

Guidelines for Establishing
Sustainable Statewide Occupational Therapy
Communities of Practice (CoP)
within Victorian Mental Health & Wellbeing Services

**Together, we
go further**



**The Victorian
Collaborative Centre**
For Mental Health & Wellbeing

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Purpose of Guidelines

These Guidelines support Occupational Therapists working in Victorian Mental Health Settings to engage in meaningful, sustainable and effective Statewide Communities of Practice. They provide:

- Occupational Therapy discipline specific support in establishing, implementing, coordinating and evaluating sustainable consistent and effective OT CoPs.
- Outline the roles required for sustainable CoPs: co-convenors, members, leadership support role, and Statewide Mental Health Educator
- Process for connecting members and using Basecamp online platform
- Useful tools and links to convene meetings and evaluate CoPs
- Provide a mechanism to connect the efforts of each of the OT CoPs, to enable strategic progress “Together we go further” in alignment with the *Strategic Plan for the Public Mental Health Occupational Therapy Leadership Network*.

These Guidelines for Establishing Sustainable Occupational Therapy Communities of Practice were originally developed under the umbrella of the overarching "Guidelines for Establishing & Sustaining CMHL-Supported CoPs (2024)" which provides non prescriptive guidance CoPs supported by within Victorian public clinical mental health services.

Definition of a Community of Practice

A Community of Practice (CoP) is a group of people who, through their shared interest or passion, voluntarily and ongoingly engage and collaborate to deepen their knowledge and expertise to advance a domain of professional practice. CoPs are characterised by:

- a) a shared group identity, interest or passion (*domain*)**
- b) regular joint activities, interactions and reflections and learning together (*community*)**
- c) the development of resources, knowledge, attitudes, skills, continuing professional development and evidence-based practice (*practice*).**

CoPs are widely used in a variety of social and health settings to build professional expertise and identity across culturally and geographically dispersed practitioners. Within Occupational Therapy, "Communities of Practice are social learning groups that focus on networking, sharing information and creating new knowledge together to advance a domain of professional practice." (AOTA, 2021). Communities of Practice are used to develop knowledge, to support and extend practice, to create "virtual teams" of OTs, to bring about innovation and change. They seek to support OTs to practice at the top of their scope of practice.

(Wenger, 2009,2011; Noar 2023, Jiwa, Chan, Ross, Shaw & Magin, 2011; Hyett et al. 2023; Seibert, 2014; AOTA, 2021; Barry et.al, 2017; Wilding, Curtain & Whiteford 2012).

See Appendices for: What are the similarities and differences between a CoP and other groups or meetings?

Possible CoP Aims & Outcomes

Aims	Outcomes
To connect mental health professionals regarding a specific area of practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced networking, creating a greater sense of belonging and connection among members • A deeper understanding of peers' roles and responsibilities • Increased access to practical support • Enhanced mutual support, worker wellbeing, and a more satisfied and sustainable workforce • Strengthened professional identity
To promote collective learning, innovation and growth	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased opportunity for professional development • Greater knowledge and skills, improved attitudes • Capacity building for best practice "Together we go further"
To share information and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased access to practical resources to make your job easier • Time saving measures, avoiding 'reinventing the wheel'.
To facilitate reflective practice. To learn about roles, strengths, challenges and successes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driving innovation • Solution focussed problem solving • Mutual support
To support evidence-based practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advancement in a practice domain • Build evidence and knowledge translation • Showcase initiatives to broader audience
To improve the overall quality and experience of consumers, families and carers of Victorian Public area mental health services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centring the expertise of people using services • Enhanced transparency and partnerships with Lived Experience in the provision of services • Improved outcomes for consumers, families and carers of Victorian area mental health services, as defined by each CoP.

This page is extracted from the overarching CMHL Guidelines for Establishing & Sustaining CMHL- Supported CoPs

Goals of Occupational Therapy Communities of Practice



To build capacity in OT assessment, intervention, and evaluation in particular settings of Victorian mental health practice



To enable OTs working in similar settings to connect, share, learn and reflect together



To share resources and develop resources to advance OT within that mental health setting



To embed learning into OT practice & support knowledge translation of current evidence and workforce development priorities



To value the unique contributions of OTs to the teams where they work.



To build structures that enable projects (inc. student and research projects) in line with OT workforce development priorities



To enable reflective practice, social learning, continuing professional development, evidence-based practice

(Seibert, 2014; AOTA, 2021; Barry et al., 2017; Hyett 2023)

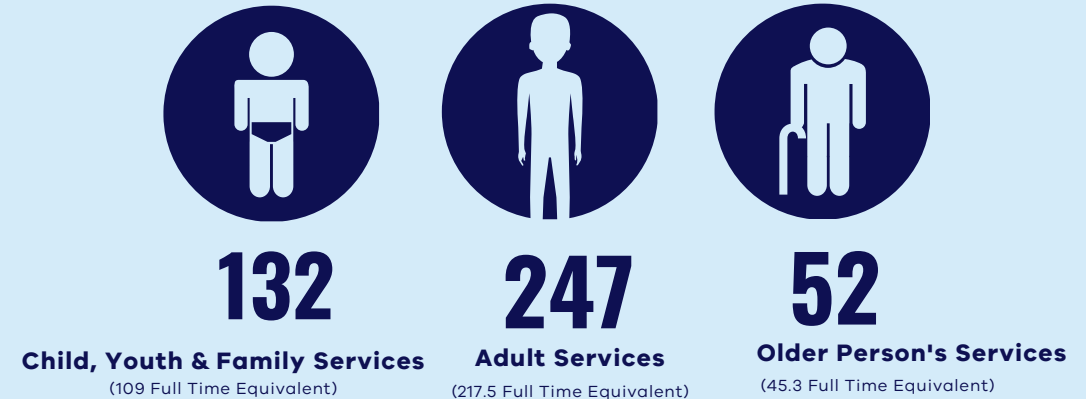


Mental Health OT Workforce & CoPs

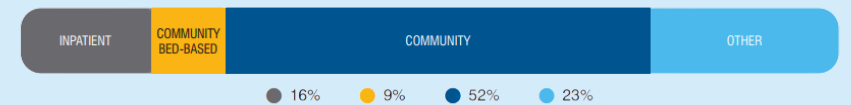
There are over 545 occupational therapists work across varied settings in 21 public clinical area mental health and wellbeing services in Victoria (OT Workforce Scoping, 2021). Communities of Practice provide an invaluable opportunity to connect OTs and advance the occupational therapy service provided.



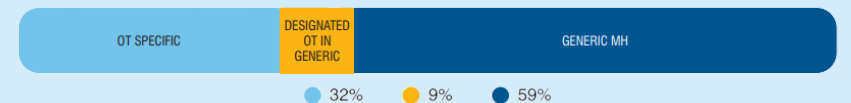
Occupational Therapists working across the Lifespan:



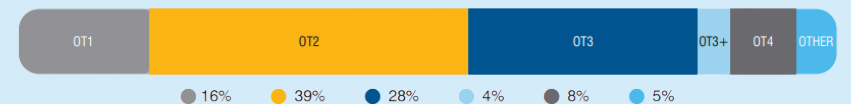
Settings:



Designated Roles:



Grades:



Current Victorian OT Settings Based CoPs

Statewide CoPs for OTs have been established across Victorian area mental health services across inpatient, community, residential, and lifespan settings.

