



Possible challenges

Creating a safe space for professionals (particularly when the same people aren't involved all the way through)

Keeping the momentum going

Suggested approaches/strategies

- Acknowledge from the start (and reiterate throughout) that it takes time for a safe space to develop
- If possible, schedule some meetings as face-to-face. This can help to build a sense of safety and connection (and it may be easier to feel part of a safe online community having had some in-person interaction)
- Prioritise getting 'buy-in' from managers so that they support, and create the space, to enable their team to engage in the work and attend associated meetings
- Utilise online platforms to engage, share and communicate (recognising that there are time commitments attached to travelling for face to face meetings)
- Communicate expectations and commitments from the start of projects

Possible challenges

Professionals' reluctance to share (either good practice or when things have gone wrong)

Lack of diversity amongst the group

Participation in communities of practice is not recognised/ accredited in terms of continuing professional development

Suggested approaches/strategies

- Emphasise and prioritise the safe space – in a similar way to group work with young people you could establish some 'group rules' to make people feel more comfortable when sharing
- Try to provide mechanisms that enable professionals to share anonymously

- Open up the community to practitioners from a wide range of organisations, rather than relying on one or two organisations or groups, and make use of networks to promote the opportunity

- When individuals dedicate time to participate in communities of practice, it can be hard to justify this time if there is no formal acknowledgment/ outcome associated with the time inputted. Developing a concrete output or resource from the meetings may help 'formalise' engagement and may be a useful learning resource for others too

