

9-1 Ongoing Training and Observation Expectations

Continuous learning

There is so much to learn to be a skilled and knowledgeable WIC certifier! As you have noticed, it takes the first 6 months just to complete all the required training and get used to how things work in your clinic. But it doesn't stop there. It takes a long time to feel comfortable and confident being a certifier. Plus, things are always changing in WIC. That is the reason WIC tries to promote lifelong or continuous learning for staff.

Continuous learning is about expanding your ability to learn by regularly upgrading your skills and increasing your knowledge. Strong continuous learning is required to successfully adapt to changing work and life demands. Continuous learning in WIC involves viewing your experiences as potential learning and re-examining your assumptions, values, methods and practices.

Some practices of continuous learning include:

- Asking questions when you don't understand something;
- Asking for feedback or advice from more experienced co-workers;
- Identifying learning or training opportunities that are available to you;
- Learning by observing more experienced co-workers;
- Identifying and understanding your skill strengths and areas where you need improvement;
- Developing your own learning goals;
- Applying the lessons you have learned from past experiences to new situations;

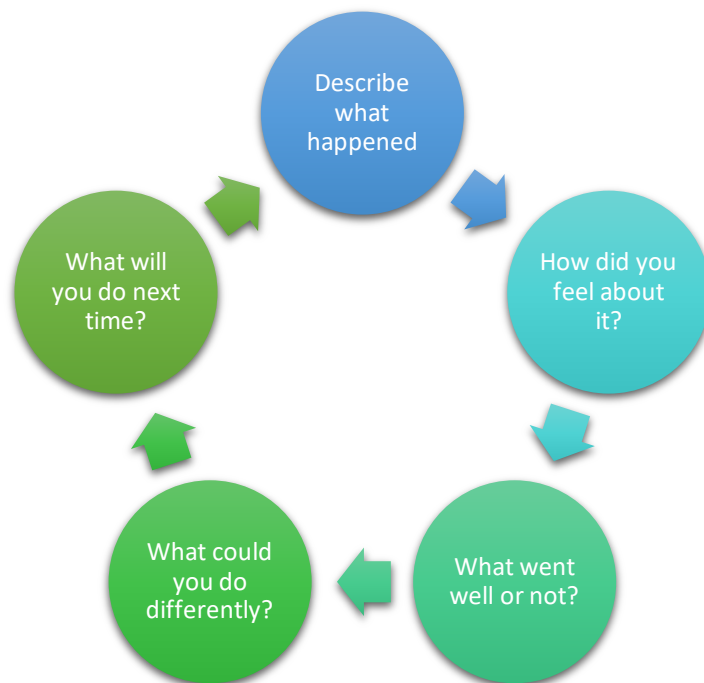


- Trying new ways of doing things;
- Recognizing your preferred way to learn new things;
- Taking responsibility for your own learning;
- Maintaining your skill levels by practicing what you have learned.¹

WIC supports continuous learning by encouraging reflective practice, requiring quarterly in-services, calling for yearly observations, and providing training resources.

Reflective practice

One way to continually learn from our experiences is to reflect on how things are going as you do your work. Reflective practice is a way of studying your own experiences to improve the way you work. Here are the **steps to reflective practice**.²



Considerations:

- Try setting time aside regularly to reflect on how things are going;
- Talking with a trusted co-worker can be helpful when reflecting;
- Focus your reflections on something you want to learn or get better at;
- Try not to judge yourself – it is okay to make mistakes, as long as you are working to get better.

¹ [Continuous Learning, University of Guelph](#)

² Gibbs' Reflective Learning Cycle

Learning activity

Think about a recent certification that maybe didn't go as well as you would have liked. Use the steps to reflective practice to think about the situation. Discuss your thoughts with your training supervisor.



Quarterly in-services

All WIC staff, no matter how long they have worked in WIC, are required to complete in-services each calendar year. These in-services will be on topics related to your work as a certifier. Sometimes the in-services are provided by the state WIC office and sometimes they will be developed by someone in your agency. Your training supervisor will decide on the best way to complete the in-services and will keep track of when each certifier finishes them. Your agency may require additional training besides the training required for WIC.



Each calendar year you will complete the following in-services:

- 4 in-services on general WIC topics like nutrition updates, policy changes, or changes to the data system;
- 1 in-service on breastfeeding support;
- 1 in-service on civil rights.

Observations

Observations are one of the best ways to learn, whether it is being observed or observing others. Using reflective practices during observations can help you improve whether things go well or not.



Considerations:

- Your training supervisor will observe you at least once a year. This is intended as a chance for you to learn and improve, not as an evaluation of your performance.
- You can use the *Job Aid-Observation Guide* to help you focus your observations of others.
- Try picking one thing to focus on, then reflect afterwards to find the most important thing you can learn.

Learning activity

Talk with your training supervisor about how your agency sets up observations of you and observations of others by you.



Use the *Job Aid – Observation Guide* during an observation of another certifier.

Reflect with your co-worker on what you observed.

Other training resources for continuous learning

There are several training resources provided by the state WIC program that you can use at any time:

Key webpages on the [Oregon WIC website](#):

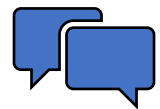
- [In-services for WIC Staff](#)
- [Data system user manual](#)
- [Participant Centered Services](#)
- [Oregon WIC policy and procedure manual](#)

[WIC Link newsletter](#)

The WIC Link newsletter is sent out monthly for all WIC staff to review. It includes short articles and links to other resources that you might find useful.

Talk it over

Talk with your training supervisor about any questions that you have related to continuous learning.



References

[Policy 440 – Staff Training Requirements](#)

