


Collaboration in Theory and Practice

DR. JEFFREY SPOONER
CBA CONVENTION
NOVEMBER 20, 2023
REGINA, SASKATCHEWAN

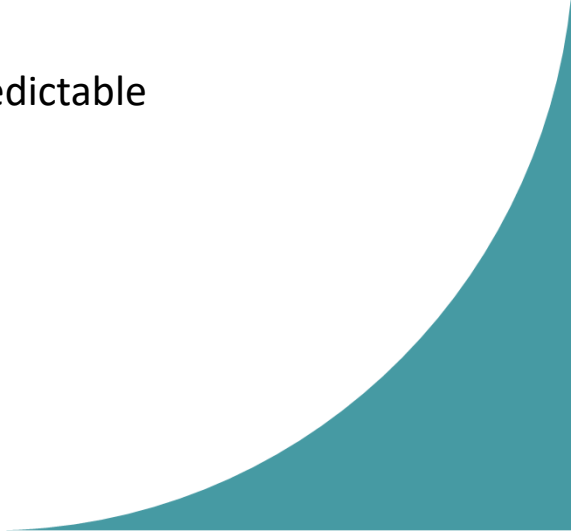
Collaboration: Introduction

- Dr. Jeffrey Spooner
 - Principal Consultant at Coaxis.ca
 - Social science researcher
 - Popularity of Collaboration
 - Role of research-related insights and practical advances
 - Need for constructive friction AND supportive frameworks
- 

Introduction: Engine block design

- **Analogy**
 - Similar to building an automobile engine block


Innate Challenges of Collaborating

- Most people will try to avoid conflict -- of any sort
 - Moreover,
 - Strangers need time to become co-productive
 - Highly invested participants
 - Energized atmospheres
 - While collaborators need synergistic energy, it is highly unstable and unpredictable
- 
- A teal-colored decorative shape, resembling a quarter-circle or a curved wedge, is positioned in the bottom right corner of the slide.


Collaboration Planning

- Collective term reflecting several ways to anticipate and address collaborative challenges

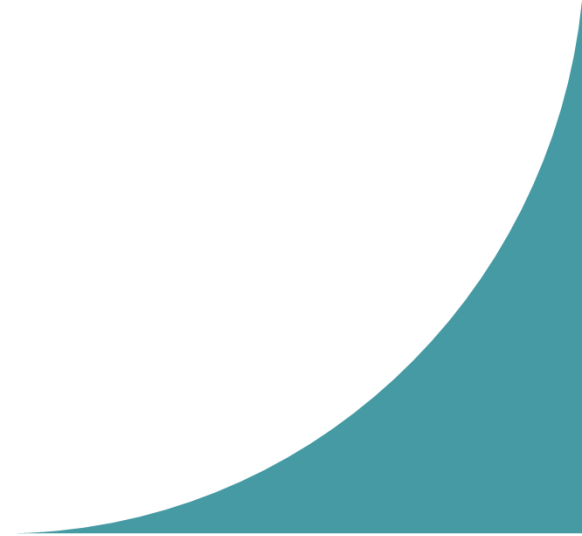
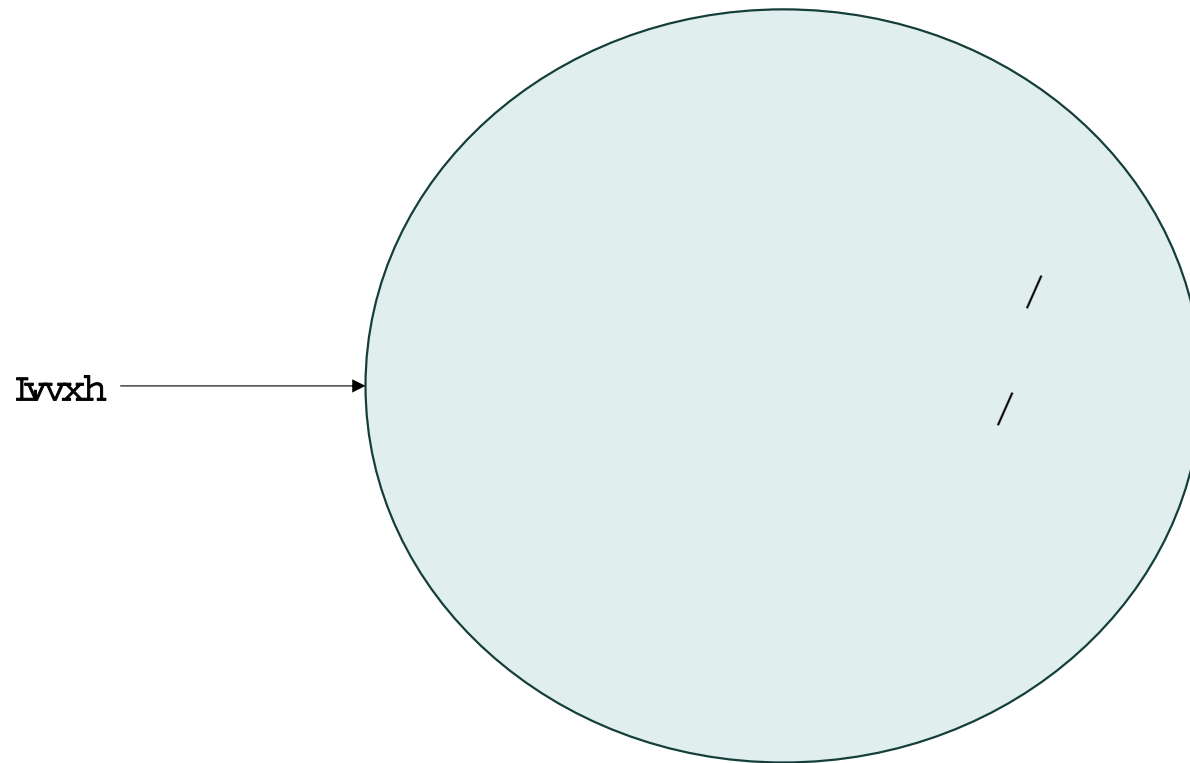
Collaborative Mindsets

