Communities of Practice

Collective Learning For Public Health Impact

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Community of Practice

Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.

- Etienne Wenger
Community of Practice

- A social theory advanced by Etienne Wenger
- A cross-sectoral approach to collective learning, knowledge management, community development and personal empowerment
- Self-organized methods for collective social learning
- Growing number of applications to various sectors in health and business:
  - tobacco control
  - professional education
  - primary care / health systems
  - health education ...and more

- Most often include an explicit virtual (electronic) component
Community of Practice

Wenger’s Model

Joint Enterprise

- Negotiated enterprise accountability, interpretations, local response, rhythms

Mutual Engagement

- Engaged diversity, relationships, social complexity, community maintenance, shared activity

Shared Repertoire

- Stories, styles, artifacts, tools, discourses, concepts, theories, actions, historical events

CoP Evolution

1. Helping Communities: Provide a forum for community members to help each other with everyday work needs.

2. Best Practice Communities: Develop and disseminate best evidence, procedures and process to members.

3. Knowledge Stewarding Communities: Organize, manage, and steward a body of knowledge.

4. Innovation Communities: Create new breakthrough ideas, new knowledge, and practices.

Identity focus > Personal growth > Managerial tool > ?

Systematic Review

- 31 primary studies (18 – Business, 13 – Health)
- No common language or operational definition found
- No common structure for what a CoP looks like in practice shared
- No common set of outcomes or impact measures used
- Quality of research is varied across the literature
- Questions remain:
  - power dynamics?
  - empowerment or knowledge management?
  - personal growth vs. organizational development?

Systematic Review

- Social interaction
- Knowledge-sharing
- Knowledge-creation
- Identity-building

Common characteristics to all groups studied

- Questions remain:
  - power dynamics?
  - empowerment or knowledge management?
  - personal growth vs. organizational development?

Why?
Networks and Communities
community /ˌkɔːməˈnɪtɪ/ n. 
1. a group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common.
2. a sense of belonging to or identification with a particular group or place.

size whose m

government, a

the community

women leading
group of org

colog
“You know when you’ve got it and when you don’t” – Psychologist Seymour Sarason on sense of community
Locating Community
Creating New Communities of Practice
..do we need a community of practice to address chronic disease and obesity in Canada?
..do we need a community of practice to address chronic disease and obesity in Canada?

...have we not started one before? (or if we have, we don’t we know about it?)

...
..do we need a community of practice to address chronic disease and obesity in Canada?
...have we not started one before?
...do the barriers you’ve identified prevent us from moving forward?
...
..do we need a community of practice to address chronic disease and obesity in Canada?

...have we not started one before?

...do the barriers you’ve identified prevent you from moving forward?

...will these barriers fall because of you?
Build Community

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