

## **Conversation Café**

The Conversation Café format has been selected to enable abstract authors to gain as much exposure and peer feedback as possible and for IPCRG colleagues to learn from and build relationships with their peers. It is based on an [approach developed by David Gurteen](#) who describes it as “a conversational method in which small groups of people come together to have open, creative conversations on a topic of mutual interest, surface their collective knowledge, share ideas, and gain a deeper understanding of the issues involved.....it also helps connect people, improve interpersonal relationships, break down organizational silos, and improve trust and engagement.....The real outcomes are what people take away in their heads and the relationships they develop.”

### **What happens?**

#### **Getting started**

*Authors* arrive are provided with a hand out of their abstract, but can also share this and a presentation on their tablet or laptop. They choose one of the tables to sit at, with one abstract/presenter per table.

Arrive on time at the conference room. Welcome everyone to the session and ensure the delegates spread out at all the tables. If for any reason there is a table with an author and without a delegate, suggest the author joins another author and do also join in! Check everyone knows what the abstracts are and how to access these using the online programme. Use these notes to help explain the process if anyone asks.

Do a timecheck – there should be 12-18 minutes for each conversation if delegates are to get to talk to all the authors, depending on how many authors are in your café.

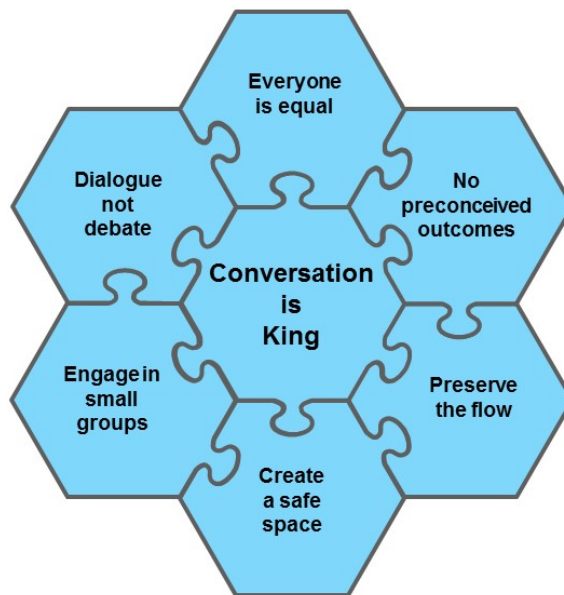
Ring the bell or shout out to get things started!

#### **Begin the conversation**

Authors and delegates, start your conversation! Authors can summarise their idea or findings, delegates can ask about the abstract or about the method or rationale. See where the conversation goes - this is about dialogue rather than a formal presentation.

David Gurteen proposes these principles, which we think are good to share

## Knowledge Café Principles



*Moderators* – when time is up, ring the bell. *Authors* stay where you are and *delegates* move to another table.

Repeat so that delegates have had a chance to talk to all the authors.

5-10 minutes before the end of the session, *moderators*, you may want to ask people for their reflections on both the process and what emerged from the conversations. However, it is not essential to do this, “the real outcomes are what people take away in their heads and the relationships they develop.”

[David Weinberger](#) suggests the difference between talking and having a conversation in the [Cluetrain Manifesto](#):

- *To have a conversation, you have to be comfortable being human - acknowledging you don't have all the answers, being eager to learn from someone else and to build new ideas together.*
- *You can only have a conversation if you're not afraid of being wrong.*
- *Otherwise, you're not conversing, you're just declaiming, speechifying, or reading what's on the PowerPoints.*
- *To converse, you have to be willing to be wrong in front of another person.*
- *Conversations occur between equals.*
- *The time your boss's boss asked you at a meeting about your project's deadline was not a conversation.*
- *The time you sat with your boss for an hour in the Polynesian-themed bar while on a business trip and you really talked, got past the corporate bullshit, told each other the truth about the dangers ahead, and ended up talking about your kids - that maybe was a conversation.*

Siân Williams