

# Breastfeeding CoP

**Gathering on November 2, 2011**

(9:30-11:30) Chebucto Family Centre

**Present:** Keely Fraser, Erin Fair, Trena Slaunwhite-Gallant, Valerie Campbell, Julia Campbell, Cassie Kent, Robyn Berman, Sarah Hardy, Tracey Longley, Holly Gillis, Jackie Spiers, and Amy MacAulay

**November 2, 2011**

## The Power of Circle

The circle is an ancient form of meeting that has gathered human beings into respectful conversations for thousands of years. In some areas of the world this tradition remains intact, but in some societies it has been nearly forgotten.

Its common sense to bring people together in conversation. It's the way we have done it in generations past, gathering round the fires and sitting in circles. It is the way we occasionally now, building core relationships and invite real collaboration.

Having conversations that matter allow us to gain clarity on issues of importance. When we are involved and invited to work together we take ownership and responsibility when ideas and solutions must be put into action. Actions that come out of collective clarity are both **wise** and **sustainable**.

During our gathering today we practiced the ancient form of conversation through circle and explored the question

**What is going on in my life and work right now that is inviting me to be here?**



## Re-Visiting Our Purpose

Over the past year our Community of Practice has grown and evolved. New members have joined, we've learned more about one another's work, and see the value in being connected but we've not yet begun to realize our full potential.

Before diving into more action, there is value in re-visiting our purpose. Gaining further clarity on what it means to be a community of practice will be key to ensuring we continue to evolve and learn together and that we are creating something sustainable that is in fact meeting our needs.

### Inside this issue:

The Power of Circle 1

Re-Visiting Our Purpose 1

To be successful in fulfilling our purpose we want and need 2

What does it mean to be a Community of Practice? 3

**Together we can change the world**

*"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."*

- Margaret Mead

## Re-Visiting Our Purpose cont'd

Until now our Community of Practice meetings have followed a loose agenda, with just enough structure to get us to where we need to go. This allows each of us to offer what we can, and ask for what we need.

Gaining collective clarity on our purpose is not something that is done just once. As action is taken, the group evolves and more is discovered as a result, its important that we come back to check in with our purpose.

Are we still on the right path or is there a new purpose emerging?



Our purpose is a navigation tool like a compass that helps us discover where to direct our energy and efforts.

A statement of purpose defines, with absolute clarity and deep conviction the purpose of our community of practice.

An effective statement of purpose will be clear, commonly understood statement of that which identifies and binds the community together as a worthy pursuit.

**“Gaining collective clarity on our purpose is not something that is done just once.”**

As a group we re-visited our purpose and discussing the question, **what is our purpose in coming together as a community of practice?**

Ideas that emerged through our discussion were...

- To create and build relationship.
- To come together, communicate, share and stay connected with one another and with what’s happening in our community.

- To advocate together.
- To stay up to date in our knowledge and share resources.
- To create a sense of shared accountability.
- To create a group where membership is fluid and our direction reflects what is needed and emerging.



## To be successful in fulfilling our purpose we want and need

We spent time reflecting on what that want and need to be able to fulfill our purpose

Ideas that emerged through our discussion were...

- Regular in person meetings
- A contact list of all CoP members
- A website for the CoP
- Shared roles, responsibilities, leadership and hosting
- A way to document our journey and what we have accomplished (activities/photos/minutes)
- Resources (time, \$)
- Short term achievable goals
- Ongoing dialogue and communication
- To keep our group open, fluid and emergent
- Shared accountability for sustainability of the group
- For our work together to be easy, fun and energetic
- To meet in a variety of locations that are child friendly

# What does it mean to be a Community of Practice?

We revisited what it means to be a Community of Practice (CoP). There are 3 crucial elements.

**1. The domain:** A CoP is not merely a club of friends or a network of connections between people. It has an identity defined by a shared domain of interest. Membership therefore implies a commitment to the domain, and a shared competence that distinguishes members from other people.

**2. The community:** In pursuing their interest in their domain, members engage in joint activities and discussions, help each other, and share information. They build relationships that enable

them to learn from each other. Having the same job or the same title does not make for a CoP, unless members interact and learn together.

Members of a CoP do not necessarily work together on a daily basis.

**3. The practice:** A CoP is not merely a community of interested people who, for example like certain kinds of movies. Members of a community of practice are practitioners. They develop a shared repertoire of resources: experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems—in short, a shared practice. This takes time and sustained interaction.

It is the combination of these three elements that constitutes a community of practice. And it is by developing these three elements in parallel that one cultivates such a community.



## For More Information



For more information about the Breastfeeding Community of Practice, our activities or becoming a member, please contact us.

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Join the [Breastfeeding Community of Practice \(NS\)](#).

