



Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Community of Practice (CoP) Meeting

October 22, 2025

11:00 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Microsoft Teams (virtual)

Meeting Summary

Background

On October 22, 2025, the Minnesota Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Community of Practice (CoP) convened virtually to reconnect the statewide community and set a refreshed direction for the CoP. The CoP brings together people engaged in SUD treatment and prevention in any capacity - individuals with lived experience, providers, family members, recovery peers, counties/tribes, managed care organizations, researchers, and state partners - to translate knowledge into action and provide a framework for information sharing, competence development, discussion, and mentoring.

Attendance

72 participants (per Teams attendance report)

Who's in the Room

A quick poll showed the majority of participants (79%) were first-time CoP attendees.

Objectives

- Reconnect the CoP in a people-centered, hopeful way.
- Revisit the CoP's purpose, roles, and value.
- Engage peers in small-group discussions to surface needs, ideas, and a near-term focus.
- Lay groundwork toward shared vision and community agreements.

Welcome & Opening (Andrea Suker, DHS)

DHS opened by thanking participants and briefly reintroducing the SUD Community of Practice as a statewide network focused on improving outcomes and reducing disparities through practical, peer-to-peer learning. DHS emphasized why this space matters: connecting people doing the work

with people who live it to strengthen a people-centered, culturally responsive continuum, honoring lived experience as a core strength. Acknowledging current challenges in the field, DHS framed this next phase as solutions oriented. DHS noted a refreshed format and facilitation support from SDK Strategic Services.

Purpose & Orientation to the CoP (Stephanie Devitt – SDK Strategic Services)

SDK introduced its team, the firm, and its facilitation approach. They discussed taking an engagement-driven, relational path - starting with a deep review of policy context and stakeholder landscape and reaching out to CoP members to understand their priorities and interests.

SDK named current realities in the field, including how providers are carrying heavy caseloads amid burnout and turnover, serving people at their most vulnerable while operating in a tight management and compliance environment. That context shapes how SDK will design CoP sessions so the format helps relieve pressure rather than add to it.

Reflections from Prior CoP (George Lewis – Motivational Consulting)

George shared lessons from earlier CoP cycles and emphasized the value of connection and building on successes already happening across Minnesota.

Breakout Discussions (Small Groups)

Participants broke into group of ~6 people and responded to four prompts:

- What would make the CoP worth your time?
- What do you wish you understood about others' work or lived SUD experience?
- What do you wish everyone understood about your work or lived SUD experience?
- One thing you hope the CoP can accomplish together

With the help of co-facilitators, each group had 20 minutes to introduce themselves, discuss the prompt questions, and include their responses into a GroupMap tool. Along with the input surfaced, some participants formed connections, even exchanging contact information with one another.

Report-Back & Synthesis

Each small breakout group designated a speaker to report back to the larger meeting group. Speakers each took a couple of minutes to surface priorities from their discussions. Common themes emerged, including: reduce barriers and paperwork burden; strengthen collaboration and communication; share

replicable practices; shape and understand policy; and align around consistent approaches to treatment.

Breakout Discussion Synthesis

Notes from each breakout's GroupMap were aggregated by idea; the numbers indicate how many times each topic was mentioned across all breakout groups.

1. What would make the CoP worth your time?
 - Real connections & networking — 16
 - Share what's working / what's new (replicable practices, trends) — 10
 - Policy & decision-maker proximity (timely updates; access) — 7
 - Actionable takeaways every meeting — 3
 - Coordination across systems / reduce duplication — 3
 - Paperwork pain points / desire to reduce — 3
 - Geography & capacity realities (rural vs. metro; thin availability) — 2
2. What do you wish you understood about others' work or experience?
 - What works in different contexts - barriers & access — 16
 - How policies are made/interpreted and how they impact billing/privacy changes — 7
 - Communication & referrals (who/where/how) — 7
 - Transitions from incarceration to treatment (process, delays) — 5
 - Practice frameworks (harm reduction, ASAM, compliance) — 4
 - Day-to-day realities & who is served — 4
 - Peer support/mentorship for providers (managing stress) — 3
3. What do you wish everyone understood about your work/experience?
 - Persistent barriers & access gaps — 17
 - Recovery is individualized; harm reduction — 6
 - Paperwork burden takes time from clients — 4
 - Burnout & stigma are real — 4
 - Family roles & licensing/rule constraints — 4
 - SUD+mental health interdependence (co-occurring needs) — 3
 - Cultural context & Indigenous needs — 3
 - Basic needs & timeliness matter (housing/food; delays hurt) — 1
4. What is one thing you hope the CoP can accomplish together?
 - Increase access to treatment & reduce barriers — 14
 - Stronger collaboration & communication across organizations — 10
 - Make the CoP sustainable, hopeful, outcomes-focused — 6
 - Influence policy with concrete recommendations — 5
 - Shared understanding & consistent practice (training; levels of care) — 4
 - Lower paperwork/administrative load — 4

What's Ahead (Stephanie Devitt, SDK)

Stephanie outlined how the CoP is guided by a legislative mandate, and momentum will come from co-creating direction with participants. She also discussed how SDK will use participant input to create a shared vision and community agreements based on CoP participant input, stand up a Leadership Committee, and publish a simple content calendar.

How to Stay Involved (Paul Shanafelt, SDK)

Attendees were invited to complete a brief feedback survey, express interest in the Leadership Committee, and watch for the slide deck and GroupMap summary on the CoP webpage.

The SUD CoP will reconvene on Thursday, November 20, 2025 (10:00–11:30 a.m.).

To obtain the slides presented at the October SUD CoP meeting, please email SUD.CoP@sdkstrategicservices.com.