- An especially favourable mental orientation – ideally held by all collaborators – for achieving a successful collective outcome
- 

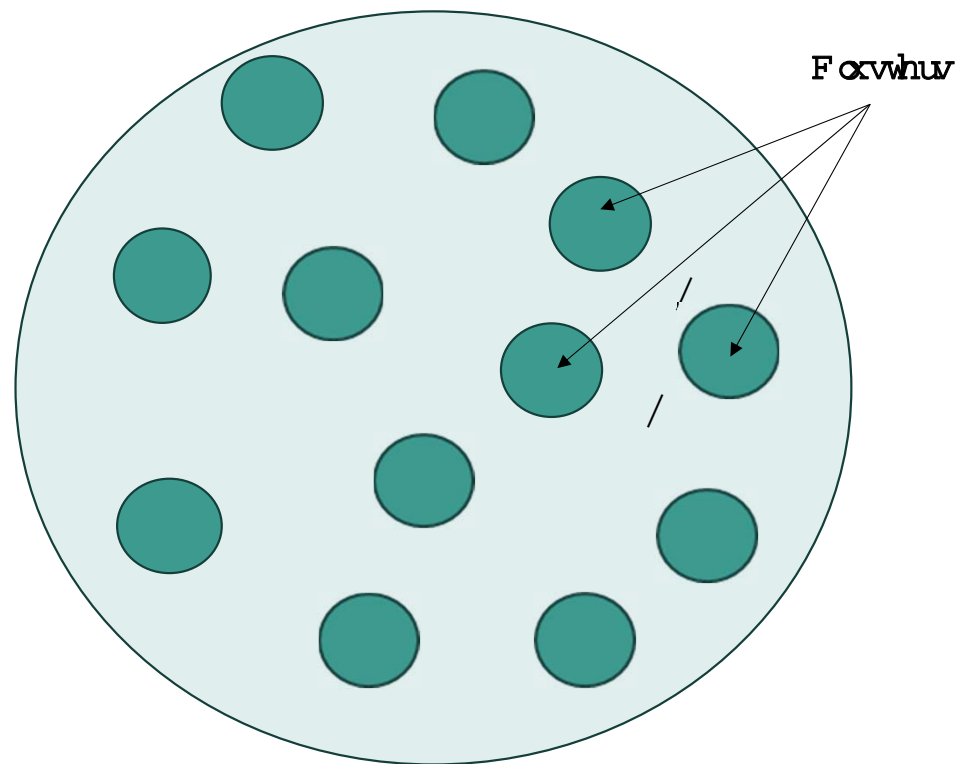
Collaboration Mindsets: Brainstorming

- Participants will typically start a collaboration by discussing nature, scope, and focus of project in broad terms
 - Will usually involve sharing key topics to be included/addressed (e.g., terrain mapping/ brainstorming)
- 

