CREATING A "COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE" ON TRANSITION AGE YOUTH & YOUNG ADULTS WITH SERIOUS MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS IN NORTHEAST MASSACHUSETTS

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What is a Community of Practice?

A Community of Practice (CoP) is described as "a group of people who share a concern, a set of problems, a passion about a topic, and who deepen their knowledge and expertise in this area by interacting on an ongoing basis." CoPs may evolve organically or may be supported and/or brought together by an organization.

Benefits of a Community of Practice

- Provides a new connection for members.
- Encourages interaction and communication among members.
- Encourages people to collaborate in a common venue of shared learning.
- Provides new knowledge for members to apply in other contexts

Transitions Research & Training Center & Department of Mental Health Support

The Northeast Massachusetts Community of Practice for Transition Age Youth and Young Adults (MACOPTAYYA) was initiated through the involvement of a champion, a regional director of the state Department of Mental Health (DMH). With support from the Transitions Research and Training Center (RTC), the CoP built a partnership of committed stakeholders from various points of the system of service for TAYYA, thus building bridges across the adult and children mental health agencies.

Bridging the Age Divide for Transition Age Youth & Young Adults (TAYYA): CoP Members Represented

- Providers & transition case managers from child mental health services
- Mental health managed care organization, (Medicaid)
- Adult vocational rehabilitation services
- Young adults with serious mental health conditions
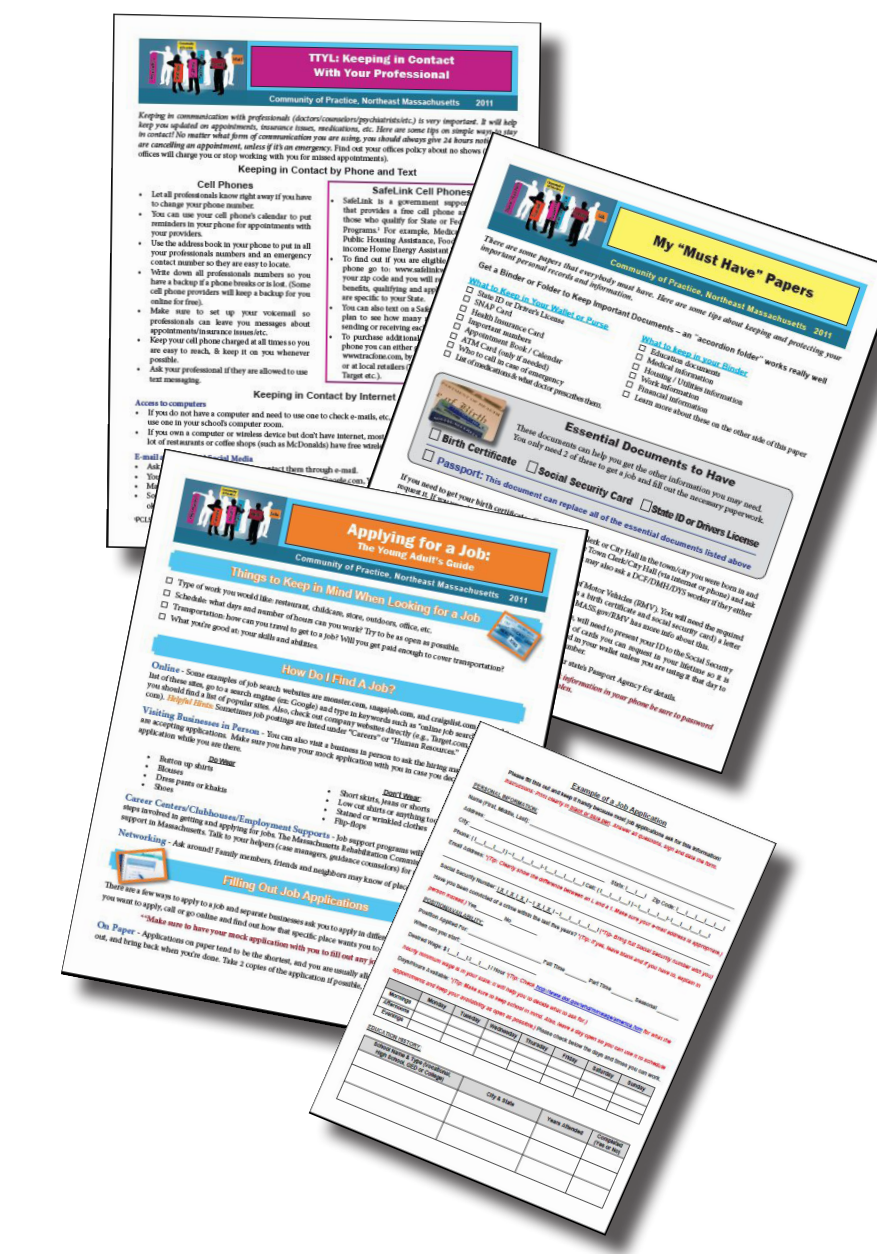- Families
- Advocates

