



Communities of Practice

Alcohol and Other Drugs Youth Service

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The Project.

- Evaluate the effectiveness of the Community of Practice in achieving it's aims.
- Partnered with the University of Wollongong and CMHDARN for the project.
- Review of materials, minutes, TOR etc
- Observation of meeting process
- Telephone interviews with selected members
- Online Survey with all members
- Formal report
- Article

What are Communities of Practice?

Groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems or a passion about a topic and who deepen their knowledge or expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis...Over time they develop a unique perspective, common knowledge, practices and approaches... a common sense of identity.” *Wenger , McDermott & Snyder 2002*

CoPs have 3 dimensions

1. Domain:

What do we do that is similar?

2. Community:

How do we relate? What brings us together?

3. Practice:

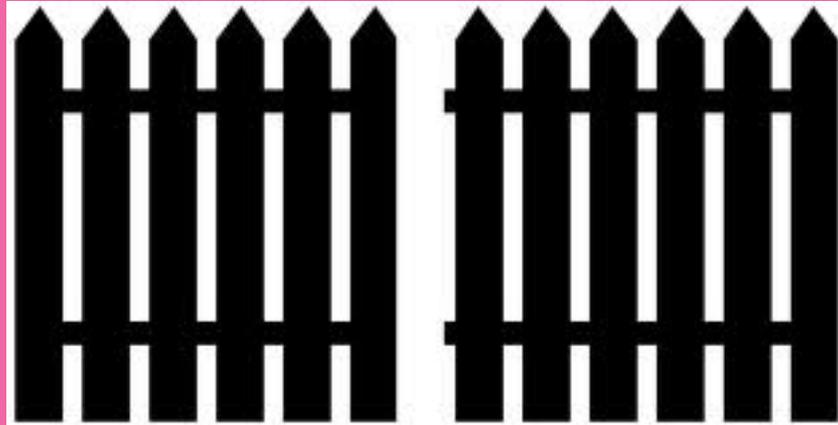
What are the resources, tools, practices?



What are Communities of Practice?

- Across organisations
- Vary in composition, single or multidiscipline
- Varying in purpose
- Face to face vs virtual
- Means of information and learning exchange
- Top down vs bottom up
- Complex, multifactorial, operate with different models
- Peer to peer, expert to novice

“Have you ever had 6
kids jump the fence?”



Our Community of Practice: Membership

Service	Region	Members
Triple Care Farm	NSW, Robertson	6
Junaa Buwa!	NSW, Coffs Harbour	6
Mac River	NSW, Dubbo	4
Hindmarsh Sobering up Centre & Hindmarsh Residential Rehabilitation Centre	SA, Hindmarsh	2
DAYS (Drug and Alcohol Youth Services)	WA, East Perth	5
Mission Australia Executive	NSW, Sydney	2

Our Community of Practice: Domain

- All Mission Australia Residential Youth Alcohol and Other Drug Services
- Sobering up, withdrawal, day program, residential rehab, aftercare.
- Young people, 13-24 with Alcohol and Other Drug issues, young people with mental health issues, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Is, Young people at risk of or in contact with the criminal justice system.
- Their families carers and communities.

Our Community of Practice: Community

- Psych, Social Work, Nursing, MHNP, GP, Youth
- Frontline staff to State Leaders
- Meet formally, face to face quarterly
- Supported by a Clinical Practice Leader
- Forms part of the clinical governance structure
- Email group, a web SharePoint
- videoconference supervision arrangements
- Informal emails, face to face and phone calls

Our Community of Practice: Practice

- Recovery oriented
- Counselling, vocation and education, living skills, physical health, medical care, care coordination
- Multimodal approach MI, CBT, DBT, ACT, Mindfulness, Certificate II, Accredited training modules, Living skills modules, health and fitness modules, smoking cessation, matched to stage care coordination

The primary aim of the Mission Australia Youth AOD Community of Practice is to develop responsive and appropriate services to improve outcomes for young people, families and communities.



**Supports strong
teams, competent
leaders and skilled
practitioners**

**Develops innovative,
effective, evidence based
early intervention,
rehabilitation and post-
care practices**

**Enables effective sharing of
information, model
development and sharing
of information**

“For a long time, I felt isolated. Like no one else knew what it was to be an intern psychologist in a youth drug and alcohol rehab. It’s a whole different ball game to community work, to private practice, and to working in outreach. Working in a rural area, my options were very limited”. Member Dubbo.

Sustainable CoPs

“Sustainable CoPs are regional in scope, evidenced based, data driven, supported institutionally, provide comprehensive support and have a philosophy of continuous quality improvement”.

Ranmuthugala et al., 2011

“Bringing people together and calling them a CoP doesn’t mean they will function as one”.

Cultivating Communities of Practice

- Flexible, not prescribed, AND organisationally sanctioned
- Clearly defined objectives
- Funding
- Active participation of members
- Understanding the power structures
- Level of trust
- Easy communication and sharing
- Passion for the topic
- Commitment and ownership
- Aligning CoP activities to organisational expectations of benefit
- Benefits to participating
- Good, user friendly ICT
- Regular evaluation and review

Barriers

- Geographic Spread
- Funding was integral to momentum
- Trust and no competition philosophy
- Maintaining diversity vs aligning practices
- Maintaining membership with organisational changes
- ICT infrastructure

Barriers and enablers in conducting the research

- Knowing the right academic, building relationships from ground zero
 - >> Making time for getting to know the organisation and the academic
- Working across multiple sites, and then adding in a university – project coordination
 - >> Lots of communication, regular checking in
- Negotiating Academic, Organisational, HREC and funding body timelines
 - >> Ensuring reasonable time is permitted for ethics and unforeseen circumstances

Outcomes < 2years

- New model for suicide prevention, 4 trainers and over 120 staff across the state from Wilcannia, to Wollongong and Coffs Harbour to date.
- Written and implemented 3 State wide policies, Suicide, Benchmarking, Entering client rooms and privacy. 1 National policy Consumer participation.
- Reviewed 20+ policies. 4/5 Services have implemented Smoke Free Policies!!! International Conference Presentation.
- Reviewed 10 critical incidents (Preventing Suicide, Homicide, HR, Media)
- Won over \$250K in joint funding
- Successfully tendered and implemented a residential rehab a day program, and currently building a new 10 bed withdrawal unit.
- Trained 80 staff in Dialectical Behaviour Therapy
- Implemented Accreditation programs across 4 services.
- Implemented a benchmarking project across 3 services
- TheMHS Silver award. 3 papers, 1 poster.
- 3 new university partnerships including one formal evaluation of the CoP



Formal Evaluation in Progress: Watch this space

- Friday 29th November will be the release date of the final outcomes report on the evaluation of the Mission Australia AOD Residential Youth Services Community of Practice.
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References

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