

Learning Circle Communities- An Experience with Medical Postgraduates

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What problem was addressed?

Online Communities of Practice (OCoP) or Learning Circle Communities, especially amid pandemics have a significant role to play in professional development. One of the long-term goal of Indian Medical Graduate is lifelong learning, so oCoP is an opportunity to shape professional's attitudes and behavior and also to increase efficiency at work. For this, improving collaboration with colleagues by increasing the interpersonal connections is of utmost importance. Etienne Wenger defines Communities of Practice as "Group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. Membership therefore implies a commitment to the domain, and therefore a shared competence that distinguishes members from other people. They value their collective competence and learn from each other. In pursuing their interest in their domain, members engage in

joint activities and discussion, help each other, and share information^[1]

What was tried?


The Postgraduate students (N=18) of Community Medicine studying at a Medical school of India were introduced and exposed to a process of learning circle communities. The objective was to help the students to develop conversations to link where they came from, where they are and where they might go. The author oriented the students emphasizing the purpose & process and appropriate instructions were given to them. The first assignment given to them was "Tell Your Personal Professional Stories". They had to go around the group. Have each person interview one person, and be interviewed by another—so that all of them would have experience of both being interviewed and interviewing. The second step was "The Tree Of Life' This included; An Appreciative Inquiry Of their Life with question guidelines given to them.

What lessons were learnt/Reflections?

Reflections of post graduates regarding Online Communities of are summarized in Table-1

Table 1 : Reflections of post graduates students regarding Online communities of Practice

What it is?	What happened?	So what?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A process of understanding others • Method to share knowledge and experience • Process of self exploration • Process of understanding self, others and the environment • Reduces theory-practice gap 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After being exposed to learning circle, understood my college in a better way • Interaction with colleagues became easy • Rapport building with friends • Improved my listening power and tolerance • Learnt from each other 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If this becomes part of the post-graduate's curriculum it would enhance knowledge sharing culture • Influence the professional's attitudes and behavior and also increase efficiency in work • It would reduce conflicts between colleagues • Interpersonal- relationship would strengthen

Quick Response Code 	Access this article online Website : www.healthlinejournal.org	How to cite this article : Misra S. Learning Circle Communities- An Experience with Medical Postgraduates. Healthline. 2022; 13(3): 271-272 .
	DOI : 10.51957/Healthline_410_2022	

What next?

The students realized the relevance of Community of Practice and were willing to participate. It is planned to replicate the process using online platform (or in person) with larger group of students to promote a sense of community, student learning, professional development, support and building knowledge, especially on sharing and promoting evidence-based practice.

Declaration:

Funding: Nil

Conflict of Interest: Nil

References:

1. Wenger, Etienne C. and William M. Snyder: Communities of practice; the organizational frontier. Harvard Business Review, January-February 2000, 139-145.