

## Common Issues Impacting CE (Continuing Education) Approval

The Ohio Counseling Association (OCA) is a recognized Continuing Education (CE) provider by the Counselor, Social Worker, and Marriage and Family Therapist Board (CSWMFTB) of Ohio. OCA is only able to offer counselor CE's, and utilized the Professional Development Committee (PDC) to review and approve requests from OCA chapters and divisions to have CE events. The PDC can also provide feedback to chapters and divisions to help them with their CE events. The PDC also does reviews and approval of CE's for the two OCA conferences – the All Ohio Counselors' Conference and the newer Spring Conference.

As the Chair of the PDC for over a year, there have been some common stumbles that I've seen in CE applications. So here are some important considerations when planning your CE event, making decisions about presenters, and for information to make sure to include in AOCC and Spring Conference presentation submissions:

1. **Content areas** – Make sure that your presentation topic falls within one of the CE content areas from the CSWMFTB. These are listed on the submission form. Topics that cannot be linked clearly to one of these areas may be returned for clarification, returned to add specific content, or (while it may be accepted to present at AOCC or the Spring Conference) may not be approved for CE's. The PDC can help you in figuring out which content area a topic would most appropriately fall under, or if additional content may be needed to be categorized appropriately.

*Tip: Make sure to include an explicit link in the description to the content area.*

2. **Presenter expertise & background** – CE presenters are not required to be licensed counselors, however they do need to demonstrate expertise and appropriate background in the topic of the presentation. For example, a psychiatrist can present about advances in medication or a police officer could present about mental health courts and collaborating with first responders during a crisis.

*Tip: Make sure you highlight your background in your topic and review your CV to make sure that also provides a highlight to your expertise.*

3. **Client care focus** – Except for supervision, CE presentation topics needs to link directly to client care. If a link to client care is not evident, the presentation may not get approved for CE's. It's important to make it very clear how the topic can assist clinicians in providing client care, even if the topic isn't necessarily clinical. For example, a presentation about changes in HIPAA laws, outcomes of court cases, and changes in Medicaid can connect to client care but that connection needs to be stated.

*Tip: Review your description and consider adding one sentence to explicitly state the topic's relevance to client care.*

- 4. Supervision focus** – If you want your CE presentation to be approved for Supervision CE's, it needs to focus on either development of the supervisor and/or the development of the supervisee. This is the only area that doesn't need an explicit connection to client care.

***Tip:** Review your description and make sure it indicates how your topic adds to the development of the supervisor and/or the supervisee.*

- 5. Inclusion of clinical and/or evidence-based content** – Hearing stories of recovery are a vital part of learning for counselors. It helps us gain additional insight and empathy outside of our own experiences. We encourage you to seek out speakers that can bring this perspective to your events. We also know that experiential learning can be very impactful for clinicians. However, in order to have CE credits, the presentation also needs to include clinical and/or evidence-based content as well. For example, a presentation about a wellness activity also needs to link to a content area, link to client care, and have some additional content. As another example, having a mental health services consumer talk about their experiences should also have some additional information of a clinical nature presented as well.

***Tip:** Lived experience presenters and experiential learning are great ways to engage clinicians, however make sure that the presentation also includes clinical or research based information as a necessary compliment for CE's.*

***Final last BIG TIP:** At any point in your planning process, you can consult with the Chair of the Professional Development Committee. We want to help you have a successful event! We can assist with descriptions, learning objectives, and provide feedback about growing your event. We can also assist with additional advertising suggestions to reach a larger audience. Please don't hesitate to reach out to us!*