

Welcome!

We have designed this year's gathering in an unconference format to maximize your opportunity to discuss, connect, and collaborate with your peers. Baked into our design is the assumption that you are coming to the conference with questions you want answered, ideas you want to share, and challenges that you want help addressing.

Shared Agreements to Optimize Our Collaboration

- Be fully here and with us -- and be on time
- Celebrate and honor each individual's, and our collective, diversity, experience, and wisdom
- Actively listen; ask questions to clarify
- Explore with curiosity and kindness
- Ensure we are having one conversation at a time
- Speak 1/nth of the time; if you're in a group of 10, speak 1/10th of the time
- Be curious about different perspectives, approaches, and practices
- Embrace "yes, and..." rather than "yes, but..."
- Be productively selfish -- share your challenges and needs; your tips and tactics
- Advocate! If you see areas for the group or consortium to enhance its work, speak up

What's Different:

At most conferences, you probably sit in the audience, listening with one ear while you check your Twitter, email and edit your next story. Or maybe you are used to giving a powerpoint, taking questions, then retreating to a cozy corner for some VIP one-on-ones. This conference is different. Here, you are asked to be fully engaged with everyone in the room. It's up to you to propose sessions and to engage in conversations with people you don't already know.

How to Maximize Your Time at the Conference

All participants will be invited to host 45 to 75 minute conversation circles with 5-15 other attendees. Conversations can be individually hosted or in pairs, and it is easy. The first step is to prepare a one sentence invitation that you'd verbally share that follows the following format:

- Join me to *discuss* [insert topic or idea]
- Join me to *explore collaborating* with me / us on [project or initiative]
- Join me to *learn more about* [insert topic or skill]

Tips for Hosts of Conversation Circles

As hosts in unconference gatherings, you are instrumental in leading and nurturing the collaborative experience for all. We invite hosts to embrace a few key principles:

- Ensure clarity on what the conversation is about, and what it isn't about.
- Start your conversation by inviting each person to share their name and why they chose to join the group (this helps to assess and clarify expectations).
- Be realistic -- you will only have 45 or 75 minutes, so be clear on what topics you will prioritize based upon what you want to discuss and what the group shared on why they are in the circle with you. We suggest taking a few minutes before you begin to identify 2-3 topics at the beginning to establish a shared agenda and purpose for the conversation.
- Designate a time-keeper to note when you're at halftime and with 10 minutes left.
- Embrace your facilitative leadership skills -- we want everyone in the circle to be in the conversation and we count on you to ensure all voices and insights are invited and encouraged in the space you're hosting.
- In the last 10 minutes, distill the top 3-5 things you'd like to share with the larger group and write them down on flip chart paper. This is very important for us to ensure folks who weren't able to attend can get a taste of what you all discussed and know who to follow-up with if they have questions.
- Seize the opportunity to move the conversation forward. Determine next steps, such as host another conversation, or invite others to collaborate

Note-Taking Template

For flip-chart paper and report-back from conversation circles:

Title of Session

Participants

- Takeaway 1
- Takeaway 2
- Takeaway 3
- Takeaway 4
- Takeaway 5

Next Steps or Invitations

- Action - Date - Person(s)
- Join us to _____

If you prefer to use a computer, take these notes and email them to joellen@themediaconsortium.org with subject line: "tmc2017 reportback"