



Workshop: The Art of Collaboration - Summary

This 2-part WCW workshop will guide participants through the fundamental strategies for meaningful collaboration, in both professional and personal contexts. Our workshops are designed to be practical, and the lessons to be integrated easily into the participants' own contexts and experience level.

"The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place."
- George Bernard Shaw

Our ability to co-create collaborative conversations with our colleagues, leaders, followers, and clients is instrumental to creating positive experiences, fulfilling career choices, and impactful work projects. The challenge is that humans interpret the same data and signals quite differently. Our diversity in perspectives, experiences, and needs can create opportunities for misunderstanding, limit career advancement, and discourage collaborative thinking.

Ultimately, people work at their best when they work with people that they like, who are inclusive of their perspective – and on a more human level – make them feel good about their energy investment.

*"People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did,
but people will never forget how you made them feel."*
- Maya Angelou

There is only one way to improve: Practice! Participants will be applying key skills in small group breakout rooms in our "work" shop. Participants will learn how to build psychologically-safe environments for productive, multi-stakeholder collaborations.

It will be actively relevant to the water industry context, as Alvin Pilobello leverages 10+ years of municipal infrastructure construction management, and water infrastructure asset management experiences. He will also collaborate with Keren Verch, a member of the Water Environment Association of Ontario's professional development committee, and a National Sales Account Executive for a major equipment supplier, who will be sharing stories related to her big project collaborations in the water sector.

We will leverage the Zoom web-conference platform's breakout rooms for small group discussions. Towards the end of the workshop, participants will be given homework, and to identify an area of growth opportunity that they can personally commit to improving in their professional career in the short to medium-term goal.

The target audience is practically any professional from the water sector, regardless of experience. The whole point of the workshop is to be able to collaborate with someone of a different experience level, professional / personal / cultural experience, and technical background. The more diverse the participants, the more practical the learning will be.

Most importantly, these workshops will be fun: people learn effectively when they are having fun!



How It Matters to the WCWWA

The Western Canada Water represents more than 5,000 water industry professionals across a coalition of 7 Constituent Organizations (COs). Even before the pandemic, collaboration was already socially-distanced, and often required remote connections between members and representatives in order to create collaborations.

The mission of Western Canada Water is clear: Water industry professionals working together to provide safe water and protect the environment. This opportunity to deliver a 2-part workshop on the Art of Collaboration is highly relevant to the members of Western Canada Water, because WCW creates spaces, events, and committees that foster collaboration, networking, and long-lasting professional relationships that lead to greater, positive societal impact.

This workshop most closely aligns with the WCW's following Strategic priorities:

- **Enhanced Collaboration with Constituent Organizations** | Innovation is enabled when the stakeholders involved are given the space and psychological safety in order to contribute their ideas, and be given due consideration, regardless of status and title. Influencing others, and creating buy-in requires identifying where stakeholders' interests and passions live – what's in it for them? We will create a foundation of actionable items for participants to create healthy, collaborative environments.
- **High Quality Education and Networking Opportunities** | A major pillar of the workshop is to help water professionals foster a better understanding of the person they are collaborating with, including both the technical and interpersonal contexts that may affect the relationship and work project involved. We believe that networking is a lifestyle, not a means to an end – to create high quality education and networking opportunities, it must fit to the needs and context of the target audience.
- **Better engage with the newest CO members & Increased Active Engagement of Young Professionals** | The ability to collaborate is key to making sure that Western Canada Water continues to evolve as needed, and requires changes in behaviour, vision, and mindset. Engaging Young Professionals is a two-way street: It requires the resilience, lived experience and expertise of our seasoned professionals, combined with the curiosity, eagerness, and growth mindset of new members. Influence needs to go both ways too: Bringing people along is a leadership skill that we emphasize in this workshop.



Workshop Series – An Outline

This workshop series is designed to create a collaborative environment by learning how to foster trust. Trust is fostered when we say what we mean, when we align what we mean (our Intent) with what is understood (our Impact) by our counterpart, and doing what we say (action).

In Part 1, participants will focus on the Self – how do they currently communicate, and how does it impact others? They will gain a better understanding of how their technical background, organizational needs, and personal patterns impacts how they communicate and act. Participants will learn how to self-manage tendencies that get in the way of fostering trust in the people we interact with, and help their team members understand how to get the best out of them – it need not be a guessing game!

