



Overview of MI Communities of Learning

Purpose and Content

MI Communities of Learning (sometimes referred to as skills groups) are small groups held after an initial 2-day training in Motivational Interviewing (MI). The purpose of Communities of Learning (CoL) groups is to support the development of individual learners and the team as a whole in the real world practice of MI. The content of CoL groups can vary according to the need of learners and the group. Below are a few examples of how these groups can be used:

- Practicing MI skills using real plays and role plays.
- Learning new MI skills or strategies as a group.
- Consulting with other members to overcome barriers and challenges in using MI.
- Sharing success stories and new ideas related to MI with the group.
- Planning next steps in learning and personal growth.

CoL groups help the learning process in ways other than just practicing and reviewing MI concepts. Participants who attend groups are able to keep MI in the forefront of their mind, and hearing success stories from colleagues provides motivation for further practice. These groups can also function to hold learners accountable in their use and practice of MI skills. Finally, groups are a great way for learners to get colleagues' perspective on how to apply these skills to the challenging real life scenarios of their particular position.

Facilitation of Groups

CoL groups may initially be facilitated by the MI trainer, but eventually these groups should be adopted by the agency without outside help. Team members may take turns planning and facilitating these meetings, or an MI Champion may take leadership in the management of the CoL groups. Alternately, time dedicated to CoL may be incorporated into existing meetings or trainings held by supervisors or managers.

Frequency of Groups

Initially, it may be a good idea to have CoL groups meet more often as learners may benefit from the extra support. After the first few months groups may be able to meet as little as once a month. It is important that the meetings are convenient and voluntary. Many times food and other "perks" are offered to help attract learner attendance. Learners should see the groups as helpful to their practice and as part of their self-care and professional development.

Incorporating CoL Groups Into Your Team

A sample agenda is included on the next page, but some CoL groups function without a formal agenda at all. The important part of the CoL structure is that it fits with your agency and team. A CoL should work naturally within the existing team culture and climate; creativity and flexibility in the group structure can be very helpful in making these groups successful.





Skills Groups Agenda

Facilitator:

Coordinator:

Note Taker:

Materials:

Today's Topic:

1. Mindfulness Activity

Description:

2. Success Stories

Description:

3. Activity

Description:

4. Debrief/Discussion From Activity

Description:

5. Plan For Next Steps

Homework:

Facilitator for next group:

Coordinator for next group:

Note taker for next group:

Date of next group:



