

Suggested Format: First CoP Meeting

Time Frame: 1 hour and 45 minutes (Ongoing CoP's will be 2 hours)

Print copies of this format for all members to follow.

Important Note: We've scripted this first meeting for you so that you don't have to think too much beforehand and instead let the script ensure that you experience your first meeting as peer-facilitated rather than led by one person. Of course, it will feel a bit strange and contrived to read from a script, but once you feel you understand the format of CoP, you'll ditch the script! Or, if you don't want to use the script, you can format your meeting similarly and always make sure that it stays in the Key Spirit of a Community of Practice (p. 3). It's very easy to slide back into the standard "work meeting" format where one person is in charge of everyone's learning, rather than a peer-led group (which is what makes CoPs so great), so see if you can do your best to keep that from happening!

STEP 1: Time Keeper and Note Taker (5 minutes)

A group member volunteers to read this section to identify today's Time Keeper and Note Taker:

"At each meeting we'll identify a Time Keeper and a Note Taker. The Time Keeper makes sure that each section of the meeting stays within the time frame indicated, giving a "two minutes to go" heads-up by ringing a timer, and then ringing the timer again when the time is complete for each section. The Note Taker takes notes whenever it seems valuable to do so – this is for ongoing notes for the group to refer back to regarding aha moments, decisions made, brainstorming ideas, and anything else you feel is important. For this first meeting, the Note Taker can 'wing it' and take notes where he/she senses it might be helpful, and it will become more clear what to take notes about as we continue to have meetings."

"Who would like to be Time Keeper?"

"Who would like to be the Note Taker?"

STEP 2: Getting to know the group (20 minutes)

A group member volunteers to read this to the group:

"The goal for this part of our first meeting is to bring out each individual personality, and to get to know each other's strengths, challenges and interests regarding MI. Starting with whoever volunteers to go first, we'll go clockwise around the circle, each person taking about a minute, and each sharing the following:

- A strength or strengths that you feel you bring to your job – what do you feel you do well, and therefore this is also a strength that you bring to this CoP group?
- What are you liking about MI? What are you *not* liking about MI?

"Who wants to go first?"

STEP 3: Starter Group Agreements (5 minutes)

A group member volunteers to introduce and read the Starter Group Agreements:

"These are Starter Group Agreements that we can use for this first meeting, and then at the end of this meeting we'll have some time to change or add anything we want to tailor for our group. These Agreements are meant to help us create a supportive environment for taking risks while practicing what we've learned, and put some guidelines in place that will protect each participant from accidental criticism or ridicule. Even good-natured ribbing can result in participants not wanting to attend future CoP's. It's important to acknowledge the vulnerability we feel when practicing new skills in a group. And when we conduct exercises using real issues, we may learn new things about each other, so in order to make the CoP a safe learning environment, it's necessary to treat that information with respect. Follow along as I read the Starter Agreements, and notice any changes you want or thoughts you have, because we'll have time at the end of the meeting to discuss any edits we might want to make as a group..."

Examples of CoP Agreements:

- Anything personal shared during role plays or real plays will be kept confidential.
- Spend time in such a way that everyone has a chance to speak who wants to.
- A participant may "pass" if not inclined to speak.
- To inquire together about a topic, each member refrains from giving advice and instead asks curious questions, gives neutral observations and/or offers insight that he/she has had in their own experience without assuming that this is what the other person needs to do.
- Questions will be phrased respectfully and from a place of curiosity rather than critically.
- If we listen to each other's recorded sessions, the interviewer will be given the first opportunity to speak during the debrief so he/she can share thoughts about the session and any insight about what he/she was proud of and/or might like to do differently in hindsight, etc.
- Each recording debrief will start with affirmations about what seemed to work well.
- We will support each Topic Facilitator by actively participating and looking for ways to appreciate that person's style.
- We will not criticize, tease or ridicule each other and will not inundate any participant with feedback or suggestions. No more than a few people will provide feedback so nobody feels "ganged up on."
- Allow dissenting or "unpopular" opinions if they arise – these can often make the conversation even richer and lead to aha moments when welcomed into the mix of overall conversation.

STEP 4: How is MI going for everyone? (10 minutes)

A group member volunteers to read this to the group:

"For the next 10 minutes, let's have a large group discussion about the following questions. Please, each of you, jump in as you have thoughts about:

- What you've learned in this and any other MI training in the past – what's going well, what's challenging."
- What are the top MI skills or topics that you'd like to explore and learn about during this group? (Note Taker, please write these out on the easel pad – we'll return to this list at the end of the meeting).

