



# Professional Development Portfolios

By Dr. Linda Hancock

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled “All Psyched Up” for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of “Life is An Adventure...every step of the way” and “Open for Business Success” is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email [office@drlindahancock.com](mailto:office@drlindahancock.com)

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Because professional bodies are becoming more concerned about professional development, it is important that you can not only plan specific ways to meet the requirements but also ways that you can keep track of your learning.

There are three things that you need to know when it comes to professional development:

1. Choose learning opportunities that will qualify for credit and also meet your own specific needs. Many regulatory bodies have identified categories for different types of professional development. You need to make sure that you understand what is required and choose appropriate opportunities that will meet the criteria. At the same time, you must choose things that will help you to learn a new skill or expand your competency so that you can earn more income.
2. Make sure that you receive documentation to prove that you did what was required. This might be in the form of a diploma, certificate, letter or even a report that you write yourself. Check with the organization that has laid out the requirements to determine what they will accept.
3. Develop a portfolio to hold all of your materials. You might choose to use a file folder or binder to house your professional development documents. The most important thing is that you have a place to keep everything together and that you file the documents as soon as you receive them. It can be frustrating and time consuming to get to the end of the year and be looking for paperwork.

Professional Development is usually an ongoing requirement that is needed for your professional growth and in order to obtain your annual licence to continue working in your field of practice. You will find that if you put thought into the choices you are making, it won't be long until you have gained considerable expertise that will enhance your practice and impress your regulatory body.

Over the years I have learned so much from other individuals just because I was willing to sign up for courses and invest money into travel, hotel and registration fees. I have travelled all across North America in order to learn from people who had expertise in an area where I didn't have the knowledge, skills or experience to practice. There has not been one regret and to be honest, I would never trade my professional development past for double, triple or even quadruple what it cost me initially to take part in it.