CREATING A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE FOR SUPPORTING TRANSITION AGE YOUTH WITH SERIOUS MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS

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The Transitions RTC aims to improve the supports for youth and young adults, ages 14-30, with serious mental health conditions who are trying to successfully complete their schooling and training and move into rewarding work lives. We are located at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, Worcester, MA, Department of Psychiatry, Center for Mental Health Services Research.

Visit us at: http://labs.umassmed.edu/transitionsRTC/index.htm

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Creating A Community of Practice

- Defining a CoP
- Creating the NE MACoPTAYYA
- The Young Adult Perspective

What is a Community of Practice?

- CoPs are “groups of people who share a concern, a set of problems, a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis.”

(Wenger, McDermott, & Snyder, 2002, p. 4)
Characteristics of a CoP

Three important characteristics help distinguish a CoP from other groups:

1. The *domain*
2. The *community*
3. The *practice*

(Wenger, 1998)

What is a Community of Practice?

• A CoP is more informal than a *work group* or *task force*.

• *Learning communities* focus on learning, CoPs focus on practice.¹

(Wenger, 1998)
What is the purpose of a CoP?

- To develop the practice, through exchanging knowledge, skills, and experiences of the members.
- Members generally volunteer due to their interest in the topic/practice.
- Identification with the community and the practice keeps the group together.
- The community lasts as long as the members are interested in participating.¹

(Wenger & Snyder, 2000)

Benefits of a Community of Practice

- Provides a new connection for members.
- Encourages interaction and communication among members.
- Encourages people to collaborate in a common venue of shared learning.
- Provides new knowledge for members to apply in other contexts.¹

(Cambridge & Suter, 2005)
How is a CoP established?

- Identify the potential domain and how members can work together to grow the practice.

- Leadership and a champion give credibility and attract participation.

- An infrastructure and support are needed to help the community grow (e.g. sponsors, time to participate, communication channels).

(Wenger & Snyder, 2000)

The Northeast Massachusetts Community of Practice

(MACoPTAYYA)
How it all got started:

The Transitions RTC mission and the Department of Mental Health “champion”:

- Inviting members
- Breaking down the silos
- Bridging the age divide

Breaking Down The Silos For Transition Age Youth

- Department Mental Health Transition Case Managers
- Medicaid Carve-Out Insurance Regional Managers
- Parents and Youth
- Foster Care and Child Welfare
- Vocational rehabilitation
- Child and Youth Service Provider Agencies
- Special Education
- Juvenile Justice
Bridging The Age Divide For Transition Age Youth

- Adult vocational rehabilitation
- Adult mental health service Providers
- Children and Youth service Providers
- Special Education
- Foster Care and Aging Out services
- Vocational Rehabilitation

The MACoPTAYYA Structure

- In-person Meetings, refreshments
- Selection of Leader
- Involvement of Young Adult
- On-line Meetings
- Electronic Meeting Space – E-mails
- Note keeping, reminders, agenda
- Formation of Sub-Committees
- Free discussion and consensus with leadership
- Donation of personal time
MACoPTAYYA Process

- Goal Selection: Tip Sheets
- Brainstorming: Topics and Content
- Sub-Committees
- Iterative Tip Sheet Development: Content and Design

MACOPTAYYA Process
Young Adult Feedback

- Young Adult Councils in Massachusetts
  - Positive and constructive feedback
  - Young adult friendly language
  - By and for Young Adults
MACoPTAYYA PROCESS

- Tip Sheet Celebration
- Tip Sheet Dissemination
- Evaluation
- Attrition, Leadership, New Members
- New Goal formulation/leadership

TTYL: Keeping in Contact

Keeping in contact with your professional colleagues is very important. Stay updated on appointments, recent news, regulations, etc. There is a simple way to keep in contact: the TTYL — Keeping in Contact with your Professional Colleagues.

Cell Phones
- Call professional when you are ready, if you know where you and your colleagues are outside of your mobile phones.
- Use for addresses book to keep track of all your mobile phones and access contact numbers as you need them.
- Make sure all mobile phones are fully charged and in working order.
- Use phone if you are on a call or if the phone is off or not working.

Make sure to set up your contact list on mobile phones and any other contact list on your personal device.
- Keep your cell phone charged and available for use.
- If your cell phone is lost or stolen, report it immediately.
- Ask your professional if they are interested in joining TTYL.

Keeping in Contact by Internet

Access computers:
- If you do not have a computer and need to use one to check on calls, etc., you can go to your local library or your school's computer lab.
- If you are a computer novice but don't have internet access, local libraries offer free internet access.