OTs in Inpatient Settings CoP

OTs in Secure Extended Settings CoP

OTs in Community Care Units & Prevention And Recovery Centres CoP

OTs in Locals CoP

OTs working with Older Adults CoP

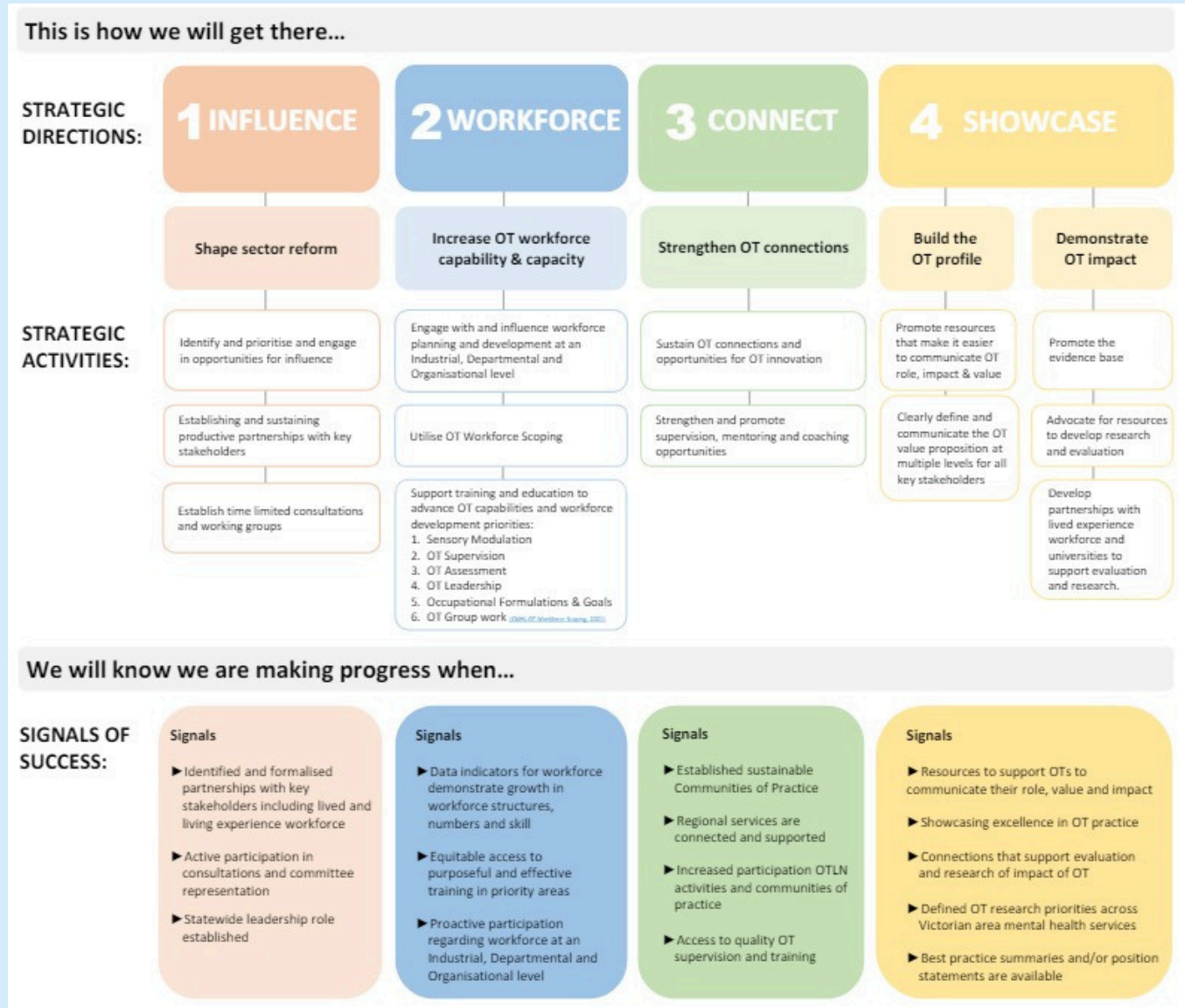
OT Program Seniors in Infant, Child, Youth Settings CoP

OT Educator CoP

OTLN Strategic Plan Connection

The Victorian Public Mental Health Occupational Therapy Leadership Network comprises highly committed occupational therapy leaders dedicated to advancing the occupational therapy workforce.

A key strategic direction of the Strategic Plan 2024-2027 is strengthening Occupational Therapy Connections, specifically establishing sustainable communities of practice, and increasing participation and innovation in communities of practice.



OTLN Strategic Plan Connection

Communities of Practice can be valuable mechanisms to support the occupational therapy workforce development priorities with access to training and resources to implement within specific settings. The current 6 OT workforce development priorities are:

Advancing Occupational Therapy Workforce Development Priorities

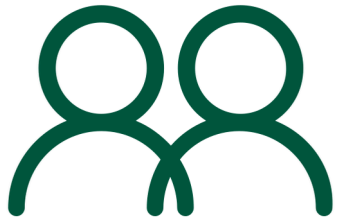


For example, in 2024 Statewide roll out of OT Advanced Group Facilitation training to CoPs commenced and is ongoing.



CoP Lead Roles

Co-Convenors



2 Convenors to share the role is better than 1! The role includes:

- ❑ Send calendar invites
- ❑ Manage membership lists and Basecamp
- ❑ Ensure minutes are taken
- ❑ Chair the meeting (or ensure a chair allocated for each meeting)
- ❑ Collect meeting surveys and coordinate CoP agenda

OTLN Support Role



The Support role is a coaching role by a member of the OT Leadership Network, they ensure:

- ❑ Meetings occur
- ❑ Co-convenors are in the role
- ❑ TOR developed reviewed annually
- ❑ Leadership/coaching to co-convenors
- ❑ Attend meetings as required
- ❑ Conduit to share information with OTLN and promote CoP
- ❑ Provide any specialist input into meetings, guest speakers, CPD
- ❑ Barriers to participation are overcome

Statewide Educator



The Statewide OT Educator provides mechanisms and statewide oversight of the CoPs, including:

- ❑ Provide templates
- ❑ Support to have membership from statewide services
- ❑ Support with Annual Evaluation
- ❑ Provide support to OTLN Support role and co-convenors as required
- ❑ Set up Basecamp
- ❑ May occasionally attend meeting for Basecamp tutorial or other workforce development education activity


Members



Members are leaders of the CoP. This is an active role in:

- ❑ Engaging in Basecamp discussions, asking and answering questions
- ❑ Sharing resources, uploading and commenting on documents
- ❑ Generating discussion topics
- ❑ Attending meetings or sending apologies/delegate
- ❑ Completing meeting survey
- ❑ Participating in CoP evaluation
- ❑ Showcasing activities
- ❑ Occasional role in presenting, taking minutes or chairing a meeting
- ❑ Maintaining accurate contact details

What is Basecamp?

 **Basecamp** is an online platform to support communities of practice to connect, share resources, meeting documents, and to communicate between meetings. Here is an example of a basecamp webpage, which includes:

- Description of CoP
- Contact names and emails of Co-convenors, OTLN Support Role and Statewide Educator
- Message Board
- Meeting Schedule
- Documents and Files:
 - Meeting records (includes membership list)
 - Terms of Reference
 - Annual Snapshots
 - Resources

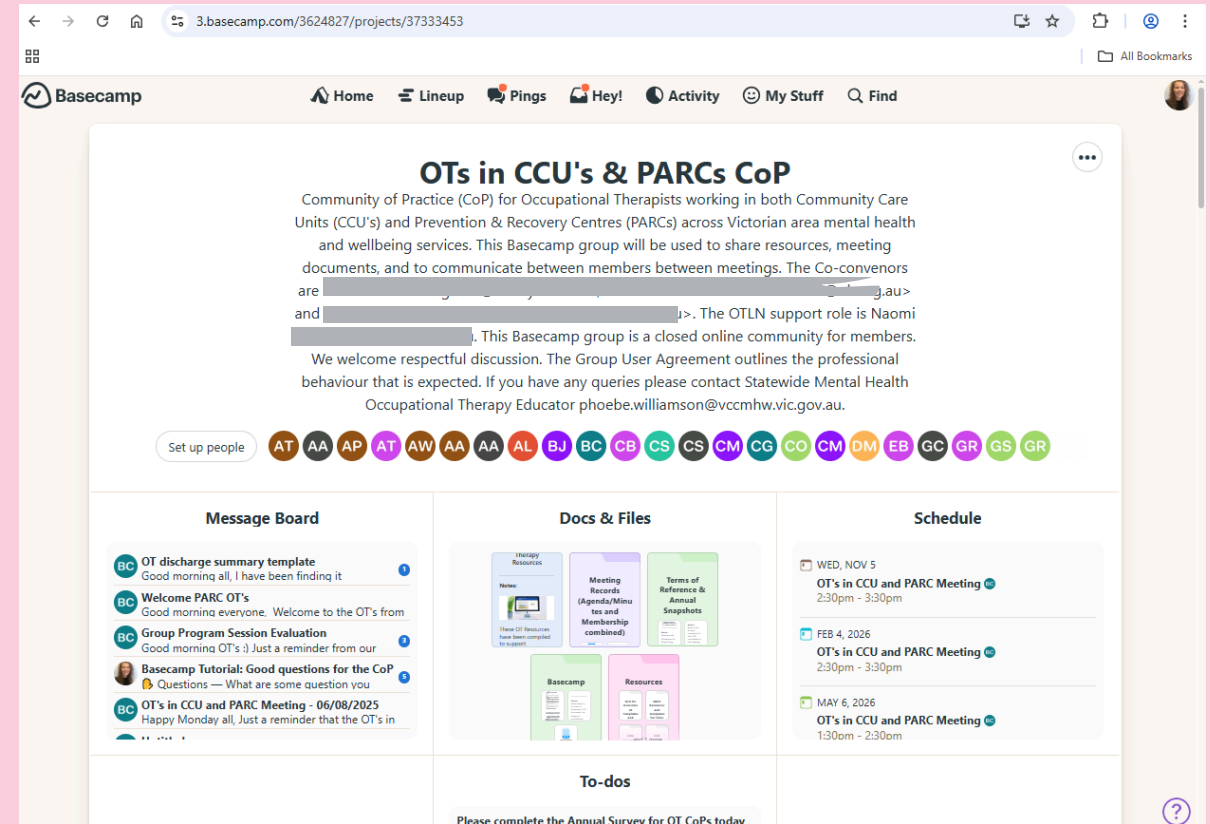


Image: An example of a Basecamp Platform for an OT CoP

How to use Basecamp?

