



Practice Impacts Performance

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You start by never giving an adult a solution to a problem they don't think they have.

While children tend to learn whatever they're told to learn, when it comes to educating adults, it's a different story. Adults want to be able to immediately apply what they've learned in a tangible way. In a healthcare setting, that means teams want to know what they're learning, why they're learning it and how they can use it in their day-to-day work to make a difference for their patients.

There are a number of ways you can help adult learners stay interested in highly conceptual coursework.

Give evidence within the structure of a workshop

Professionals tend to have a knowledge base that's founded in their experience. That approach to building their knowledge base can be hard to move past. They will talk about that one case or that one time. The trouble is, particularly in healthcare, none of us has been working long enough to have seen everything. You just can't have a purely experience-based practice. To create an evidence-based practice, a balance between

research-based evidence and practice-based experience is needed.

Practice practical learning

For adults, broad concepts need to be concrete to their own work environment. Once they see how the concepts apply to their own work, they really get it. For instance, "relational mapping" can seem abstract to many. But when team members take a work process — such as moving a patient from the ER to a bed on a ward — and create a map that shows where communication and coordination breakdowns occur, that abstract concept comes to life.

Make knowledge and behavior sticky

Repetition is particularly helpful in creating a knowledge transfer. It creates processes and habits so the desired behaviors become hardwired into the team. Through tabletop exercises, role playing and mock drills, you can reinforce concepts in practical settings.

Debrief the good

It used to be that teams would only debrief the bad. This behavior needs to change — so teams

are debriefing every case and members can look at what went well and ensure it gets repeated. The process can be as simple as a five minute regroup or as complex as teams want it to be.

When it comes to providing a learning experience, you must do everything you can to make your teams successful. A fresh approach that's tailored to adult learners will keep your frontline energized and focused.



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