



## **Professional Development Organization and Accountability**

v.1.2.16.23

### **A hero's journey...**

*Once upon a time, there was a counselor named Alethia. She had always felt a deep passion for helping others and believed that counseling was her true calling. She poured her heart and soul into her work, striving to provide her clients with the best possible care.*

*Despite her best efforts, however, Alethia found herself struggling to keep up with the ever-demanding challenges of the counseling profession. She felt uncertain about her abilities to address her clients' needs and worried that she lacked the necessary knowledge and skills.*

*One day, Alethia realized that she needed to take intentional steps to improve her clinical skills and knowledge. She consulted with her clinical supervisor and colleagues and discovered the professional development strategy for counselors to plan and block schedule 8 hours of professional development time each week, in accordance with the principles of deliberate practice.*

*Alethia was initially skeptical about block scheduling and wondered how she would find the time and energy to plan and engage in deliberate practice activities. However, she was determined to become a better counselor and help her clients find healing and Thriving. She embraced the call to adventure and set out on her hero's journey.*

*With the help of her peers and clinical supervisors, Alethia began to block schedule 8 hours of professional development time each week. She engaged in deliberate practice activities, seeking feedback and reflection from her colleagues and supervisors. She discovered new techniques and approaches that she incorporated into her clinical work, which ultimately led to better outcomes for her clients.*

*Alethia found that block scheduling and engaging in professional development activities provided her with a much-needed break from the demands of her clinical work. She felt more focused, energized, and confident in her abilities to provide her clients with high-quality care. She also felt a sense of fulfillment and purpose as she pursued her passion for helping others.*

*As Alethia continued on her hero's journey, she saw the results of her intentional efforts to improve her clinical skills and knowledge. Her clients found healing and were able to Thrive in their lives. Alethia's reputation as an excellent counselor grew, and she became a respected member of her community.*

*Alethia's journey was not without its challenges, but she persevered, with the help of her peers and clinical supervisors, and emerged a better counselor and a hero in her own right. Her journey serves as an inspiration to all counselors who strive to provide the best possible care to their clients and make a positive impact on their lives.*

## Discipline

As a counselor, you know how busy and tiring your clinical work can be. It can be easy to get caught up in the demands of your work and neglect your own professional development. It can be tempting to coast a little and put off planning and block scheduling deliberate practice time.

However, it is essential to remember that the success of your clients' healing and well-being rests on your ability to provide them with high-quality care. This requires you to lean into your own personal and professional growth, continually refining your clinical skills.

While it can be challenging to find the time and energy to plan and block schedule professional development, it is crucial to make it a priority. The MCO professional development structure and process can help you with that. By dedicating 8 hours each week to deliberate practice, you can be intentional about your professional development and ensure that you are providing your clients with the best possible care.

Moreover, being disciplined with your professional development time will provide you with a much-needed break from the demands of your clinical work. It can be a time to refocus, reenergize, and recommit to your passion for helping others.

So, even though it may be tempting to put off your professional development and coast a little, remember why you became a counselor in the first place. Remember your love for your clients, your desire to see them find healing, and your calling to honor Jesus in your work. These are the reasons why planning and block scheduling 8 hours of professional development time each week is so important. Plus, you're getting paid to do it 😊

By following the process below, you can take intentional steps to improve your clinical skills and knowledge, feel more confident in your work, and provide the best possible care to your clients. So, even though life may be busy and tiring, don't neglect your own professional development. Instead, let this structure be your guide and motivation to become the best counselor you can be.

Block scheduling is a time management technique in which you set aside specific blocks of time for particular activities or tasks. In our context, block scheduling refers to setting aside a specific, uninterrupted period each week to engage in deliberate practice and professional development activities.

## Benefits of Block Scheduling

Block scheduling has several benefits, including:

- **Increased productivity:** By focusing on one task or activity at a time, you can improve your productivity and make better use of your time.
- **Improved focus:** Block scheduling helps you avoid distractions and interruptions by setting aside specific time for your chosen activity.
- **Better time management:** By planning and blocking off time for deliberate practice and professional development activities, you can ensure that you are making time for these important tasks and not allowing them to fall by the wayside.
- **Reduced stress:** Block scheduling can help reduce stress by allowing you to manage your time more effectively and feel in control of your schedule.
- **Improved quality of work:** By dedicating uninterrupted time to a specific task or activity, you can produce higher quality work and achieve better outcomes.

By dedicating specific, uninterrupted period(s) each week to engage in deliberate practice and professional development activities, counselors can ensure that they are making time for these essential tasks, which will ultimately benefit their clients and the counseling profession as a whole.