Collaboration Mindsets: Cluster Diagram



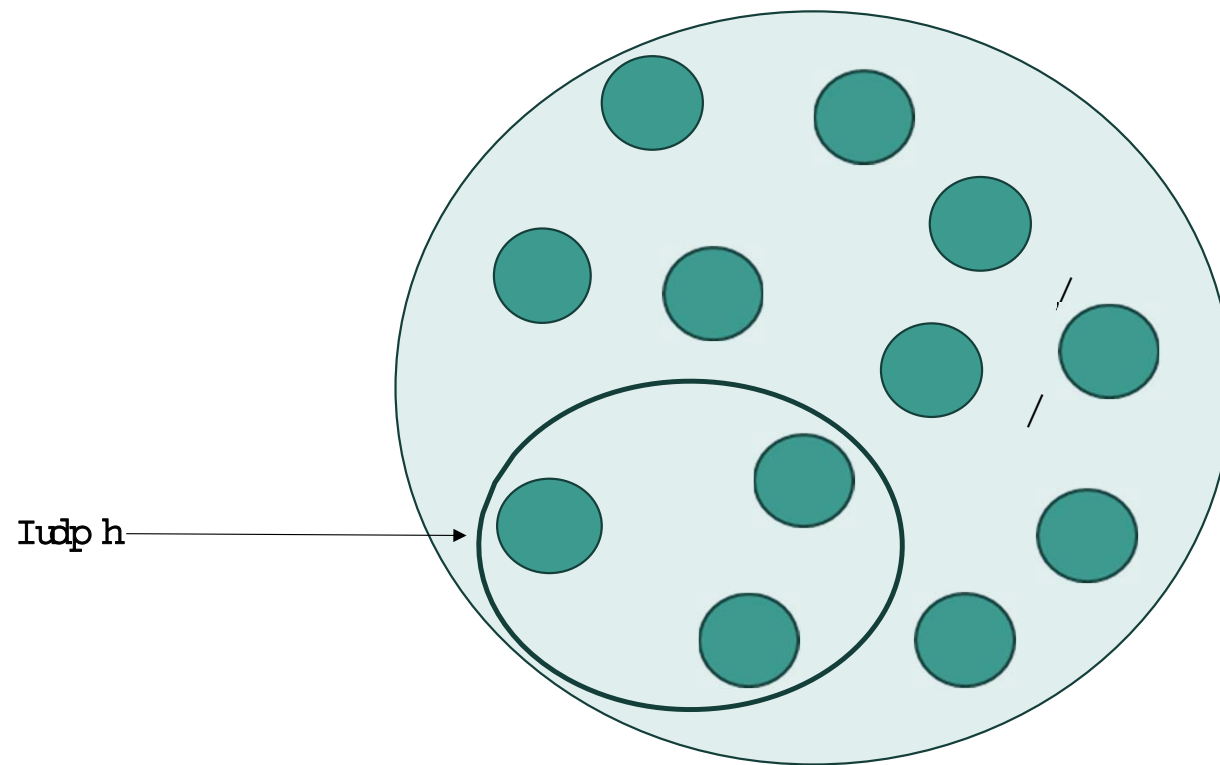
Collaboration Mindsets: Cluster Diagram



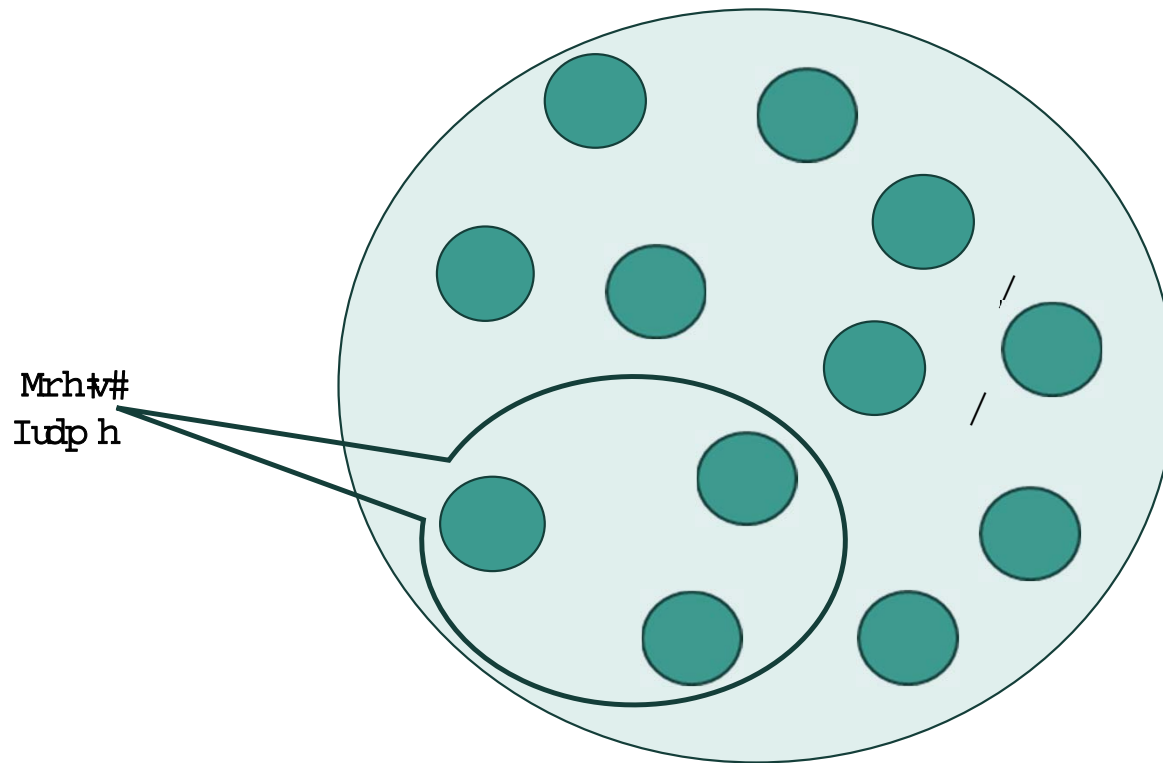
Collaborative Mindsets: Cluster Diagram

- **Two notables**
 - 1) No participant is apt to be familiar – at least initially – with every possible/relevant cluster
 - 2) Every participant will usually prioritize one or more clusters
- **Frames**
 - Favoured clusters that guide how participants shape, contextualize, or argue issues/topics

