AN INNOVATIVE APPROACH TO COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE: UTILISING NEW TECHNOLOGIES

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LIFE WITHOUT BARRIERS
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An overview of:
• Barriers to staying abreast of current research
• The concept of Communities of Practice
• An example of a current initiative in LWB
• Enablers for the initiative
Barriers to keeping abreast of the research:

- Time constraints
- Volume of literature
- Access to library services
- Skill/knowledge in systematic searches
- Readability and relevance
- Motivation/organisational culture

(See for example, Barratt, 2003; Pyra, 2003; Randall, 2002; Stevens et al., 2005; Mayfield, 2011)
Barrier Example

A systematic map of OOHC literature 1995-2008

Not exhaustive – only 5 databases and only reviewed abstracts

- Volume and complexity in locating relevant references (over 9,500 references = over 4,000 relevant publications and 2,615 research literature)
- Time consuming task – approx 50 hours to search; screening and coding (approx. 1 hour to screen 20 abstracts)
  Total approx. 500 hrs
- 62% of research found in PsychInfo
- 38% of research across other 4; 5% unique to Medline
- Analysis phase 8-12 weeks

Key conclusion is that we need dedicated resources to locate and disseminate.
A model of situated learning

(Wenger circa 2007)

Interact regularly. Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact with others doing the same thing. Communities of practice are formed in a shared domain of human endeavor.
LWB CONTEXT

• Large not for profit organisation service; commenced 20 years ago
• Services in over 250 communities including rural and remote areas
• Every state and territory with the exception of ACT

• OOHC is one of our core programs, mainly intensive foster care, foster care and some residential services

• Support over 2,200 children in placements.
The aim of the forum is to give workers in the out of home care program stream an opportunity to:

- Reflect on key messages from research and discuss implications for our practice and programs
- Present practice initiatives
- Share practice resources
- Identify and discuss common practice issues and jointly problem solving solutions
The Communities of Practice involves:
• A regular time slot – first Wednesday of the month; every second month
• A 2-hour session (time constraints on frontline staff and technology creates limits)
• Powerpoints are disseminated before and after
• First session was recorded as a podcast
• Agendas are usually a research presentation for first hour and then a case presentation for second hour

Utilise 14 videoconferencing sites, multiple video telephones and regular phones
Enablers:
• Organisational context & culture
• Pillars of practice framework
• Available technology
• Staff enthusiasm
## Life Without Barriers: Pillars of Practice Framework

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Desired Outcome</th>
<th>Clients live life to the full – and choose what’s right for them</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Our Pillars</td>
<td>Listen to our clients and demonstrate that they are being heard</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Respect culture and remove the barriers to participation</td>
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<td>Plan with the individual and create a plan that expresses their goals and aspirations</td>
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<td>Supervise our staff well have a better understanding of performance, capacity and outcomes achieved</td>
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<td>Work as a team to multiply our energy and achieve more with our clients</td>
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<td>Choose the model that works and get better results</td>
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<th>Our Values - and what we stand for</th>
<th>We build relationships</th>
<th>We are imaginative</th>
<th>We are respectful</th>
<th>We are responsive</th>
<th>We are courageous</th>
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## Purpose

To partner with people and change lives for the better
LESSONS/ FUTURE SCOPE

• Scope to increase awareness & levels of participation
• Awaiting new videoconferencing sites in Victoria and Tasmania
• Also commenced a Disability Communities of Practice in March 2015; same format &frequency
• Potential to strengthen partnerships with researchers/universities
• To be inclusive of other NGOs
• Evaluation
Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.

Margaret Mead
Contact details for questions/ more information / or to volunteer to present at one of our Communities for Practice

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References