## Deliberate Practice

In recent years much research has been devoted to the subject of deliberate practice. Deliberate practice is a method of skill acquisition and improvement that focuses on carefully designed activities and repeated practice to enhance performance. The essential elements and practices of deliberate practice are:

- **Specific goals:** Deliberate practice requires setting specific, measurable goals that are designed to push the limits of one's current abilities. – *Competencies and markers, case review improvement focuses, growth edge focus from supervision.*
- **Immediate feedback:** In order to improve, it is important to receive immediate feedback on one's performance. This feedback can come from a coach, mentor, or through self-reflection. – *Self-supervision, weekly Guide 1:1's, weekly Squad supervision, case consult/review.*
- **Repetition and refinement:** Deliberate practice involves repeated performance of a task or activity, with a focus on gradually refining and improving upon one's skills.
- **Focus and concentration:** The process of deliberate practice requires intense focus and concentration in order to make the most of each practice session.
- **Effort and challenge:** Deliberate practice involves pushing beyond one's comfort zone and embracing challenges in order to make significant progress.
- **Purposeful repetition:** Repetition is key to deliberate practice, but it must be purposeful and designed to help the individual improve in a specific area.

- **Long-term commitment:** Deliberate practice is a long-term commitment, as true mastery takes time and consistent effort.

By incorporating these elements and practices into your training and development you optimize your performance and achieve your goals more quickly and effectively.

## **GSD – The Process**

Get...Stuff Done (GSD). Creating a written professional development plan for each week is the best way to organize your training. Whether that be in a notebook or a BOX note, identifying your learning goals, which specific development activities you will engage to make progress towards them, and blocking out time on your calendar to do them, is how it gets done! Resident's will review their weekly professional development plan with their Guide each week. During the Guide 1:1 meeting Resident's will take 5 minutes at the beginning of meeting to review completion of the professional development plan from the previous week and 5 minutes at the end of the meeting to create a new plan for the coming week.

By following this process, counselors can plan and block schedule their 8 hours of professional development time each week, in accordance with principles of deliberate practice. This intentional approach to professional development will help you improve your skills and knowledge, ultimately benefiting your clients and your team as a whole.

### **Step 1: Establish Learning Goals**

The first step in planning deliberate practice is to establish learning goals. Counselors should consider their strengths, areas for improvement, advancement requirements, as well as any new skills or knowledge they want to acquire. They can also consult with their supervisors and colleagues to identify areas for growth and development.

### **Step 2: Select Learning Activities**

Once counselors have established their learning goals, they should select learning activities that align with these goals. These activities could include self-supervision (annotating video), attending didactic discussions, MCO hosted trainings, university coursework, reading articles and books from MCO treatment protocols, watching observation video, watching training videos, participating in peer consultation groups and Fellows' supervision, or seeking out additional outside training.

### **Step 3: Block Schedule Time**

After selecting learning activities, counselors should block schedule time in their weekly schedule to engage in the specific professional development activities. This could involve setting aside an 8 hour block each week, or breaking up the time into smaller increments throughout the week. *Counselors should also consider their peak performance times and schedule deliberate practice during these times. Scheduling professional development when your brain is toast does not result in good retention and integration.*

#### Step 4: Implement Deliberate Practice

During the blocked-off time, counselors should implement deliberate practice by focusing on their learning goals and engaging in the planned activity. Counselors should also track their progress and adjust their learning goals and activities as needed.

#### Step 5: Evaluate Progress

At the end of each week, counselors should evaluate their progress towards their learning goals, submit their professional development using the log webform, and adjust their deliberate practice activities as needed. They can also reflect on what worked well and what they could improve in their deliberate practice process.

#### Step 6: Seek Support and Accountability

Counselors should seek support and accountability from their supervisors and colleagues to maintain their deliberate practice efforts. This involves sharing learning goals and progress updates, participating in peer consultation groups, and seeking feedback from colleagues.

## Accountability

Three kinds of accountability will help you in your professional development journey.

1. **Self-Accountability.** This happens when you make time to reflect on your growing edges and create a plan for your professional development. In this you hold yourself accountable for your continued growth.
2. **Peer Accountability.** By sharing with your peers your growing edges and things you are working on you invite their support, encouragement, and challenge. In this way we cheer each other on towards achieving our goals. Be specific in what you are working on and *how* and *when* you are going to work on it. The more specific you are the more effective the accountability.
3. **Supervisor Accountability.** Professional development is a required and paid activity on the MCO team. Planning your professional development activity, scheduling it on your calendar, and submitting documentation of completion weekly using the logging webform is part of your professional accountability.

## Submitting Documentation

Professional Development activities and certification competencies are submitted for review and approval using the webform Professional Development Log Form found here:

<https://train.mycounselor.online/log/>

When competencies are submitted via the webform the submitting counselors receives a copy of the submission as does their direct supervisor. Generally, submissions are made weekly to avoid blowing up supervisors inboxes with submissions.