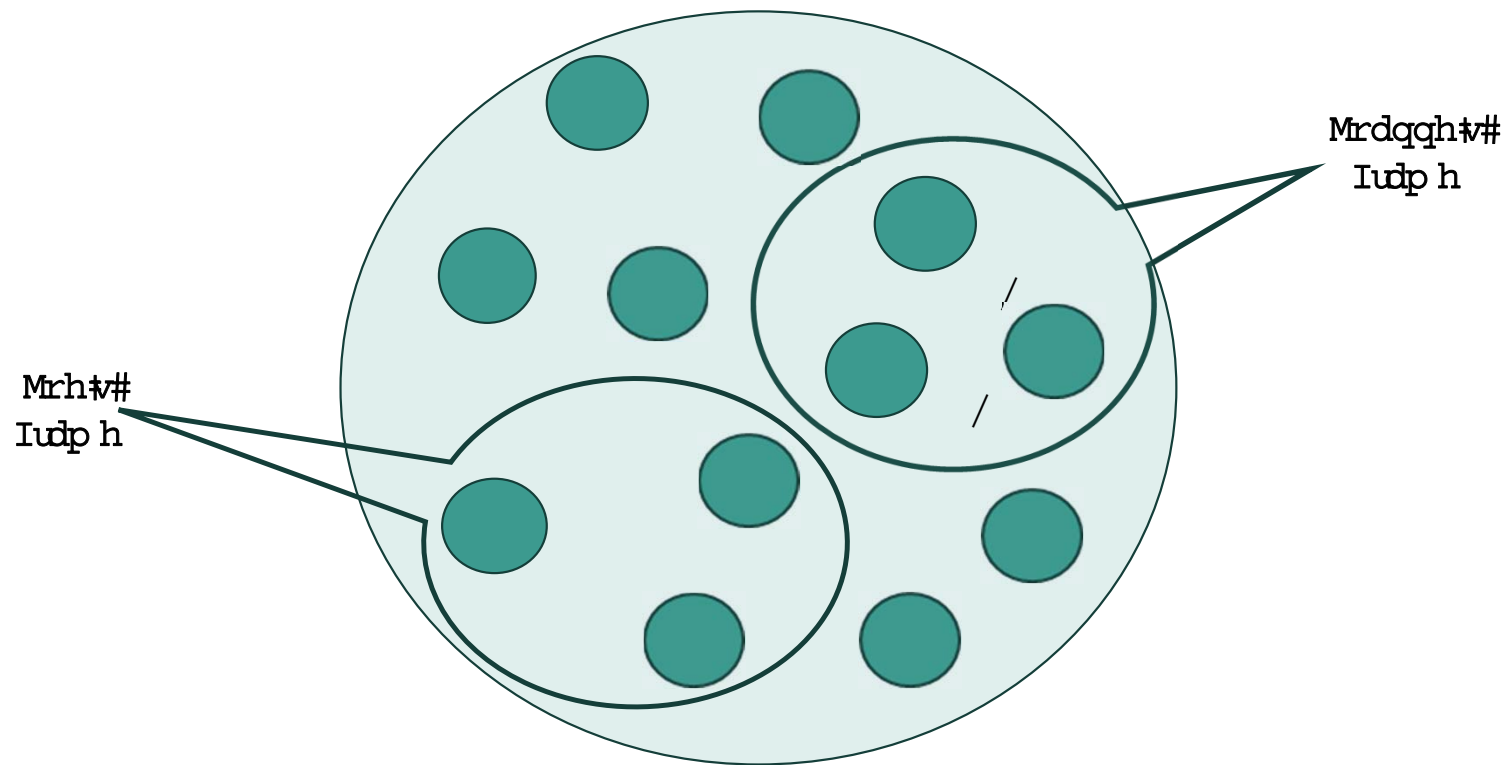
Collaboration Mindsets: Cluster Diagram



Collaboration Mindsets: Cluster Diagram

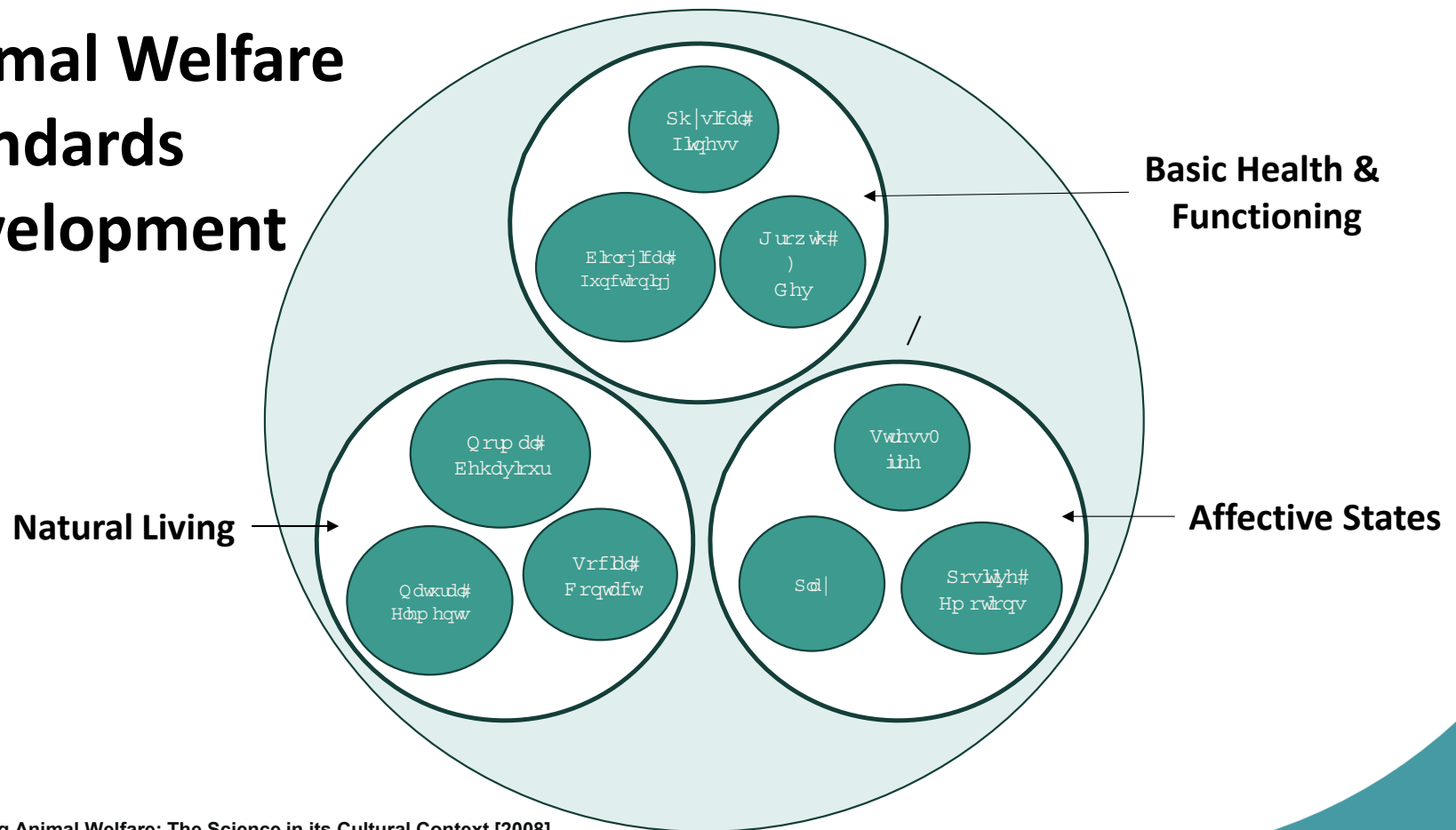


Collaboration Mindsets: Cluster Diagram




Collaboration Mindsets: Example

Animal Welfare Standards Development



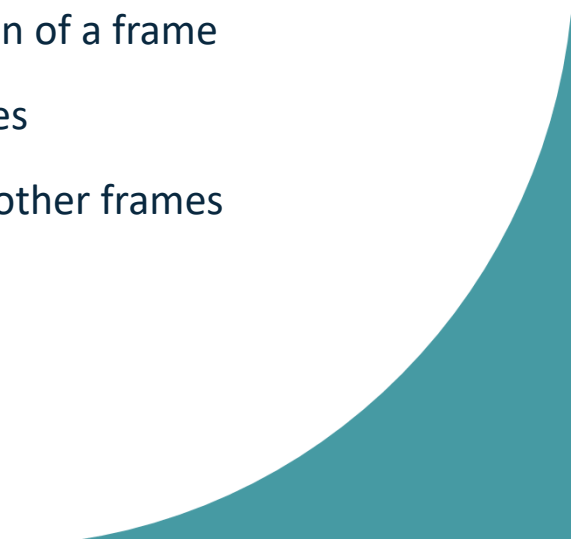
Collaborative Mindsets: Prospective Discomforts

- Discomfort – especially at outset – if others frame projects contrary to own
 - Three emotions/reactions that may arise
 - Threat
 - Frustration
 - Confusion
- 