All CoP members will be invited to join the CoP Basecamp by the Co-convenors of the CoP. Many users describe using basecamp as being very intuitive to use. Each Basecamp group will contain a folder called "Using Basecamp", containing [Basecamp User Agreement](#), [Basecamp User Tips](#), and the following tutorials to assist members to familiarise with the Basecamp platform:

Setting up your Basecamp Tutorials:

1. [How to log onto Basecamp](#) (2.54 mins)
2. [How to set up your Basecamp profile](#) (4.11 mins)
3. [How to manage notifications](#) (3.36 mins)
4. [How to change your email address](#) (1.31 mins)

Navigating Basecamp Tutorials:

5. [How to use the message board](#)
6. [How to add or update a file, resource or document](#)
7. [How to use the meeting schedule](#)

Leaving your Basecamp Tutorials:

8. [How to close your Basecamp profile](#) (1.30mins)



How to manage Basecamp?

Co-convenors will have responsibility for maintaining an up to date membership and ensuring that all CoP members are added to basecamp.

Each Basecamp group will contain a folder called "Using Basecamp", containing [Basecamp User Agreement](#), [Basecamp User Tips](#), and the video tutorials to assist members and co-convenors to familiarise with the Basecamp platform:

Tutorials for Managing Basecamp for Co-Convenors:

1. [How to add members to a Basecamp group](#)
2. [How to remove members from Basecamp group](#)
3. [How to find members email addresses](#)
4. [How to set up the annual CoP meeting schedule](#)



Lifecycle of a CoP



The initial phase of identifying:

- Need for the CoP
- Name
- Key goals
- Key roles
 - identify co-convenors
 - identify OTLN support roles
- Draft Terms of Reference

After the need for the CoP is endorsed, this forming phase is about getting the meetings off the ground:

- Meeting schedule for the year
- TOR endorsed
- Standing agenda, meeting records
- Membership
- Basecamp

Recognising increased coaching support may be needed from OTLN Support Role and Statewide Educator. CoPs may re-enter this phase at various times.

Self-sufficient CoP

- Active regular meetings
- Active basecamp use
- TOR revised annually
- Evaluated as meaningful and effective, use of meeting survey, annual survey, exit survey
- Annual snapshot mid-year
- Focus may move towards showcasing, developing structures for measuring the impact of OT in that setting

CoPs will finish and sunset by considering the following criteria:

1. Consistent limited attendance (<2 members, 3 meetings)
2. Limited member interest
3. Discussion with Statewide Educator to explore revitalisation strategies, or options to redefine or merge with another practice area
4. Tabled at OTLN meeting
5. Agreement/Consensus to disband

How do we initiate a new CoP?

The process is:

- 1 OTs identify a gap or need that could be addressed by establishing a Community of Practice (CoP)
- 2 Identify co-convenors or OTLN Support role, who **Complete CoP Proposal Submission Form**
- 3 Present to Statewide Educator & OTLN
- 4 Invite Members **EOI for OT CoP Form**
- 5 Schedule Initial Meeting
- 6 **Draft TOR** for collaboration and endorsement in first meeting

Initiate Phase

Key Roles & Responsibilities:

Lifecycle of a CoP



Co-convenors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Co-convenors are identified <input type="checkbox"/> Draft Terms of Reference (including confidentiality expectations) <input type="checkbox"/> Schedule first meeting and circulate draft TOR for endorsement in first meeting <input type="checkbox"/> Invite members <input type="checkbox"/> See Considerations to address when planning and developing a new CoP
OTLN Support Role:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure roles are identified for Co-convenors (ideally 2 people to share the role of chairing and coordinating the CoP for a ?1 year term?) <input type="checkbox"/> Support Co-convenors to establish CoP <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure TOR and other structures are established <input type="checkbox"/> Conduit to share information to/from OTLN as required <input type="checkbox"/> Attend first CoP (if possible)
Statewide Educator:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Provide Proposal submission form for a new CoP <input type="checkbox"/> Review request for new CoP and ensure it aligns with Victorian Collaborative Centre and disciplines workforce development priorities <input type="checkbox"/> Agenda for OTLN Statewide Educator update <input type="checkbox"/> Provide template for Terms of Reference (TOR), meeting agenda/record <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure OTLN Support role is identified (a key contact to act as a coach and supporter for the CoP co-convenors) <input type="checkbox"/> Support identification of Members (e.g. EOI form, advertising on website and annual OT newsletter, and promoting in committees and forums)
Members:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Complete EOI form, opting in to be active participants of the CoP <input type="checkbox"/> Raise membership with managers and OT service meeting
OTLN:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> OTLN reviews the request of new CoP and ensures the purpose/topic is in alignment with OTLN values, strategic plan. <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure key roles are identified, confirms new CoP added to the list of existing CoPs and the EOI is updated.

