



Community Wisdom

The newsletter about building and sustaining Communities of Practice

February 2011
Winter Edition

CoP Facilitator's Course: Ready to Roll in March!

We are very excited to announce that the CoP Facilitator's Course will be ready to launch in March! This course is a pilot program that grew out of a desire for our membership to deepen their knowledge and skills in CoP facilitation. When COFFE first formed we would not have thought we could create an offering this rich, covering both theory and practice, offering mentorship and discussion, and spanning a large geographical area through the use of the internet and other technologies. The course is practicum based and requires participants to be facilitating a CoP. Read more about it inside this newsletter. Application deadline is March 16, 2011.

Page 2

Webinars are back!

CoP Facilitator's
Course: Details

**

Where do I apply to
take the course?

See contact
information p. 4.



COFFE Advisory Group

This course is a pilot project that is the result of a collaboration between Alberta Health Services (Knowledge Management Department), Red Deer College, and SEARCH. It is a continuation of the work started by COFFE (Community Of Facilitators For Education and Exchange), a group which formed in 2008 with the goal of supporting communities of practice in Alberta.

Community Wisdom February 2011

CoP Webinars Have Returned!

As mentioned in our Holiday Special newsletter, we are doing an encore presentation of our noon hour webinars on CoP basics. This time we have condensed the best information into three webinars. These webinars will continue to be highly interactive with lots of time for discussion. All you need to participate is access to the internet and a phone.

To get on the invitation list that will provide the email with the link and the phone number, please email Michelle.A.Biegler@albertahealthservices.ca and let her know which webinars you would like to attend.

Webinars run from 12 PM to 1 PM.

Webinar Schedule

How to build CoPs (Feb 28)

How do you convince group members to allow time for conversation? How do you choose your group's specific area of practice to talk about?

Facilitating CoPs (March 7)

How do you build relationship capital? How do you keep conversations going between meetings? How does a virtual CoP work?

Moving CoPs beyond the honeymoon/ troubleshooting (March 14)

Is your group having difficulties convincing leadership of its importance? How do you know your CoP is effective?

Introducing the Community of Practice Facilitator's Course

The CoP Facilitator's Course is an **on line learning opportunity** that includes a practicum component, collaboration with fellow learners, and mentorship. On completion of the course you will be qualified to assist groups, committees, task forces and project teams to make their work more effective, satisfying and sustainable.

Facilitating a CoP requires a specialized set of skills. General facilitation skills typically focus on specific goals such as helping a group solve a problem or dispute. While these techniques are important in organizations, CoP facilitation is different in that it focuses on fostering long term community building and encouraging narrative and conversation as tools to promote emergent learning and practice improvement. It is an art as well as a science and makes learning and change a fun thing to do.

The course is designed to support facilitators as they learn the theory and practices of coaching CoPs, while providing opportunities to apply newly found skills in their own team or work group. In addition, the participants in this course will form their own Facilitation CoP where they will discuss their successes and challenges and learn from each other in a virtual classroom space and in person. They will have opportunities to share their stories with the class and practice narratives as learning and community building tools.

Course Structure

This course is approximately 14 weeks long, beginning mid March and ending at the end of June. There are several components to it:



On line modules and discussion board:

There are six on line modules with readings and assignments. The modules link to a discussion board which is only for

participants in the course. The discussion board is for discussing issues and assignments and consulting with the mentor team and fellow course participants.

Face to face workshop: On April 20 there will be a face to face workshop for the participants. This is an opportunity for participants to meet with classmates and the course organizers and mentors, consult about challenges and share successes, and hone their CoP facilitation skills.

Practicum: Throughout this course participants will be working with their own CoP, team or work group (either virtual or face to face) to practice the skills they are learning.

Narratives: As a facilitator participants will need to hone their skills in storytelling and ‘practice talk’ as a teaching tool as well as be able to guide others to not only tell their practice stories but understand the importance and power of this type of

communication. The discussion board will contain a narrative corner for the stories of the participants, facilitators and mentors of this course, collected with a 1-800 number connected to an audio file system.

Participant Responsibilities

We are able to offer this course at no cost to participants, but do expect each participant to undertake the following activities:

- Read the application thoroughly and fill out the application form including permission from the participant’s immediate supervisor;
- Be available for an half-hour phone call to review expectations, obtain informed consent for the research study, and orient the participant to the on line components.
- Participate in the discussion board and complete the assignments.
- Facilitate or co-facilitate a CoP in the participant’s home institution, either face to face or on line, and record narratives related to that CoP facilitation.



Community Wisdom February 2011

- Attend a one day face to face workshop in April.
- Participate in ongoing and end-of-pilot evaluation of the course.
- Participants can expect to spend about 2-3 hours per week on the on line modules, discussion board and evaluation activities.

The March 2011 intake for this course will be capped at 20 participants.

Participants who successfully complete this course will be awarded a CoP Facilitator's Certificate. Graduates of this course will have the opportunity to be mentors for future participants in this initiative.

Interested? Contact us for an application. **Application deadline is March 16, 2011.**

Barb Colvin

barbara.colvin@rdc.ab.ca

