

## **Guidelines for Seminar and Workshop Creation so as to Qualify for CE Credit**

Continuing education (CE) for mental health professionals is regulated by a network of sponsoring organizations such as the American Psychological Association, the Association of Social Work Boards, and the National Board of Certified Counselors, among many other boards at the state level. Approval of CE credit for the behavioral sciences is a non-religious function, and CE programs are evaluated on their secular, not Biblical, content.

The guidelines concerning continuing education vary among these regulating organizations. But they all share a number of features, as well. One of those is that continuing education for licensed mental health professionals reflects ongoing advances within the field of mental health and its allied disciplines. These disciplines represent professional, scholarly, and scientific domains within the social, behavioral, and natural sciences. They are secular fields that collectively reflect the nexus of knowledge needed to inform best practices, protect the welfare of the consumer, and maximize therapeutic effectiveness. Importantly, they must be relevant to practice, based on secular (e.g., scientific) authority, and be geared towards the post-graduate level.

Common elements of continuing education include regulatory information (e.g., HIPPA, state codes), professional issues (e.g., ethical codes and practices), and knowledge gains in relation to scientific methods (e.g., research) and professional practices (e.g., psychotherapy). Continuing education programs cannot derive their primary or exclusive authority from biblical sources, but instead must reflect advances or applications from within these secular domains of professional practice.

Sponsoring continuing education organizations all recognize that there are substantial domains of valuable learning that occur outside the parameters of continuing education. Even though this learning does not qualify as continuing education for mental health professionals, it can nonetheless contribute significantly to the welfare of the therapist and the client. Examples include knowledge or applications derived from medical, financial or religious domains. Each of these can contribute substantially to human welfare but nonetheless fall outside the pale of continuing education for mental health professionals, and for that reason they do not carry CE credits for licensed behavioral health practitioners.

When constructing a workshop or seminar for which you'd like to have CE credit granted, please keep in mind the CE guidelines mentioned above, paying specific attention to the fact that continuing education programs cannot derive their primary or exclusive authority from biblical sources, but instead must reflect advances or applications from within the secular domains of professional practice. Continuing education programs can include information and input from outside secular domains, but these other sources do not represent the authority upon which CE credit can be granted.

In short, review your program in relation to the following criteria:

1. Is it based primarily on secular (scientific or conceptual), and not Biblical, authority?
2. Is it relevant to clinical practice?
3. Is it geared toward a post-graduate level of training?