

Collaborative Learning Sessions

Practical Tool



Part of the Complex Collaboration Toolkit.

Introduction

About the Tools and Toolkits

These tools and toolkits are hosted by **Healthy Campus Alberta**, a provincial community of practice committed to cultivating caring campus communities in Alberta. Originally developed by **Alberta Campus Mental Health Innovation** (an initiative carried out by the **Alberta Students Executive Council**), the tools and toolkits are learning-focused, living documents that serve to support our community of practice.

About the Complex Collaboration Toolkit

Complex collaborations are essential to promote mentally healthy campuses across Alberta. Originally developed to support Regional Hubs, collaborative groups that originated amidst the launch of the Alberta Post-Secondary Mental Health and Addictions Framework, this toolkit is adaptable to any collaboration: interdepartmental, regional, provincial, national, or international. The toolkit frames complex collaboration as a point of connection among individuals, teams or organizations with complementary skills and resources willing to collaborate on a common objective. However, creating a shared approach for mutual gain is not an easy task. The complex collaboration model has been developed to provide some insights and approaches that weave together a variety of processes and theories to enhance the effectiveness of these complex collaborations.

About Collaborative Learning Sessions

The **Collaborative Learning Sessions** tool offers some strategies for learning and adapting through the complex collaboration process.


Who could use this tool?

- Coordinators of collaborations among post-secondary institutions;
- Program planners in post-secondary student services or administration;
- Mental health professionals who work with post-secondary students.

What purposes could this tool serve?

- Holding spaces for collaborative learning and adapting;
- Providing a conceptual basis for understanding collaborative learning

Collaborative Learning



Stage 1 Preparation		Stage 2 Strategy, Plan	Stage 3 Prototyping and testing	Stage 4 Concept Design for Pilot(s)	Stage 5 Pilot testing for context		Stage 6 Integration into routine operation	Stage 7 Ongoing routine operating/ adapting
Building Coalition of the Willing. Developing relationships and a shared understanding the collaboration terrain	Develop initial concept and assemble agreement / permission for resources, commitments for initial project(s) and roles of collaborators.	Plan for operationalizing the concept, Get resources in place. You got the resources and commitments! Now what?	Probe, experiment with prototypes to test assumptions. Surface intervention requirements for delivery and management architecture with variations for organization diversity	Conceptual Collaborative Program strategy, legacy tools. Seek agreements / approval for next stage.	Develop and implement pilot testing strategy. Illuminate and create / redesign / adapt policy architecture.	Converge to final program strategy for routine operation with variations for context. Seek approval for next stage	Develop and implement Transition strategy for integrating into existing program delivery and policy ecosystem	Ongoing collaboration and linkages re operationalizing and adapting a co-created program strategy
Collaborative Learning Session		Collaborative Learning Session	Collaborative Learning Session	Collaborative Learning Session	Collaborative Learning Session		Collaborative Learning Session	Collaborative Learning Session

Learning and Adapting

Each stage of the *Actioning Complex Collaboration Practical Tool* can be followed by an opportunity for group learning. Establishing the pattern of regular reflections for learning in the early days of a project is important. These sessions need not be lengthy, but regularity is important.

Creating a complex collaboration is, by its very nature, a learning process. As such, processes to help a collaborative group learn and make decisions about how best to adapt the approach is an important part of navigating the ambiguity and complex terrain of a complex collaboration.

Collaborative learning involves trust and open information sharing. Early stages of the collaboration require more assurance of safety, since the working trust and group cohesion are building along the way. Safely navigating this process in a group setting is a powerful way to build trust and cohesion since the reality of the experience demonstrates how safe it will be to share uncertainty and disappointment.

A scheduled participative learning and adapting process at the end of each stage does two things. It marks the end of a stage and so provides a way for participants to recognize where they are in a long and sometimes confusing process. Most importantly, it provides a way to provide a collective view of what has been achieved and learned during that stage. This is invaluable information for those not at the table (larger organizations and the wider communities of each representative).



Download a [high-definition PDF](#) of the Complex Collaboration Model.

Using the Collaborative Learning Session Tool

There are three worksheets included in this tool to guide you and your collaborators through the collaborative learning process.



Individual Reflection Worksheet

Complete a new worksheet after each stage.



Collective Reflection Worksheet

Complete a new worksheet after each stage.



Collective Takeaways Worksheet

Come back to the same worksheet during each collaborative learning session.



Case Study

This tool is meant to be flexible and adaptable for your context. Let's explore some ways that Campus A and Campus B could engage in Collaborative Learning Sessions.

Hosting a Collaborative Learning Session after each stage.

After each stage in the collaboration process, stakeholders from Campus A and Campus B set an hour-long meeting where they complete the individual and collective reflections. They create a running document of collective takeaways that they add to every session.

or

The collaborators from Campus A and Campus B complete the individual reflection worksheets asynchronously after each stage. One person compiles the worksheets and prepares a 10-minute summary to present at the team's standing meeting.

Hosting a Collaborative Learning Session mid-way through the collaboration.

Campus A and Campus B are mid-way through their collaboration and haven't held a learning session yet. The leads from each campus complete the three worksheets in a 1-on-1 meeting and bring their conclusions to the next team meeting.



Individual Reflection Worksheet

Each person can individually complete this reflection worksheet. Think about your experiences with the collaboration so far. Write or draw your thoughts in the boxes.

Stage:

--

What were your expectations going into this stage?

--

Was there anything that surprised you?

--

Is there anything you would do differently next time?

--

What learnings will you bring into the next stage?

--



Collective Reflection Worksheet

Share the group findings from the Individual Reflection Worksheet. This worksheet can also be completed on its own as a group discussion exercise. Summarize themes from the group in the boxes.

Stage:

Collective Expectations

Collective Moments of Surprise

Collective Things to Do Differently

Collective Learnings



Collective Takeaways Worksheet

Use this worksheet to compile takeaways from each collective learning session / each stage of the collaboration. Write one or two takeaways per stage. If you are starting mid-way through the collaboration, fill in takeaways retrospectively as best as you can.

Stage 1: Prepare

Stage 2: Strategize & Plan

Stage 3: Prototype & Test

Stage 4: Concept Design

Stage 5: Pilot

Stage 6: Integration

Stage 7: Operate & Adapt