Establish Phase

Lifecycle of a CoP



Key Roles & Responsibilities:

Co-convenors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Create agenda, topic and meeting structure. Circulate to members before CoP via calendar invite and basecamp <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitate CoP meetings (Chair or delegate a Chair) <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure CoP minutes are taken and that a record is on Basecamp after each meeting. Minute taking approach is included within in ToR <input type="checkbox"/> Send out CoP invites recurring for a year in advance <input type="checkbox"/> Meeting survey is considered used and seek informal feedback about members experience of CoP
OTLN Support Role:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Be available to Co-convenors to seek advice and support <input type="checkbox"/> Attend CoP if available or as requested by co-leads <input type="checkbox"/> Promote through OTLN and other professional networks <input type="checkbox"/> Oversight that meetings are occurring <input type="checkbox"/> Provide any specialist input into meetings, guest speakers, CPD Explore barriers to participation if these arise
Statewide Educator:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Set up Basecamp. Provide basecamp tutorial and resources as needed (e.g. Basecamp User Tips, Basecamp User agreement, Basecamp Tutorials) <input type="checkbox"/> Attend first meeting if requested support role in connecting new members, advertising and promoting CoP (e.g. EOI form, website, newsletter) <input type="checkbox"/> Provide Evaluation Templates: Meeting Survey, Exit Survey <input type="checkbox"/> Explore barriers to participation if these arise
Members:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Provide feedback to their OT colleagues and managers <input type="checkbox"/> Participate in meetings, inform co-convenors if not able to attend <input type="checkbox"/> Agenda items of interest <input type="checkbox"/> Participate in development of ToR <input type="checkbox"/> Participate in CoP Evaluation and quality improvement e.g. meeting surveys <input type="checkbox"/> Participate in basecamp through message board, document sharing
OTLN:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> General promotion of OT CoPs, membership, participation, attendance and sharing. <input type="checkbox"/> Support identification of OTLN Support Roles

Sustain Phase

Key Roles & Responsibilities:

Lifecycle of a CoP



Co-convenors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Review agenda and circulate to members before CoP meetings <input type="checkbox"/> Facilitate the CoP meetings. <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure CoP minutes are taken and uploaded to Basecamp after each CoP <input type="checkbox"/> Send out CoP invites. <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure new membership list is up to date <input type="checkbox"/> Add new members to Basecamp and calendar invites <input type="checkbox"/> Liaise with OTLN support role. <input type="checkbox"/> Routinely review ToR (including confidentiality requirements). Facilitate completion of annual member survey
OTLN Support Role:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Be available to Co-convenors to seek advice and support <input type="checkbox"/> Promote through OTLN and other professional networks <input type="checkbox"/> Assist with Annual Snapshot collation and reporting to OTLN
Statewide Educator:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> CoP is self-sufficient, with support or attendance at meetings as required to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Support Evaluation ◦ Support basecamp use ◦ Provide information about workforce development priorities or education activities that supports their domain of practice <input type="checkbox"/> Provides Evaluation Templates and collates report: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Annual Member Survey ◦ Annual Snapshot Template and collation <input type="checkbox"/> Provide consultations to co-leads and support roles as required.
Members:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Regular CoP interactions (meetings and basecamp) with meaningful member participation. Focus may be reflective practice, education, resources etc. <input type="checkbox"/> Exit survey is completed by members and co-leads to provide valuable insights to improve these guidelines <input type="checkbox"/> Active participation in sharing resources on basecamp and developing resources <input type="checkbox"/> Claim CPD points if CPD reflective practice form is completed
OTLN:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Once per year the CoPs annual snapshots will be presented and discussed in midyear OTLN Meeting. <input type="checkbox"/> OT Leaders support members to maximise engagement in CoPs, regularly agenda and discuss in organisations OT Meetings, <input type="checkbox"/> Promoting OT CoPs, membership, participation, attendance and sharing. Table any issues or needs arising.

Evaluating the CoP

To assist with maintaining a meaningful and productive CoPs, the following resources and templates can be used:

Meeting Survey

A brief Microsoft Forms survey that can be quickly completed by CoP members after each meeting. It is suggested that Co-convenors provide the link to this survey at the end or within the CoP meeting.

Annual Survey

The annual OT CoP survey is offered to all statewide OT CoPs annually to gain a better understanding of the features that make OT CoPs meaningful, effective and sustainable. It seeks to obtain informal feedback about members' experience of participating in the CoP. The survey is based of AOTA's CoP manual (2021).