The screenshot shows a webform titled "Professional Development Log". Below the title is a brief instruction: "Use this form weekly to document your professional development activities for the week and to submit your advancement materials for review and approval." The form contains several required fields: "Unit # (Required)" with a dropdown menu showing "Clinical Unit #1"; "Unit #1 Counselors (Required)" with a dropdown menu showing "Adina James"; and "Counselor Email (Required)" with an empty text input field. Below these is a "Training Activity (Required)" section with a heading "Check all the professional development activity categories you would like to document training activity for." and a list of checkboxes: "Self-Supervision (Video Annotation)", "Squad Supervision", "Didactic/Discussion", "Process Group", "Fellows Supervision", "Guide 1:1 Meeting", "Clinical Supervisor 1:1 Meeting", "Case Consult/Review", "Personal Therapy", and "Competencies". A "Submit" button is located at the bottom left of the form.

## Self-Supervision

All counselors annotate at least one (1) session from their case load each week. The date of the session being annotated, a link to the Raenotes annotated video file, and short notes on what the identified growing edges from the self-supervision are submitted via the professional development form. The plus button can be used for submitting multiple self-supervisions.

### Self-Supervision (Video Annotation)

Full session video reviewed and annotated in Raenotes.

In "Notes" column indicate which areas of competency you were focusing on during self-supervision.

Date	Video Link	Notes
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

Submit

## Squad Supervision

Supervision with ones Squad happens on a weekly basis and the training activity is document using the professional development webform, recording the date of the supervision, the topic(s) covered, and the supervisors name.

**Squad Supervision**

Document participation in your weekly Squad group supervision.

Date	Topic	Supervisor
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="submit" value="Submit"/>		

## Coursework / Pre-Didactic

Document professional development time spent engaging MCO University Coursework, Required Reading, Observation or Training Videos, and Pre-Didactic Materials.

**Coursework / Pre-Didactic**

Document having completed university coursework, required reading, or the didactic prep materials.

Date	Type	Topic
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="submit" value="Submit"/>		

## Didactic/Discussion

Didactic or Coursework Discussion typically takes place during team meeting and involves dialogue around either pre-didactic material posted via an article on the training site or assigned University coursework.

**Didactic/Discussion**

Document having completed the coursework/didactic prep materials and participated in the didactic discussion (or watched the recording).

Date	Trainer	Topic
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="submit" value="Submit"/>		

## Process Group

Process groups are facilitated personal growth experiences hosted by the clinical team monthly. Participation is mandatory and documentation of participation is provided through the professional development log webform. The date of the process group and the facilitator are entered.

**Process Group**

Document participation in process group.

Completion Date

Facilitator

Submit

## Fellows Supervision

Certified and AP counselors are required to attend a minimum of one (1) Fellows Supervision per week. The date, topic/focus of the supervision, and the supervisor are submitted via the professional development webform.

**Fellows Supervision**

Certified and AP counselors document participation in a Fellows group supervision.

Date

Topic/Focus

Supervisor

Submit

## Guide 1:1 Meetings

Guide 1:1 Meetings are attended by Residents weekly with their Guide. PD submissions include the date, focus and Guides name.

**Guide 1:1 Meeting**

Residents document weekly 1:1 meeting with Guide.

Date

Focus

Guide

Submit

## Clinical Supervisor 1:1 Meeting

Resident's meet with their Unit Clinical Supervisor one (1) time per month. Documentation includes the date, focus, and Clinical Supervisors name.

**Clinical Supervisor 1:1 Meeting**

Document 1:1 meeting with Clinical Supervisor.

Date

Focus

Clinical Supervisor

Submit

## Case Consult/Review

Case consults are time requested by a counselor with a supervisor (Guide, Clinical Supervisor, or CTD) for consult around a specific case. Case Reviews are training exercises completed when a membership is ended with a less than 5-Star review. They involve self-supervision and a Case Review time with a supervisor. Case Consults and Reviews are document with the date, focus, and supervisor name.

### Case Consult/Review 1:1 Meeting

Document 1:1 meeting with Clinical Supervisor or Guide for Case Consult/Review.

Date	Focus	Guide/Clinical Supervisor
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="submit" value="Submit"/>		

## Personal Therapy

Six (6) sessions of personal therapy are included as part of the MCO Residency. Documentation of completion of these session is accomplished via the professional development webform, including the date and name of the therapist.

### Personal Therapy

Document completion of a session of personal therapy.

Date	Therapist
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="submit" value="Submit"/>	

## Competencies

Competency submissions for meeting advancement requirements are submitted via the professional development log webform. Multiple competencies can be submitted at once and a single video file can be used to demonstrate multiple competencies. The competency task name, video link, and minute marker for the competency are submitted.

### Competencies

Video demonstration of competency.

In "Notes" column indicate the beginning and ending minute marker for the specified competency task.

Competency Task	Video Link	Notes
<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="submit" value="Submit"/>		