Contact Us

E-mail Lisa.Smith2@Umassmed.edu
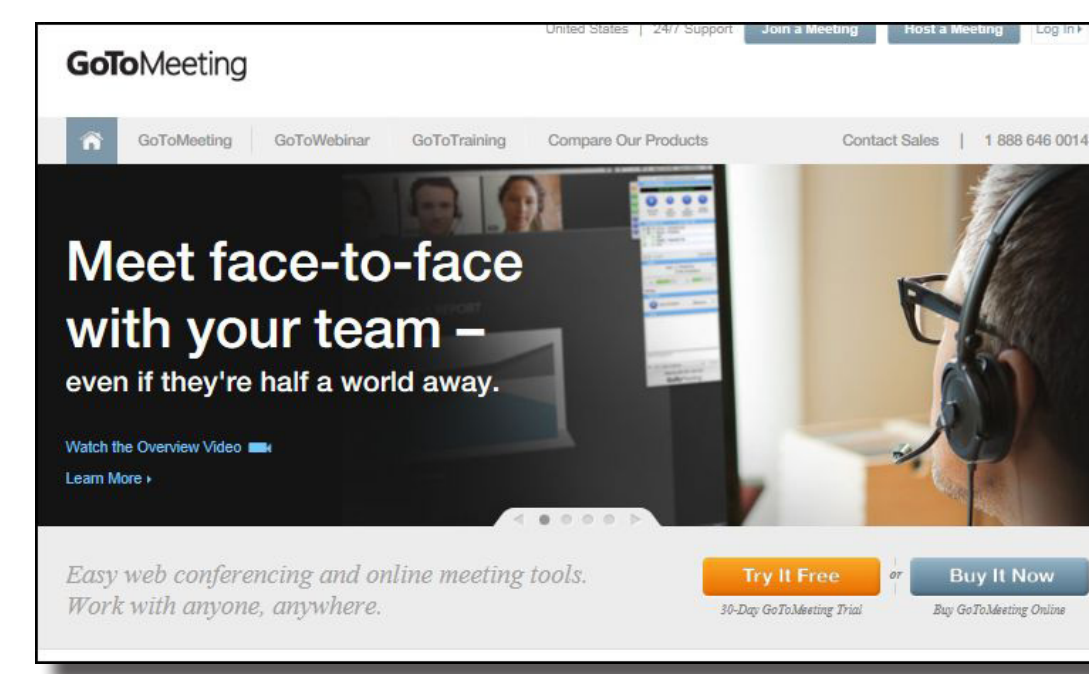http://labs.umassmed.edu/transitionsRTC