Collaborative Mindsets: Interpersonal Conflicts

- Depending on HOW threatening, frustrating, or confusing ... people may try to:
 - Immediately and forcefully challenge/negate alternative views
- Or Worse,
 - Challenge/negate those holding alternative views (e.g., question their legitimacy, capability, or participation)
- Sets stage for:
 - Interpersonal conflict(s) (where collaborations start to die)
 - Disengagement (pulling back or becoming increasingly aggressive)

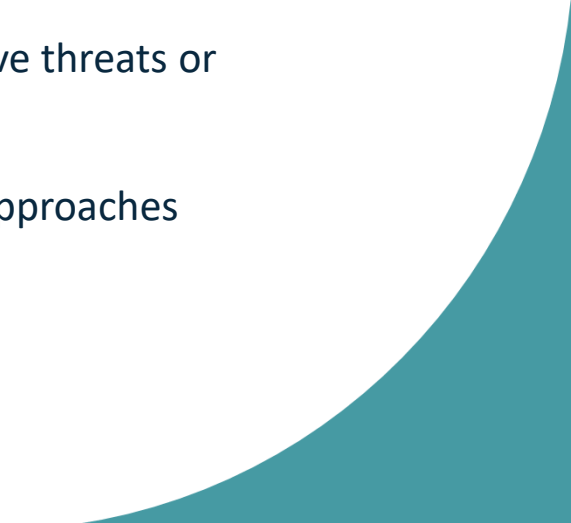
Collaborative Mindsets: Preparatory Steps