Social media and social media:
- Call your professional if you are interested in using social media.
- You can sign up on social media websites like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.
- Make sure to check what your colleagues are saying on social media.
- Some professionals may also use social media to contact others through Facebook or Twitter, but make sure you call if they don't return your call.

TTYL: Keeping in Contact with a Young Adult (YA)

Helpful tips for internet communications:
- Keep your passwords secret, never share passwords, and never give passwords to anyone.
- Make sure to check your email or social networking accounts at least three times a day to ensure that you are up to date.
- Make sure to check your email or social media accounts at least three times a day to ensure that you are up to date.
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My “Must Have” Papers

Education Documents (must have important for school, college, professional, personal, etc.):
- Copy of transcript at your school/college
- Degree certificate
- Transcripts
- Copy of any additional courses

Social Security Card
- Date of Birth
- Information for all family members

Essential Documents to Have

- Birth Certificate
- Social Security Card
- Driver’s License
- Passport

These documents can help you get the job you want. You only need 1 of these to get a job and fill out the necessary paperwork.

What to Keep in Your Binder

- Education documents
- Social Security Card
- Driver’s License

What to have in your binder

- Education documents
- Social Security Card
- Driver’s License

Applying for a Job

Things to Keep in Mind When Looking for a Job

- Don’t apply for jobs that are below your skills, experience, education, etc.
- Schedule what days and number of hours can you work? Try to be as specific as possible.
- Qualifications, how much experience you will get in the job will vary depending on the employer.
- What your good at, your skills and abilities.

How Do I Find a Job? (Tips)

Online - Search engines
- LinkedIn
- Monster
- CareerBuilder
- Indeed
- Craigslist
- Glassdoor
- Jobstreet
- How to use LinkedIn
- How to use Monster
- How to use Indeed
- How to use Glassdoor
- How to use Jobstreet
- How to use Craigslist
- How to use CareerBuilder

Filling Out Job Applications

There are ways to tailor to job and separate resumes when applying in different ways. If you have any questions, we would be happy to help you get the job you want. The key thing is to tailor your resume to the job you are applying for.

Example of a Job Application

Please fill out this sheet and bring it to your career counselor.

PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name: [First], [Last]
Address:
Phone: [Home], [Cell]
Email: [example@email.com]

SOCIAL SECURITY NUMBER: [example]

GENDER: Male / Female
DATE OF BIRTH: [example]

EDUCATION

[College Name], [Degree], [City, State], [Year]

WORK EXPERIENCE

[Company Name], [Position], [City, State], [Year]

SKILLS

[Skill 1], [Skill 2], [Skill 3]

REASONS FOR APPLYING

[Reason 1], [Reason 2], [Reason 3]

AGREEMENT:

I certify that all information provided is true and correct.

[Signature]

Date:

[Print Name], [Date]

[Print Name], [Date]

[Print Name], [Date]

[Print Name], [Date]

[Print Name], [Date]

[Print Name], [Date]

[Print Name], [Date]
How to keep a Job

Telling Your Money What to Do
Key Factors of MACoPTAYYA Success

- Champion engaging stakeholders from differing systems
- Leader who was supported by their employer
- Young adult with lived experience participation in the CoP
- Young adult feedback of the tips sheets
- Support of the Transition RTC
The Young Adult Perspective

Experiences With Technology

• Learning Computer Software
  • Go To Meeting & Wikispace

• Providing ongoing support to CoP members
  • Invites/Agenda/Minutes
  • Training members on computer software
Personal Experience

• Infusing Youth Voice
• Working with passionate change makers
• Exposure to new organizations and resources
• Learning “ins and outs” of mental health community

Importance of Youth Involvement

• Bringing unique expertise to the table
  • (technology/language)
• Forming YA/Adult partnerships
• Youth empowerment
• Knowing what matters

“I believe the success of our tip sheets was largely due the extensive inclusion of youth voice in this CoP”
We Provide Technical Assistance

Presentation slides will be posted on the RTC website (also find all our tip sheets here):
http://labs.umassmed.edu/transitionsRTC/

Any Questions?
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References


1 Creating a Community of Practice for supporting Transition–Age youth with serious mental health conditions, Presentation to the 2012 National Transition Conference June 1, Washington DC., Joann Starks, M.Ed., SEDL, Marsha Ellison, Ph.D. & Amanda Costa, Transitions RTC.