Results

Development of 3 Tip Sheets

- TTYL: Keeping in Contact with Your Professional
- Applying for a Job: The Young Adults Guide
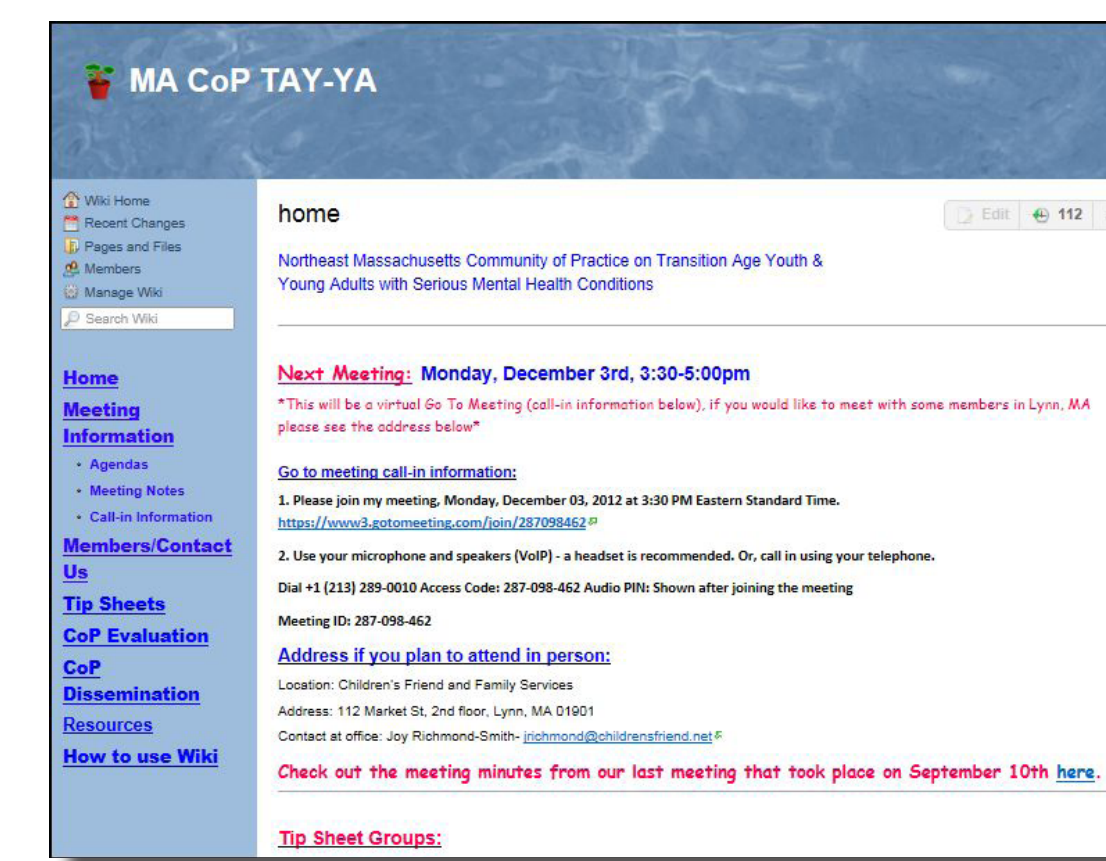- My Must Have Papers

Staying Connected with Technology

A total of 21 in-person meetings were held in Lynn, Ma. Other non local members participated using GoToMeeting software for virtual meetings.

MACOPTAYYA Wikispace Website

A virtual discussion board with documents crafted for the CoP

Tip Sheet Dissemination Vehicles

- MACOPTAYYA members
- Constant Contact and Vertical Response email marketing software
- State and national conferences, events and presentations
- Transition RTC, Voices4Hope, UMMS CMHSR & Psychiatry Department websites
- Facebook & Twitter
- A multitude of local and national dissemination partners and collaborators

Products Disseminated 11/2011– 02/2013

Tip Sheet Title	Website Statistics	National & State Conferences & Events
APPLYING FOR A JOB: THE YOUNG ADULTS GUIDE	3,151	982
TTYL: KEEPING IN CONTACT WITH YOUR PROFESSIONAL	1,188	966
MY MUST HAVE PAPERS	989	884

Steps in Developing a CoP

- Leadership and a champion give credibility and attract participation
- Clarify the vision, purpose, goals and develop background documents.
- Establish the infrastructure and support for communication, such as e-mail, discussion groups, other tools for building the resources of the community.
- Identify a launch event and invite potential members. At the launch, try to identify and agree on initial goals.

