

ATCA Frontline TC Community of Practice

Terms of Reference

“A Community of Practice (CoP) is a group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly¹.”

1. Purpose

The Australasian Therapeutic Communities Association (ATCA) Frontline TC Community of Practice (CoP) is a forum for frontline TC staff of ATCA member organisations. The community of practice aims to create a supportive environment where members can learn together by sharing insights and experiences, while creating networks and connections among organisations.

2. Objectives

The CoP provides opportunities for:

- Sharing information and practice experiences to build knowledge, attitudes and skills that can be applied in the TC and other residential and non-residential AOD treatment environments.
- Promoting collaboration and networking among members from different organizations to combine their expertise, resources and viewpoints in better supporting people accessing their services.
- Ongoing learning and skill development through problem solving and sharing advice, that is tailored to the specific needs and interests of frontline workers.
- Offering a supportive environment where frontline workers can share challenges, successes, and coping strategies, to promote professional growth, well-being, and self-care.

3. Process

The CoP will achieve its purpose and objectives through:

- discussion and reflection
- case examples and case-based learning
- sharing information, successes, skills and learnings from practice experiences
- networking and collaborating
- problem solving and sharing advice
- presentations
- identifying, sharing, and creating a database of resources and research
- sharing upcoming events and professional development opportunities

4. Membership

- Membership will consist of frontline TC client support staff working in ATCA member services.

¹ Étienne Wenger, ["Communities of practice: A brief introduction"](#)

- Membership of the CoP is voluntary.
- Practitioners interested in membership must complete and submit a registration form to ATCA and have approval from their manager to participate in the CoP.
- New members can apply to join at any time through the registration form.
- Members of the CoP are asked to give permission for their work contact details to be shared with other members.
- Membership will be capped at 25 to ensure all members can contribute and that facilitation remains manageable.

5. Member commitments and conduct

- Respect the opinions of all members and ensure professional confidentiality and integrity.
- Engage respectfully and non-judgmentally.
- Agree to and abide by the principles outlined in this document.
- To provide notice if unable to attend a CoP in a timely manner wherever possible.

6. Meetings

- The ATCA frontline worker CoP will meet quarterly.
- Meetings will be two hours long.

7. Confidentiality

- Members must keep confidential all identifying information shared in the CoP meetings. If there is something a member is unsure about sharing, they must check with their supervisor to confirm.
- Members agree that de-identified information and learnings from the CoP can be shared. However, sharing should adhere to 'Chatham House Rules' – that is, while the information may be shared, the identity of people involved in discussions, and the details of their employer organisations, should not be. More information about the Chatham House Rule is available here: <https://www.chathamhouse.org/chatham-house-rule>

8. Operating principles

- The ATCA Executive Officer will chair and facilitate the CoP, including taking and providing minutes, preparing agendas, coordinating the virtual meetings and calendar reminders to members for upcoming meetings.
- A co-chair will rotate across members, providing diverse perspectives and shared facilitation. The co-chair will be chosen through self-nomination or group nomination and confirmed by a majority vote of CoP members.
- A quorum of one third of CoP members is needed for a CoP meeting to go ahead.
- Decisions will be made by consensus. If this is not possible, a survey will be sent to all CoP members to determine the majority view.
- The decision to cancel/postpone a meeting will be made by the ATCA Executive Officer. ATCA will inform members of the CoP, as soon as possible, once the decision is made. ATCA will provide members with as much notice as possible where a meeting needs to be cancelled or postponed.

9. Terms of Reference Document History

Version	Date	Changes/Amendments
1.0	March 2025	These Terms of Reference may be amended, varied or modified in writing. Members of the CoP must be consulted regarding any changes, adjustments, or modifications proposed. To be reviewed March 2026

10. Expression of Interest Process

To ensure equitable participation and transparency between staff and their managers, we require an Expression of Interest process.

Click on the link to complete the EOI www.surveymonkey.com/r/C373YK2

10. Membership agreement

I agree to participate in the ATCA Frontline TC Community of Practice (CoP) and agree to abide by the terms and conditions as outlined in the Terms of Reference.

Practitioners Details – Name and Organisation

Signature and Date

Supervisors Details - Name and Organisation

Signature and Date