

Communities of Practice

Dr Helen O'Reilly & Dr Andrew Bill

GP Programme Directors, Mid Wessex

What are Communities of Practice (CoPs)?

- ▶ Term coined by Lave and Wenger in 1991 (when studying apprenticeship as a learning model) but not a new concept
- ▶ A way of learning from/with other apprentices vs learning from a “Master”
- ▶ 3 defining factors:
 1. Formed by people who choose to engage in collective learning in a shared practice
 2. Engage in joint activities and discussions to build relationships, help each other and share information.
 3. Develop of a shared repertoire of resources: eg. experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems
- ▶ In short, participants learn from each other by sharing their experiences

Benefits

- ▶ Planned communities will maximise the opportunities for practitioners to:
 - ▶ share tips and best practices
 - ▶ ask questions of their colleagues and provide support for each other
 - ▶ promote collaboration, coordination and efficiency
 - ▶ create a social presence and voice for the group
 - ▶ recognise and find solutions to common problems
 - ▶ improve outcomes
- ▶ CoPs are now occurring wherever peer-to-peer connections are involved:
 - ▶ Businesses, Government, Education, International development, Social Sector, Online Practitioner forums
- ▶ Once you are aware of CoPs, you notice them everywhere...

Examples

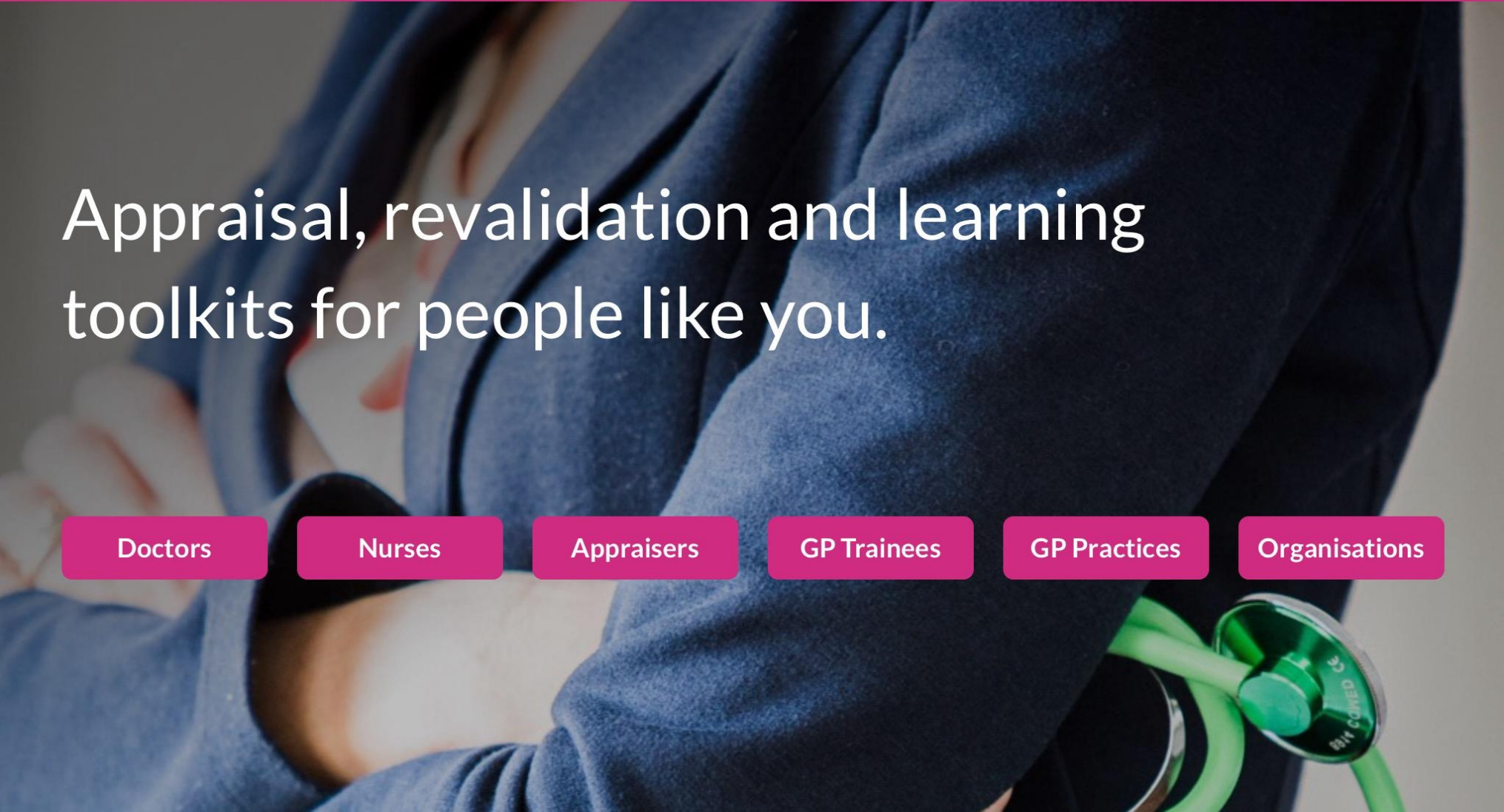
(Communities of Practice in Practice in General Practice?!)

▶ Trainees:

- ▶ ST3 Day Release Course
- ▶ ST3 Small Groups
- ▶ ST1/2 Groups
- ▶ ST1/2 Learning Sets
- ▶ Out of Sync Trainees

▶ Educators:

- ▶ GP Trainer Groups
- ▶ HEE Patch Teams
- ▶ GP Appraiser Groups



Appraisal, revalidation and learning toolkits for people like you.

Doctors

Nurses

Appraisers

GP Trainees

GP Practices

Organisations



Communities

What are communities?

Communities are online groups (public or private) that anyone can form on our website for discussing things, storing important documents etc. Think of them like a mix between an **intranet** and a **social network** like Facebook.



Intranet



Social network



Communities

Join a community, or start your own

Anyone can set up a community, or you can see what ones are already available. You could set up a private one for your practice, or create a special interest group that anyone else can join.

Just create an account or log in to get started

Cultivating successful CoPs (Wegner, McDermott & Snyder 2002)

1. Design the community to **evolve** naturally
2. Welcome different levels of **participation**
 1. The core leadership group
 2. The active group
 3. The passive peripheral group
3. Develop both public and private community **spaces**
4. Recognise and focus explicitly on the **value** of the group
5. Create opportunities for **discussion within group** and with **outside perspectives**
6. Combine familiarity and excitement - include opportunities for members to **shape** their learning experience
7. Find and nurture a regular **rhythm** - a vibrant pace but not overwhelming

How might this work (better) for you?

References

- ▶ Wenger, E., 2011. Communities of practice: A brief introduction.
 - ▶ <https://scholarsbank.uoregon.edu/xmlui/bitstream/handle/1794/11736/A%20brief%20introduction%20to%20CoP.pdf?sequence%2%80%B0=%2%80%B01>

- ▶ Wenger, E., McDermott, R.A. and Snyder, W., 2002. *Cultivating communities of practice: A guide to managing knowledge*. Harvard Business Press.
 - ▶ https://icohn.org/uploads/ckeditor/attachments/4/Wenger._Cultivating_CoP_Book.pdf

- ▶ <https://www.fourteenfish.com/>

- ▶ <https://www.mwgpe.co.uk/digitalcommunitiesofpracticeingptraining>
 - ▶ O'Reilly, H. 2016, RCGP Annual Conference Poster

- ▶ Contact:
 - ▶ helen.o'reilly1@nhs.net
 - ▶ andrew.bill@nhs.net