Stages of Development of a CoP (Wenger, 1998)
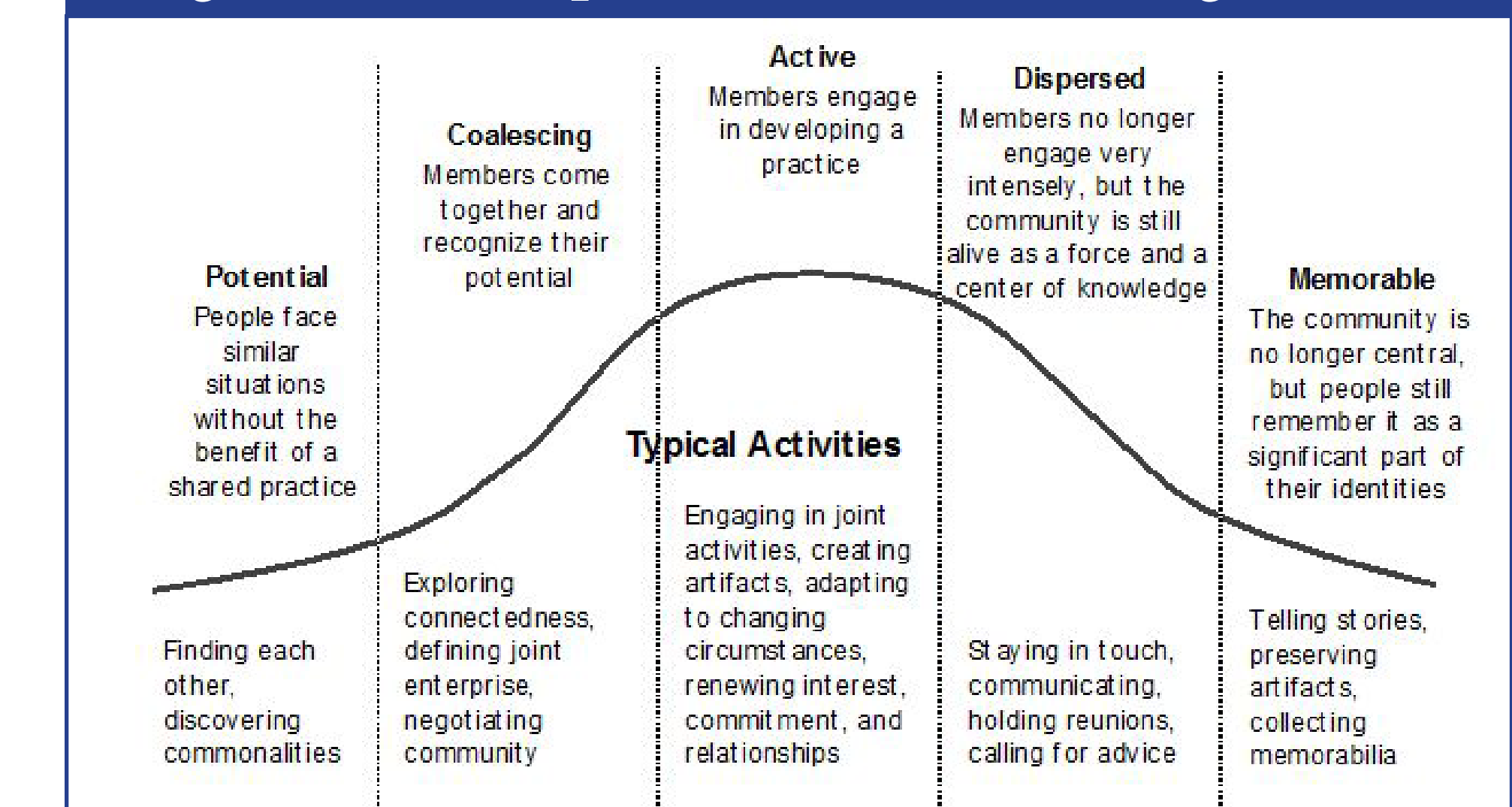
The MACOPTAYYA Process

- Transitions RTC as a supporter of CoP development
  - Recruited a Champion: Susan Wing, LICSW, Area Director MA DMH: helped identify potential members
  - Organized and conducted a CoP launch meeting with potential members
  - Scheduled introductory meeting, generated agendas, note taking, and reminders
  - Dissemination activities
  - Evaluation conducted by RTC's CoP consultant
  - Assisted in identifying communication technologies and training members
- Members donate personal time and invited other potential members
- Generated the mission, purpose, and goals
- World Café process to generate content
- Sub committees developed to continue to refine tip sheets
- Young Adult had tip sheets reviewed by DMH Young Adult Councils
- Dissemination of tip sheets by members
- Attrition and new members
- New goal formulation

CoP Young Adult Involvement & Youth Voice- Amanda Costa

- Assisted in set up and training of members on GoToMeeting online communication and Wikispace website technology
- Administrative tasks to maintain CoP progress
- Organized and obtained feedback on tip sheets from multiple DMH Youth Councils helping to incorporate youth voice, language & relevant information
- Provided valuable lived experience & youth voice to the CoP tip sheet development and overall CoP team environment

References:

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Wenger, E. (1998). Communities of practice: Learning, meaning, and identity. New York: Cambridge University Press

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