Annual Snapshot

The Statewide Mental Health Occupational Therapy Educator can supports completion of the annual snapshot by each CoP within a meeting (normally 15 mins to complete). Annual snapshots of Statewide OT CoPs are then presented at OTLN mid-year meeting. Copies are saved in Basecamp annually.

The graphic is a template for an Annual Snapshot, titled 'COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE (CoP): XXX working in XXX Settings'. It includes a logo for 'The Victorian Collaborative Centre For Mental Health & Wellbeing' and introductory text about the CoP's purpose and the snapshot's scope. The template is divided into several sections: 'Who are:' with a map of Victoria and a table for Metro and Regional counts; 'Members:' with a group icon and a table for total members, services involved, and regional/metro percentages; 'Meetings:' with a meeting icon and a table for online meetings and average attendance; 'Focus:' with a target icon and a list for key focus areas; 'Quantitative:' with a percentage icon and a field for members' ratings; 'Qualitative:' with a speech bubble icon and a field for quotes; 'Key Achievements:' with a star icon and a list for wins, projects, and changes; 'Future Goals:' with a rocket icon and a list for goals like reinvigorating membership; and 'Acknowledgements:' with a list of member organizations and contact information for the statewide OT educator.

COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE (CoP):
XXX working in XXX Settings

The Community of Practice (CoP) for Occupational Therapists working in <XXX settings> across Victorian Public Mental Health and Wellbeing Services was established in MONTH, YEAR. This Snapshot provides an overview of the CoP from May 2025, to May 2026. A basecamp group supports sharing of resources, meeting documents, meeting schedule, and message board.

The Victorian Collaborative Centre
For Mental Health & Wellbeing

Who are:

52 Occupational Therapists work in other Adult Clinical Mental Health Services in Victoria

# Metro	# Regional
---------	------------

Members:

Members
of 21 Services involved
% Regional % Metro

Meetings:

Meetings (?online)
Average # people attending

Focus:

- List key focus
- List key focus

Quantitative:

%

Members rate the CoP meeting a valuable use of time

Qualitative:

"QUOTES"

Key Achievements:

- Wins
- Key projects
- How it translates into practice
- What has changed

Future Goals:

- e.g. Reinvigorate membership and attendance
- e.g. Focus on Group skills and resources

Acknowledgements:

Special thank you to members, the Co-Convenors:
Member organisations: Albury Wodonga Health, Alfred Health, Austin Health, Barwon Health, Bendigo Health, Eastern Health, Forensicare, Geelong Valley Health, Gippsland Health, Latrobe Regional Healthcare, Mercy Health, Midland Health, Monash Health, Northern Health, Orygen Youth Health, Peninsula Health, Royal Children's Hospital, Royal Melbourne Hospital, St Vincent's HEALTH, South West Healthcare, Western Health.
Please Contact Statewide Mental Health Occupational Therapy Educator enquiries: alison.williamson@vccmh.vic.gov.au or complete an [EOI form](#) to join the CoP.

Image: Annual Snapshot Template



Sunset Phase

Key Roles & Responsibilities:

Co-convenors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Raise concerns about need to sunset CoP e.g. due to low attendance, with OTLN support role, Statewide Educator and members. <input type="checkbox"/> Liaise with OTLN support role, OTLN and Statewide Educator as needed Communicate sunsetting with members if this is the consensus.
OTLN Support Role:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion to explore revitalisation strategies, or options to redefine or merge with another practice area <input type="checkbox"/> Tabled at OTLN meeting
Statewide Educator:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Discussion to explore revitalisation strategies, renew membership or options to redefine or merge with another practice area
Members:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Members maintain up to date details, inform co-convenors of any changes. <input type="checkbox"/> Participate in review of CoP Agreement/Consensus to disband
OTLN:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Tabled at OTLN meeting Agreement/Consensus to disband CoP

Resources

Links to Templates and Resources:

- [Terms of Reference Template](#)
 - [Meeting Agenda/Record Template](#)
 - [New Member Expression of Interest](#)
 - [Meeting Survey: Microsoft Forms link](#)
 - [Evaluation OT CoP Annual Survey: Microsoft Forms link](#)
 - [Annual Snapshot OT CoP Template](#)
 - [New CoP proposal submission form](#)
 - [Collaborative Charter \(VCCMHW, 2024\)](#)
-
- Each Basecamp contains a folder with
 - [Basecamp User Agreement](#),
 - [Basecamp User Tips](#),
 - Template for the [Basecamp welcome email](#).
 - A list of all Statewide Occupational Therapy Communities of Practice is available at <https://cmhl.org.au/work/mental-health-occupational-therapy-2025>

Appendix: What are the similarities and differences between a CoP and other groups?

