



National Institute For Behavioral Health Quality

Standards and Guidelines Providers of Continuing Education

NIBHQ accreditation of providers of continuing education for behavioral health professionals is a process whereby behavioral health practitioners, state agencies, licensing boards, and the public can be assured that a CE provider meets rigorous standards required to provide quality continuing education. NIBHQ accredits providers and not a particular CE programs or course. Accreditation indicates that a CE provider has met a high standard and is free to develop any CE offering as long as the provider maintains the standards for accreditation. Providers are awarded accreditation based upon meeting the standards set forth in this document.

1. Providing Continuing Education To Behavioral Health Professionals

Standard

Providers of continuing education for behavioral health professionals are themselves trained and licensed as independent behavioral health care providers. Providers who meet this standard hold valid licenses to practice as psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, licensed counselors, or marriage and family therapists. However, any licensed health care professional who demonstrates that their training relates to behavioral health may meet this standard for accreditation. This includes nurse practitioners whose specialty is mental health.

2. Providers Of Continuing Education Have An Organized Sequence For Planning Programs

Standard

Providers of continuing education demonstrate that they have developed and utilize an organized sequence in planning their educational offerings. Providers meet this standard by clearly demonstrating that they engage in a formal process to select CE offerings. As part of the decision to offer a course or program, providers must demonstrate that all courses have specific educational objectives. Providers must demonstrate that they have developed and utilize specific standards to select and retain behavioral health care professionals to write and instruct courses and programs. This indicates that instructors of courses for behavioral health professionals must also be licensed and practicing behavioral health professionals.

Providers of continuing education demonstrate a commitment to instructional quality by having and utilizing specific performance standards for their instructional personnel. This may include, participant feedback, a formal evaluation process by supervising personnel, or any other formal procedure that demonstrates an on-going evaluation process of instructional evaluation that is based on reasonable performance criteria.

3. Consumer Benefit Through Program Evaluation

Standard

Providers of continuing education demonstrate a commitment to ensuring that participants and consumers of their educational products obtain a measurable benefit after completing a course or program. Providers meet this standard by demonstrating that they have in place a process or procedure whereby participants of their programs can provide meaningful feedback on the benefits they have or have not received from particular CE offerings. This may be accomplished by surveying participants who have completed particular CE courses or programs immediately after completion or within a reasonable time period after the program. Mere satisfaction surveys do not meet this standard. A provider must demonstrate specific benefits that participants state they have received as a result of completing a CE offering. For example, was a participant able to integrate into their practice any aspect of the offering? As a result of completing a particular course or program, was the participant able to better serve a patient?

4. Participant Rights

Standard

Consumers of educational products have a right to expect that providers of continuing education will be fair, reasonable and prompt in addressing their concerns about a particular CE course or program. Providers demonstrate their commitment to consumer rights by adopting a process whereby consumers can have their grievances addressed and adjudicated in a timely manner. This standard also includes having a reimbursement policy that is reasonable and fair.

5. Criteria For Granting CE Credit

Standard

Providers of continuing education must have procedures and processes in place that details the specific criteria for awarding CE credit. Providers meet this standard by demonstrating a formal process that clearly defines the criteria for granting CE credit. For example, attendance policies for onsite programs must be clearly spelled out. Ensuring that the materials for online courses and programs are protected as well as ensuring the participant who registers for a course is the person who completes it. These are only some of the issues that this standard addresses.

6. Record Keeping

Standard

Providers of continuing education are committed to ensuring that participant records are available for a reasonable length of time. Every behavioral health profession works within a framework of confidentiality and ethical responsibility. Secure record keeping is essential from both these perspectives. Providers meet this standard by demonstrating that all participant records and other sensitive materials remain guarded and available according to reasonable principles.