Community of Practice
Module 5
Toward a Sustainable CoP

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Learning Objectives

By the end of this module, you will be able to:

• Identify the characteristics of a successful CoP
• Determine what resources are required for the CoP to be sustainable and discuss how to provide the conditions and resources for success
• Evaluate the effectiveness of a CoP using process and outcome measures
Model of CoP Phases & Timing
(18 month timeframe of study)

- Months
  - 6: Forming the CoP
    - Launch
  - 12: Learning to work together
  - 18: Developing a shared body of knowledge
  - 18: Moving toward sustainability
Defining Characteristics of CoP - requirements for sustainability

- **Purpose**: A joint enterprise, understood and continually negotiated by its members
- **Function**: Mutual engagement that binds members as a social entity
- **Capability or Products**: A shared body knowledge, developed over time

(Wenger, 1998)
Providing Critical Success Factors for Sustainability

• A focus that energizes the core group
• Processes to share ideas and build practice knowledge
  – Right rhythm and mix of activities
• Resources
  – Skilful and reputable coordinator
  – Involvement of experts
  – Sponsorship
  – Technology
Discussion Questions

1. What are the pros and cons of storytelling as a way to share practice experience?

2. Reflect on a recent innovation in your workplace. How was the innovation transferred? How might a CoP facilitate the process?
CoP Sustainability – Value to Members

• Improve experience at work
  - Provide safe environment for sharing problems & challenges, and for testing ideas
  - Provide support for novices and nurses new to the organization or moving to a new field

• Foster professional development
  - Decrease practice isolation
  - Stimulate discussion and debate on health relevant to CCHN Standards
  - Promote development and effective sharing of limited resources
CoP Sustainability – Value to Organization

- Improve practice and research outcomes
  - Facilitate rapid identification of knowledge & skills
  - Capture & retention of organizational memory
  - Improve implementation of evidence-based practice
  - Facilitate faster/better decision-making

- Develop individual organisational capability
  - Increased retention of talent
  - Knowledge-based alliances
  - Increased capacity to respond to change
Discussion Questions

3. How would a CoP with a focus on improving practice for chronic disease prevention and self-management (CDPSM), fit with the mission, vision and values of your place of work? What aspects would / would not fit?

4. What structures in your workplace would support this community of practice? Consider the three key elements identified by Garcia & Dorohovich: people, processes and technology.
Evaluation – Documenting Success

• Evaluation can be used to show worth of CoP to members & organizations
• Lack of rigorous evaluation to date, mainly process rather than outcome evaluation
• Li and colleagues (2009) recommend evaluating key characteristics:
  – support for members interacting with each other
  – knowledge sharing
  – building a sense of belonging
Possible Evaluation Questions (PHAC 2006)

Process
• Did we do what we said we would do?
• What did we learn about what worked and what did not work?

Outcome
• What difference did we make?
• What could we do differently?
• How do we plan to use evaluation findings for continuous learning?
Example Results of Process Evaluation (Diem & Moyer 2009)

Successes

• Developed active core of members and enabled the CoP structure and function to evolve
• Supported collaboration & knowledge exchange
  - Created forum for debate and information sharing
  - Topics seen as important to members
  - Built on organization's values & goals
  - Built personal relationships among members
  - Least successful in creating easy access to website for sharing resources
Did the community of practice facilitate knowledge development?

- Identified / Assembled existing resources
  - Self management assessment tools
  - Resources for introducing organizational change
- Developed resources for clients and practitioners
  - Personal Health Passport
  - Chronic Disease Prevention and Self Management Workshop Guide and Participant Resource
Did the community of practice benefit the organisation?

- An important consideration, particularly in times of fiscal constraint
- Value to organization (slide 8) provides framework
- Difficult to show organizational benefit
  - Takes time to establish a CoP
  - Need resources to develop indicators relevant to organization and to conduct evaluation
- Possibly show value in terms of use of professional development resources
Discussion Questions

5. How might the CDPSM Workshop be used to demonstrate the value of a Community of Practice in your organization?

6. How does participation in a community of practice to develop such a resource assist the nurse to meet the CCHN Standards of Practice?