STEP 5: Topic and practice exercise of the day (25 minutes total)

A group member volunteers to read this to the group (takes 5 minutes):

"At each CoP meeting, one of us will facilitate the topic and practice exercise(s) for that meeting. This role is called the 'Topic Facilitator', and we'll rotate facilitators, each of us taking a turn. Normally we'll have 45 minutes for the topic and practice exercises, but since today is equally about getting our group set up and started, we'll spend only 20 minutes on an exercise, and the exercise is *about* getting started. Our topic and exercise for our first meeting today is 'Practicing Inquiring Together'. Here are the instructions for the exercise:"

- **10 minutes for exercise:** "When I indicate to do so, break into pairs by turning to someone next to you, and our trainers will hand you the instructions for this practice exercise. This exercise is about the skill of "inquiring together". The intention behind this exercise is to get our group in a mode of collaborative conversation, which is the kind of conversation that will most breathe life into our CoP experience. You will have 10 minutes together total and our Time Keeper will ring the timer at eight minutes to let us know there are two minutes left. When the ten-minute timer rings, we'll all come back to the large group circle. On that note, break into pairs by turning to someone next to you, and begin the practice exercise once the trainers have handed you instructions."
- **10 minutes for group debriefing:** "To debrief, let's popcorn around the group for the next ten minutes and hear any of the following:
 - What was it like to follow this format of inquiring? What thoughts do you have about using this collaborative style in our CoP's as we learn about MI together?



STEP 6: Planning next steps (25 minutes)

****Note:** End this section after 25 minutes, and if there isn't enough time for all of the above, let the group members know that you'll cover the rest at your next meeting.

The Group Coordinator reads the following discussion topics to the group and identifies answers:
 "We'll now make some decisions about our group that will guide us moving forward..."

- **Next Meeting Topic and Topic Facilitator:** "Looking at the list of Top MI Topics that we identified earlier, let's do a vote to decide on the topic for our next meeting. (Take a vote and identify the topic for the next meeting)."

"Now that the topic is identified, who will volunteer to identify practice exercises in our CoP Manual that we can do at our next meeting, and also be in charge of facilitating those exercises when we get together next? We will each take turns playing the role of Topic Facilitator at our meetings, and here's a description of that role:

- You don't have to be an expert on the topic, you just have to be curious to learn more about the topic along with the group, and identify which exercises we can do together to practice and learn about it during group. (Practice & exercise ideas are in our CoP Manual).
- At the meeting when you're the Topic Facilitator, you'll be in charge of running the practice exercises and also asking questions to facilitate follow-up discussion once we've done the exercises.

Who would like to be the Topic Facilitator for our next meeting?" (Once the Topic Facilitator for the next meeting is identified, point them to p. 16 in the CoP Manual to see how the Topic of the Day fits into the overall Ongoing Meetings format, plus also review p. 5 for a description of the Topic Facilitator role and p. 23 for suggestions on how to run the Topic-of-the-Day segment. Each participant will receive a Pdf copy of the full manual).

- **Ongoing meeting day and time:** "If this hasn't already been identified, then let's identify that now. Recommended frequency and length is once a month for two hours." Or if this process will be complicated to figure out, the Coordinator can decide to make these decisions at a later date in order to have time for the following discussion topics.
- **Fun or creative element:** "Is there any creative element that we want to incorporate in our group? We may have answers to this now, or if there are no obvious ideas now, we can see if any come up naturally as our group evolves and takes on its own personality. To spark ideas as to what might fit for our group, here are some things other groups have done:
 - Bring a certain kind of fun food, like gourmet chocolate each time
 - We play a 5 minute comedy clip at the beginning of each group, just for fun
 - To keep brains creative and curious each meeting has a play element like little pots of play-doh for each person, temporary tattoos, doodle pads with crayons, etc.
 - Anything we come up with that feels fun and creative for our group."
- **Group agreements:** "Are there any changes we want to make?"

STEP 7: Individual Input and Ideas Questionnaire (5 minutes)

Group Coordinator hands out the Input and Ideas Questionnaire and explains:

"At the end of every CoP meeting, you'll each answer a questionnaire like this. I'll keep track of the answers and every few meetings we'll check in to make decisions about any ideas for change that have come up. We'll take the next five minutes to fill these out." (Each member fills out questionnaire and hands to the Group Coordinator).

(The template for the Input and Ideas Questionnaire is in the CoP Manual, p. 21)

STEP 8: Check-in (10 minutes)

A group member volunteers to read this to the group:

"To close, let's go around the group for the next ten minutes, and those who want to contribute a thought on the following question, I invite you to do so:

- What is something of value that you're taking away from this first CoP experience today and/or what do you see possible to gain from a monthly CoP-formatted gathering like this?"