

HOW TO ORGANIZE CONTINUING EDUCATION COURSES

Below are several suggestions to help you organize and conduct a successful continuing education course. This document should serve as suggestions and is not intended to be a complete list of all items to consider.

How to select a course topic and/or speaker

1. Finding a course topic/speaker
 - a. Ask your members at a District or SIG meeting, or via email survey, what topics and/or speakers they are interested in hearing.
 - b. Search the CPTA database of approved continuing education courses.
 - c. Search the APTA Learning Center (learningcenter.apta.org) by topic, by academy or search by keyword(s).
 - d. Watch the monthly issue of CPTA District/SIG Sponsored Continuing Education Updates for courses that are being offered in other Districts and SIGs.
 - e. Invite a member of the CPTA Payment Policy Committee, Quality Practice Committee, Ethics Committee or Community Affairs Committee to make a short presentation (60, 90, 120 minutes).
 - f. Look to local universities for speakers, faculty, guest lecturers.
 - g. Promote local clinicians who are doing research, have a niche practice or knowledge base or are trying to "break in to" the speaking circuit.
 - h. Read PT journals, magazines and periodicals for California-based members who are publishing or being interviewed. These are potential candidates for you!
 - i. Identify speakers at National Meetings such as CSM and international meeting such as WCPT.
 - j. Contact APTA Academy leaders for speakers and topics that are hot, trending, and popular.
 - k. Research the websites of other APTA Chapters and Academies to see what continuing education courses they are providing and who is speaking at their upcoming conference.
 - l. Invite your speaker to a District or SIG meeting for a short presentation to determine if there is interest in that topic and/or speaker.
2. Confirm your speaker(s)
 - a. Confirm speakers six to nine months in advance. This will allow time for advertising, promotion, etc. Many well-known speakers are booked 6-18 months in advance.

3. Contract
 - a. Once your speaker is confirmed, draft a contract for them to sign (see below under additional recommendations)

How to select date, time and location

1. Date and time
 - a. Poll your members to find out what day(s) and time(s) and locations are desirable for them.
 - b. Consider holidays, long weekends, and local events that may impact on the availability of attendees, and ease of travel.
 - c. Be aware that CPTA has a “blackout” period identified yearly in the CPTA calendar which does not allow districts to offer continuing education courses three weeks before and two weeks after Chapter Annual Conference (CBPROC 10)
 - i. There are opportunities to sponsor a pre-conference or post-conference course in conjunction with CPTA Annual Conference (Contact the Executive Associate, Education & Meetings, at the CPTA Office).
 - d. Allow for registration time before the course starts (i.e. if the course starts at 8:00am, registration should start at 7:30am to encourage participants to arrive on time).
2. Location
 - a. Identify select locations that may not charge a rental fee.
 - i. Universities and community colleges
 - ii. Hospitals and clinics
 - iii. Public libraries, health clubs, golf courses, and government offices
 - b. Offer 1-2 discounted registration to the host site in exchange for a rental fee.

What are the costs involved?

1. Speaker costs
 - a. Each speaker may have a different cost based on their experience and expertise. Typical costs of a one-day course vary from \$1,000 - \$2,000. Hourly rates can be \$200-300.

- b. Travel expenses (air travel, mileage, toll roads, parking fees, ground transportation, lodging and meals)
 - c. Special equipment (weights, bands, towels, tables), handouts and supplies.
2. Host site costs
- a. Room charges (energy usage, janitorial services, etc.)
 - b. AV and Wi-Fi access
 - c. Refreshments and/or lunch
3. Tips to manage costs
- a. E-mail handouts to registrants ahead of time and ask them to bring printed versions with them or to download to their personal electronic device. Ask the speaker to provide handouts at his or her own expense.
 - b. Host the event in conjunction with another/multiple CPTA Districts or Special Interest Groups and share the costs.
 - c. If the course is all day, advertise that “lunch is on your own”

