Communities of Practice:

How Consistent Opportunities for Engagement have Allowed Organizations to Capitalize on Knowledge

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Presentation Overview

✓ Context

✓ Community of Practice Tool

✓ Trends & Topics

✓ Knowledge Sharing

✓ Quick Activity

✓ Questions?

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Our Communities of Practice

Housing First for Youth (HF4Y)

- Support with program development & implementation

- Informing the HF4Y Program Guide

➜ Taking a HF4Y approach

➜ Youth-focused housing

Prevention: Family & Natural Supports (FNS), Youth Reconnect (YR), Upstream

- Support with program development & implementation

- Informing the FNS Framework

➜ Case management support around working with youth and families

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Our Communities of Practice

National Community of Practice

• Ongoing support with shifting work around COVID-19
  • Connecting youth service providers across Canada
  • Providing space to check in and hold space for one another
  • Sharing relevant tools and resources

➡ Connection

➡ Building awareness around sector trends and needs

➡ Knowledge sharing

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Community of Practice Tool

Characteristics of a CoP:

1. **Domain** – HF4Y, Prevention, COVID-19, Youth Homelessness
2. **Community** – Ongoing and consistent calls
3. **Practice** – Youth service providers

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Community of Practice Tool

TOOL | COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE

A Community of Practice (CoP) is a group of individuals with a common area of practice, who come together to enable a process of professional self-development through collaboration and sharing of learning-related ideas, skills and experience.

WHY MAKE A COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE?

Communities of Practice are everywhere. Nearly everyone belongs to some form of community of practice, whether it is through our work, our profession or trade, or our leisure interests, such as a book club[1]. CoP's cannot be "built" directly, but are something that must be "cultivated" over time. A successful Community of Practice depends on the purpose and objective of the community as well as the interests and resources of its members. Some benefits of developing a CoP are:

- They can be a great platform for informal learning around commonly shared interests and problems.
- They offer an opportunity to exchange ideas, resources and explore issues and tricks.
- Participants are not usually looking for formal qualifications, but to address issues in their field and to be better at what they do.

ASSEMBLING THE TOOLS AND TALENT

Most CoP's have no formal design and tend to be self-organizing. CoP's are based on relationships and trust, that is built through the meetings. According to research there are three crucial characteristics of a community of practice:

Key Design Principles:

1. Design for Evolution
2. Open a dialogue between inside and outside perspectives
3. Encourage and accept different levels of participation
4. Focus on value
5. Combine familiarity and excitement
6. Create a rhythm for the community

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Trends & Topics

What have our Communities of Practice discussed?

- Coordinated Access for youth

- Youth harm reduction

- Supporting under-18 youth

- Engaging with other systems like Child Welfare and Healthcare

- School retention

- Supporting youth and families with systems navigation

- Goal-setting with youth and families

- Landlord engagement

- Using head leases

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Knowledge Sharing

What knowledge is shared?
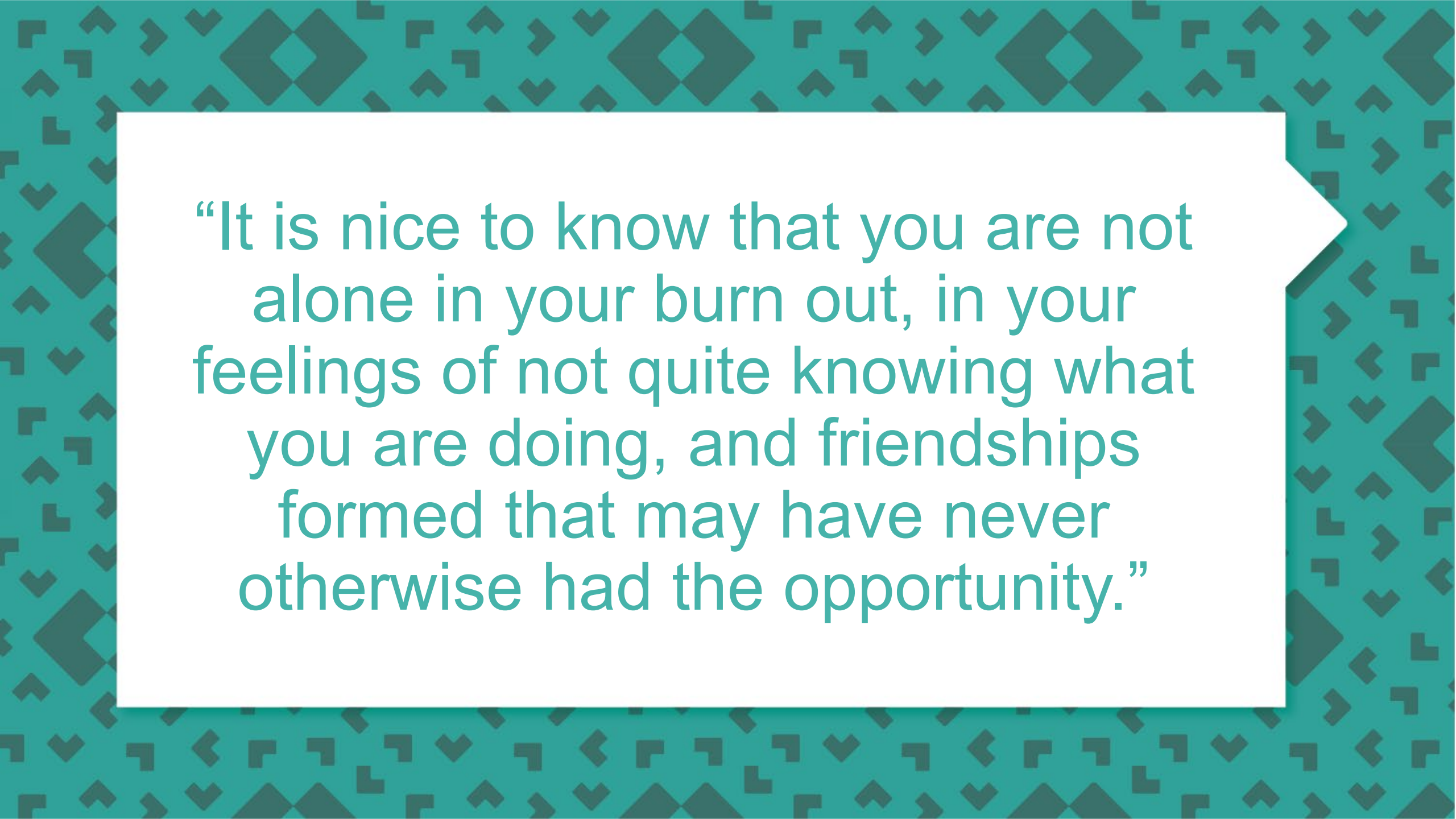
- Case consulting
- Trainings, workshops, webinars
- Policies and procedures
- Tools and resources
- Program models
- Research

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"The CoP calls have been a resource for information and support while we work on shifting sands."

"It is nice to know that you are not alone in your burn out, in your feelings of not quite knowing what you are doing, and friendships formed that may have never otherwise had the opportunity."

Quick Activity (5 Mins)

1. Partner with the person (or two people) next to you

2. The person closest to the right side of the room will **share one challenge** that has come up in their work over the last month

3. The other person (or remaining people in your group) will share **one word** that comes up for them in response to the challenge shared, and elaborate on why they chose that word

4. Share back with the room: what sector trends or topics do these challenges speak to?

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QUESTIONS?