



Overview of Collaborative Workshops

Collaborative Workshops aim to foster multidisciplinary and collaborative partnerships among stakeholders from academia, industry, communities, and government. These workshops are designed to encourage the development of collaborative research, manuscripts, publications, and the identification of funding opportunities.

Unlike traditional conferences, Collaborative Workshops emphasize flexibility and interaction. They provide a platform for small group discussions, enabling attendees to connect across academic centers and with stakeholders with a broad range of backgrounds to exchange ideas and build partnerships. The structure of these workshops is intentionally adaptable, allowing participants to shape the conversation and influence the outcomes.

Workshops often begin with panel sessions or "4x4 presentations," where speakers have four minutes to present four slides. These initial presentations serve as a springboard for idea generation. Attendees then identify topics of interest, writing them on sticky notes, which are grouped into categories by event coordinators. These categories form the basis for breakout session discussions, where participants can delve deeper into their chosen topics and collaborate on actionable outcomes.

IDEA Generation

Following the panel sessions or presentations, attendees gather together to identify the subjects and topics they are most interested in discussing. The participants write down the topics of their choice on sticky notes, which are later organized by event coordinators into logical categories – these categories create the topics for each of the breakout sessions.



Blank Board ready for sticky notes.



Attendees are instructed to attach sticky notes, regardless of placement



Idea generation prior to topic sorting

Breakout Sessions

The sorting process begins once idea generation concludes. Co-Sponsors, Co-Leads, and Steering Committee members take the lead in organizing the sticky notes, grouping the generated ideas into overarching topic areas. Each group is then labeled with a new, emergent topic title, and room assignments are added to the topics. Participants are then invited to join the session that interests them most, whether they bring expertise on the subject or are simply curious to gain new insights and perspectives.

Collaborative Workshop Rules

The Law of Mobility

By design, Collaborative Workshops are very fluid and flexible in nature. Attendees are free to go where interests lie and leave if interest wanes. Similarly, potential collaborators may want to start working on ideas right away, claiming a place to chat with coffee.

The Law of Curiosity

No one knows everything ... just ask! There are NO wrong questions ... or answers. This goes for acronyms and jargon too. Feel free to “translate in real time” when more explanation about specific terms is needed.

The Law of Efficiency

We want to make every second count. The day is in your hands, and we are open to opportunities for efficiency. Feel free to start jotting down ideas on Post-its early. Or, when your breakout group meets, start talking right away. If no one has started the discussion yet, feel free to jump in.

The Law of Flow

Be open to however the Collaborative Workshop might unfold. Whatever happens ... happens. Whoever comes are the right people. Whatever happens is the only thing that could have. Whenever it starts is the right time. When it's over, it's over.

The Law of Momentum

A Collaborative Workshop is as much about what happens after the event, as it is about the event itself. We hope you'll pledge at least one action item as you leave. We want to continue the conversation. Together, we can turn possibility into reality.

The Law of Making Space

Strive to let all voices be heard. Each individual has valuable knowledge, experience, and contributions to bring to the table. Be cognizant of your own style of communicating and flex if possible. Do you usually speak up first? Try waiting an extra moment. Do you usually spend most of the time listening? Try speaking up earlier. As a group we want to have the utmost respect, consideration, and time for all viewpoints.
