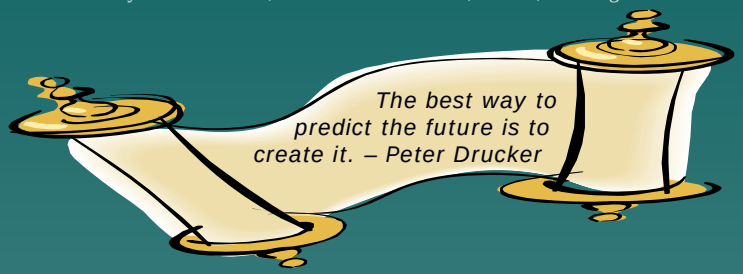
Professional Development Tracks in the Workplace:

Tools for Recruitment and Retention

Kari J. Tanta, PhD, OTR/L, FAOTA Melinda Glass, OTR/L

Valley Medical Center, Rehabilitation Services, Renton, Washington



INTRODUCTION

The development of the Professional Development Program at Valley Medical Center began as a response to staff requests for a structured means to enhance their skills, to document their professional growth, and to obtain recognition for their work within the organization. The administration viewed these requests as an opportunity to enhance recruitment and retention of employees, while simultaneously improving the quality and scope of care provided. With support at all levels of the organization, a task force was created to begin the process of developing the Professional Development Track for Rehabilitation Services. The program has been in place since 2002, and has undergone several revisions to reach its current design.

PURPOSE

This visual presentation is intended to highlight the Professional Development Program at Valley Medical Center. The information provided can serve as a template to other organizations contemplating a means of enhancing staff recruitment, employee satisfaction, and patient care.

GOALS OF THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRACK

1. To enhance the provision of excellent patient care.
2. To provide a means of structured mentorship for employees.
3. To enhance opportunities for continuing education.
4. To create an avenue to support and reward specialization.
5. To recognize and support autonomy and creativity.
6. To offer opportunities for advancement or promotion.
7. To widen the scope of patient care services provided within the organization.

EILIGIBILITY FOR PARTICIPATION IN THE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRACK

Staff members are eligible to participate in the Professional Development track after 2 years of clinical work. Eligible staff members must be employees in good standing with a permanent position.

•PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRACK CRITERIA

Level of Activity	**Level I**	**Level II**	**Level III**
Years of Experience	**Staff Therapist**	**Minimum 2 yrs clinical practice**	**Minimum 2 yrs clinical practice**
Evaluation and Treatment Areas	2 areas	4 areas	5 areas
Resource Areas	1 area	3 areas	5 areas
Education and Marketing	Min. 3/yr	Min. 7/yr	Min. 10/yr
A. Community Education	Min. 1/yr	Min. 2/yr	Min. 3/yr
B. Staff Education	Min. 1/yr	Min. 2/yr	Min. 3/yr
C. Marketing	Min. 1/yr	Min. 2/yr	Min. 3/yr
Program Evaluation	Give input	3/yr	5/yr
Protocol/Procedure Development	Know and carry out	3/yr	5/yr
Customer Service	Learn & use	ID service issues and plan change	ID service issues and implements change
Network with Professionals	2/yr	3 –5 local	5 – 7 local and national
Therapist Choice	N/A	Max. of 2 points from any of the categories below A-E	Max. of 5 points from any of the categories below A-E
A. Education and Marketing	N/A		
B. Protocols and procedures	N/A		
C. Mentoring	N/A		
D. Clinical Student supervision	Student observe		
E. Volunteer supervision	As assigned		
New Business (with permission)	Provide input	Assist with Development	1 area- primary responsibility

RESULTS

We have seen positive results on all levels since the inception of our Professional Development Track Program. Staff involvement in the PDT continues to rise (see Table 1) and staff turnover and vacancy rates have improved (see Table 2). Our employee satisfaction scores also continue to rise with increased staff involvement. The Professional Development Track has proved to be an effective tool for recruitment and retention of staff. Additionally, we have developed sophisticated new programs to meet community needs and have positively influenced patient satisfaction scores. Examples of such new programs include: a lymphedema management program, an autism clinic, a NICU follow-up clinic, a clinical instructor competency program, and a female urinary incontinence program.

Table 1: Total Number of Staff (OT, PT, SLP) Involved in PDT

Levels	'02	'04	'05	'06
Total	31	30	27	34
Level I	13	10	9	9
Level II	11	8	8	12
Level III	7	12	10	13
Percent in upper levels of staff positions				
	58%	66%	67%	74%
Staff with 2 or fewer years are not eligible and not counted in this information.				

Table 2: Vacancy/Turnover Rate

	Vacancy %	Turnover %
2002	6.1%	17.0%
2003	3.1%	14.4%
2004	5.8%	13.9%
2005	5.0%	12.6%
2006	7.9%	12.4%
Turnover rates and vacancy rates do not include per diem or on call positions.		

CONCLUSION

We are proud of our accomplishments and of the team of professionals who contributed to the creation, implementation, and revision of the Professional Development Track. We believe that this program has dramatically changed how staff members view their work, by acknowledging innovation, teamwork, and aspiration for professional growth, for the benefit of the clients we serve. We believe that this model can be successfully replicated in any rehabilitation facility that aspires to improve recruitment and retention of quality staff.

REFERENCES

May, W. W., Straker, G., & Foord-May, L. (no date). *Opportunity Favors the Prepared – A guide for Facilitating the Development of Professional Behavior*, May & Associates Consulting, Stoneham, MA.

Crowley, K., and Elster, K. (2006). *Working with You is Killing Me: Freeing Yourself from Emotional Traps at work*, Warner Book, Time Warner Group, NY, NY.

Chandler, S. and Richardson, S. (2005). *100 Ways to Motivate Others: How Great Leaders can Produce Insane Results without Driving People Crazy*, Publisher Career Press, Franklin Lakes, NJ.

Studer, Q. (2004). *Hardwiring Excellence: Purpose, Worthwhile Work, Making a Difference*, Fire Starter Publishing, Gulf Breeze, FL.