	Similarities with CoP	Differences with CoP
Network (e.g. Public Victorian Occupational Therapy Network (OTLN); Victorian Occupational Therapy Translational Research Network)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recurring opportunity for members to meet • Sharing of ideas and resources • Opportunity to highlight successes and/or challenges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear agenda, operational aspects, strategic thinking • Generally made up of a larger group • Content driven by chair/steering committee • Attendance is often compulsory
Working party	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involves sharing of ideas and resources • Membership is voluntary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time bound • Focus is on achieving clear deliverables
Training / workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provides professional development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time bound • Clear learning objectives • Facilitated by an expert/trainer
Group supervision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports professional development • May create opportunities for reflective practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance and support from a designated supervisor or facilitator
Connect & Reflect Session	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports professional development • Opportunities for reflective practice • Membership is voluntary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation is open to whole of discipline • Participation is contingent on existing knowledge/training
Special Interest Group (e.g. OTA Mental Health Special Interest Group)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supports professional development • May create opportunities for reflective practice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance and support from a designated supervisor or facilitator • Broader membership

Appendix: Possible Reflective Models

- Kolb reflective Learning Cycle
- G-R-O-W-T-H model of coaching
- Gibbs model
- Bells that Ring – group supervision approach taught by Bouverie Centre, may be useful if using a practice example/ case presentation approach
- Action Learning Sets (Reg Evans)
- Co-design or co-production – consumer reference and support
- R-E-A-C-H approach

Appendix: CoP Key Features and Tips!

KEY FEATURES



Regular Meetings Regular meetings strengthen member ties, promote participation and shared practices (Staempfli et al., 2016). It is crucial to balance activity to prevent members from feeling overwhelmed or sluggish (Goodhue & Seriamly, 2021).



Clear Purpose CoPs articulate a clear purpose that benefits stakeholders and addresses specific needs (Cambridge, Kaplan & Suter, 2005).



Voluntary Participation & Organisational Support Participation in the CoP is voluntary (Bentley, Browman & Poole, 2010) and requires support from organisation (Chandler & Fry, 2009).



Member Led CoP is led by members who actively participate in all CoP activity and decision-making (Cambridge et al, 2005). Convenor(s) and the meeting chair have a role in levelling power.



Safe Space CoP meetings need to be a safe environment where members can trust each other and test ideas without repercussions (Probst & Borzillo, 2008).



Online Platform A transparent online communication platform is used (Gannon-Leary & Fontainha, 2007) such as Basecamp and Teams Meetings.



Diverse Representation Membership should include diverse experiences, perspectives, and worldviews (Staempfli, 2020).



Evaluation Regular member feedback and outcome evaluations ensure the CoP stays relevant and meets its strategic objectives (Probst & Borzillo, 2008).

TIPS

Members decide meeting schedule and topics for year in advance; Basecamp and calendar invites.

Use template Community of Practice TOR Terms of Reference

**EOI and Flyer to introduce and invite members to a new CoP
Showcase benefits and outcomes using CoP Annual Snapshot Template**

Develop Values in TOR. Use Meeting Chat, polls, menti, and meeting survey.

Basecamp User Agreement and Slide for creating safe online spaces

Basecamp used for sharing resources, documents, meeting schedule, topics and message board.

List organisations in ToR ensuring equitable access for all prospective members across Victoria, including regional.

Use a Meeting survey, Annual evaluation form and Annual Snapshot Template.

Appendix: Considerations when planning a new CoP

What is the specific area or focus?

What specific topics does the community want to learn about?
Who will these topics be relevant to? What is the scope of the domain?

What are the benefits of the CoP?

How will the community help achieve members' goals?
How will it improve their work? How will it help members develop professionally?

How will the CoP be structured?

Who will assume leadership/convene the CoP? Who will be the members? How will new members be welcomed? How do we identify which knowledge partners are best-placed to respond to the learning needs of the members? How often will the CoP meet? How will the members connect?

How can practice-related concerns be addressed?

How will the CoP share, store, use, and update knowledge? How will evaluation of the effectiveness of the CoP occur? How will regular communication between members be enabled? Does an existing CoP exist that addresses this practice need? (thinking OTA special interest groups, local CoPs within health services, etc).

We acknowledge and thank members of the Victorian Occupational Therapy Leadership Network (OTLN) Working Party who drafted these guidelines, and Co-convenors, OTLN Support Roles, and members of the Occupational Therapy Communities of Practice who strive *Together we go further.*

This is the first revision of the guidelines that were first endorsed in June 2024

[Please complete this survey if you have feedback, comments, ideas and examples of wider application](#)

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**The Victorian
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For Mental Health & Wellbeing