- No collaborators are expected to possess infinite knowledge about all relevant issues/ideas/themes
 - Introducing diverse ideas/frames will not automatically exclude/diminish importance of other ideas/frames
 - No need to fear that the introduction of a frame will equate to the inclusion of a frame
 - No pressure will be applied on participants to suddenly champion all frames
 - Considerable time and effort will be needed for participants to fully grasp other frames
 - Whenever possible, try to embrace “both/and” vs “either-or” thinking
- 

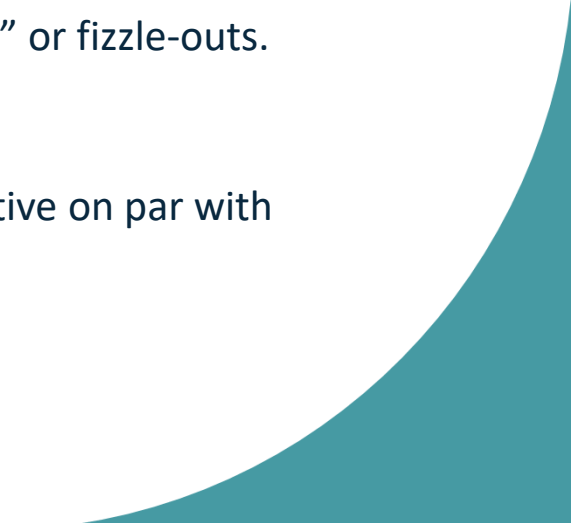
Collaborative Mindsets: Additional Techniques

- Practice self-reflection: Are you still as committed and fully engaged as YOU need to be?
 - Inform others of your personal preferences regarding communicating and interacting.
 - Do not jump to conclusions. Address others directly.
 - Notice and support other's interests.
 - Share [within limits] personal things about yourself.
 - Make frequent collective references (“we”/”us”).
 - Set collective examples by contributing to overall well-being of group.
 - Improve listening skills by “listening to learn” from all speakers.
 - Keep your faith in the capacity/potential of the group.
- 

Collaborative Mindsets: On Keeping Open Minds

- Common ground rule: “All participants should KEEP an open mind”
 - Well intentioned, but usually misguided and unhelpful (potentially harmful)
 - Participants often lack the will, why, or ways to do so at outset
 - Before anyone can KEEP an open mind they actively have to OPEN it, first.
 - Mere mental/cognitive reminders stand little chance in presence of emotive threats or challenges to personal values, attitudes, beliefs
 - Mind-setting recommendations offer more effective, robust, and fruitful approaches
- 

Recap & Conclusion

- Creative collaboration requires all involved to respectfully enter fray, roll up sleeves, get hands dirty
 - Creative friction is the “fuel” that powers successful collaborations
 - If left unchecked, however, creative friction may generate interpersonal conflicts
 - Best – prior to launching – to manage and mitigate prospective “boil-overs” or fizzle-outs.
 - Collaborative mind-setting is an effective preparatory technique
 - Collaborative mindsets will help participants set the interests of the collective on par with their own
- 

Collaboration in Theory and Practice

- Thank you
- Questions?



Collaboration: Introduction:

<https://www.northsails.com/blogs/north-sails-blog/the-battle-of-the-beasts-at-the-2021-rolex-fastnet-race> [note i could not find on canva!!]



Please add to previous slide:



[kwsv=2jp_suryhvdldbj1frp_2jx_bhv2vdl@rdw@nhh@w|shv](#)

Collaborative Mindsets: Cluster Examples

- NOTE: Maybe same slide as last but with environmental examples included ??
- I h o v 2 u h d v # r # r f x v # r q # z k h q # f r q v g h u l j # h o y l r q p h q w d # v x h v # r u # f r q f h u q v # s r d w f d o #
v r f d o # n f r q r p l f # e l r k h d o k 2 h f r o r j l f d o # n f k q r o r j l f d o # u d q v s r u d w l r q # n w f # #

Collaboration Mindsets: Cluster Diagram