How to determine your registration fees

1. Determine if you are offering this course as a source of non-dues income, complimentary, or simply to break even.
2. The registration fee for a non-member shall be 60% greater than the member fee.
3. If the course is open to students, PTAs and PTs consider having different costs for each professional designator.
4. Consider a discount for:
 - a. multiple registrations from the same facility
 - b. host facility
 - c. early registration
 - d. advance vs. on-site registration

Advertising and Marketing Tips

1. Start advertising the event at least 12-16 weeks prior to the start of the event.

- a. Use multiple sources for advertising
 - i. Direct mail
 - ii. Email blasts
 - iii. Social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn)
 - iv. District or SIG newsletter
 - v. Postings at local facilities
2. Offer CEUs for your courses. The application fee is just \$25 for Districts and SIGs.
3. Consider asking the speaker to do a short “teaser” for the course at a District meeting. Ask them to attend the meeting and give them 15-30 minutes so that can talk about their upcoming course.
4. Brand your courses by consistently using the same color schemes, art, or style, for all course flyers and mailings.
5. What to include in your advertisement and/or announcement:
 - a. Title
 - b. Date and time
 - c. Location (include detailed map of parking location and course location)
 - d. Instructor(s) name, credentials, short statement of qualifications related to the presentation
 - e. Type of instructional method(s) (lecture only, lecture w/demonstration, lecture w/hands-on/technique lab)
 - f. Target audience, who should attend this presentation (out-patient vs in-patient, peds therapists or geriatric therapists, etc)
 - g. Instructional level
 - h. Course description and learning objective(s)
 - i. Sponsor name, address and website
 - j. Fee(s) and accepted method of payment
 - k. How to register (online, registration form, onsite, by a deadline?)
6. Provide the registrant with a confirmation letter, email or fax.

Week before the course

1. Contact speaker to review logistics for the course, updates, and to ensure that you are both on the same page! Exchange cell phone numbers or know how to reach each other.
2. Confirm with host facility the access time, room set and special arrangements.
3. Order/purchase refreshments.
4. Identify who is going to introduce the speaker and take care of housekeeping announcements.
5. Prepare name badges, sign in sheets, evaluation forms and CEU certificates. If course is more than one day, you will need a sign-in sheet for each day.
6. Photo copy any handouts needed for the participants.

Day of the course

1. Post directional signs at the entrance of the building so participants know where to go.
2. Have someone available from the facility who is familiar with how to operate or access the AV equipment and how to reach maintenance or housekeeping personnel.
3. Do you need a password for Wi-Fi access?
4. Set up a registration table with sign-in sheet, badges, and course handouts.
5. Have CEU or certificates of attendance available at the conclusion of the course.
6. Have membership applications available if non-members are in attendance.
7. Have promotional material, newsletters, volunteer opportunities, upcoming events, or additional information about your group available.

Additional Suggestions

1. If you plan to conduct several courses throughout the year, consider purchasing an LCD projector. You can project on a clean wall or hang a sheet over a flat surface.
2. With small numbers of course participants (10 to 16) try hands-on courses. Engage, include and interact. These will be your most successful courses. Physical therapists hate to sit!
3. Speaker bios should include professional licenses, academic degrees, educational institutions attended, relevant clinical experience, and experience relevant to teaching course material. Eliminate awards, publications, and service positions. Use this information when introducing your speaker on the day of the event!

4. Contracts

It is an excellent idea to have the speaker(s) sign a contract. Get everything in writing, even with your host facility! You should consider including the following information:

- a. Speaker fees/room fees
 - b. Time, date and location of the course
 - c. Course title, topic, description and learning objectives
 - d. Audio visual needs
 - e. Special equipment needs (treatment tables, weights, bands)
 - f. Minimum number of registrants for the course
 - g. Cancellation of the course
5. Ask your speaker for all the items that you need for the CE Approval application (i.e. CV or resume, photo for promotional materials, bibliography).
6. Make sure you know how many registrants you need to meet your financial goals.