



Convergence in Practice:



Civil Discourse and Communication in Interdisciplinary Team Science

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Learning Outcomes

Participants will:

1. Recognize how civil discourse contributes to effective interdisciplinary team science
2. Identify common communication barriers that emerge across disciplines, roles, and perspectives
3. Practice strategies for engaging in productive disagreement while maintaining collaborative relationships
4. Demonstrate active listening and perspective-taking techniques that strengthen research collaboration
5. Apply communication approaches that help interdisciplinary teams align goals and build shared understanding

Speak Easy: *Icebreaker*

What is one thing you learned about your project colleagues during Day 1 of the Workshop?



Great Research Teams do more than Share Expertise... They Solve Problems.



Interdisciplinary research requires:

- Different disciplinary languages
- Different methodologies
- Different priorities and assumptions
- Shared problem-solving under uncertainty

*Technical expertise alone does not create successful convergence research.
Communication, trust, and civil discourse are essential.*

What Gets in the Way of Effective Communication?

- Discipline-specific jargon
- Assumptions about “what matters”
- Same words, different definitions
- Competing priorities or timelines
- Fear of disagreement or conflict
- Listening to respond, instead of listening to understand
- Impatience
- No process for handling disagreements

Communication is a Research Skill

Effective convergence research depends on:

- Listening across differences
- Managing disagreement productively
- Building shared understanding
- Communicating with clarity and curiosity
- Creating environments where different perspectives are valued as contributors to innovation
- Maintaining civility

Strong research teams do not avoid disagreement.

They learn how to navigate it productively.

A Simple Framework for Effective Communication: 3 Cs



1. Curiosity

Ask:

“Can you explain what you mean by that?”

“What assumptions might we be making?”

2. Clarity

Avoid jargon and define terms clearly.

Use lay terms

3. Connection

Refocus on:

Shared goals

Collective impact

Team outcomes



Civil Discourse in Action: Case Study



To Include or Not Include?

- What decision did your team make and why?
- Was it unanimous?
- If not, how did you make the decision as a team?
- What communication challenges emerged?
- When did misunderstandings occur?
- What strategies helped keep dialogue civil?

*Thank
You*