In Part 2, participants will focus on being a member of a larger group dynamic – a “We” mindset, instead of a “Me”-focused approach. In this workshop, we apply the lessons from Part 1, and see team collaboration as a systems-thinking approach. As a group, teams will learn how to better self-regulate collectively – every team member is uniquely responsible to helping maintain trust, accountability and productivity in the group. Participants will learn how to handle difficult conversations, create distinct team member roles, and empower others.

Part 01: There is an “I” in Collaboration | Participants will learn how their individuality can make a difference in a team dynamic, but it starts by understanding their communication strengths and weaknesses. Introspection will be completed in groups of 3, where they will get curious with each other, build rapport, and build a professional relationship.

Activities: In this 1.5 hour module, participants will learn how to ask better questions, communicate better answers, and learn the effectiveness of active listening. Participants will engage in conversations, where they will practise these skills. Most importantly, participants will become more mindful of how their communication tendencies impacts others.

Important Skills: Active Listening, Effective Questions, Relating genuinely to others, Trust-building

Applications: The skills have important applications in developing relationships with new and existing staff, developing a more connected team culture, giving feedback to colleagues, and understanding our clients’ needs.

Workshop Flow:

Section Title	Detail	Purpose
Welcome	Organizers address the main Zoom room.	Allow latecomers to log-in
Icebreaker	Place participants in Zoom breakout rooms (3 per room) – Rapid-fire introductions with each other, then return to main room.	Set the tone: Interactive, Be Present, Get them active and talking.

Lecture	<p>Topic: Mindset and Curiosity using the skills of Powerful Questions, Silence, and Active Listening.</p> <p>Demo: Alvin will pick a participant and demonstrate how to orient towards curiosity, and address one’s own internal biases.</p>	Participants will understand the power of truly active listening, and shifting their mindset towards curiosity, by being more aware of how their internal bias is driving their questions. They will also be more aware of the stories that they make up about the other person.
Activity	In the same group of 3, people will rotate being the person only being asked questions, to be one of 2 people asking series of relevant questions, and being an observer of the conversation.	Participants take turns being asked the questions (to know what it feels like), to ask questions, and to simply be an observer. The observer’s role is to provide critical feedback to the interviewers.
De-Brief	Participants return to the main room. Alvin will de-brief lessons learned.	Alvin will coach and identify key themes that are relevant to creating a psychologically-safe space for meaningful conversations.
Lecture	<p>Topic: David Rock’s SCARF Model – a framework that takes into account your conversation partner’s needs of Status, Certainty, Autonomy, Relatedness, and Fairness.</p> <p>Demo: Alvin will demonstrate a conversation that applies the elements of the SCARF model.</p>	Role Model the skills that build psychological safety and fosters an environment that enables collaboration. Participants will be asked to practice these in the next section.
Activity	In the same group of 3, people will rotate being in conversational pairs, with 1 observer. Observer roles will provide critical feedback to the conversational exchange.	Participants will apply the SCARF model to create a safe space for collaboration, while identifying the strengths + motivations of another person.
De-Brief	Participants return to the main room. Alvin will de-brief lessons learned.	Alvin will coach and identify key themes that are relevant to building trust in the people that we are leading, through conversation.
Closing	<p>Closing: Slow is smooth, and smooth is fast. When we take the time and space to have a meaningful conversation, we can create trust and influence.</p>	Alvin will look ahead to the next workshop Part 02, and give people homework to practice with their (new) friends.

Part 02: Collaboration and Tough Conversations | Collaboration inevitably involves tough conversations, especially when there are differences in everyone holds different perceptions of the same project, concept, or working relationship. We will explore how to build psychological safety for yourself, and the person you are talking to, to enable collaborative, creative solutions to be created.

In this self-empowered state, participants will understand that demonstrating leadership is not limited to those with titles, it is about your ability to influence others.

Activities: In this 1.5 hour module, participants will learn how to create a safe environment that fosters collaboration, rather than an adversarial one.

Important Skills: Self-awareness, Leadership, Conflict Management

Applications: The skills have important applications managing ourselves and our relationships in professional interactions, especially in situations that require collaboration and negotiations. We can create safe environments to enable team members to share their honest observations, ideas, and feelings. This can be used by leaders and staff to read the situation in the room, and say what needs to be said at the ‘right time’.

Workshop Flow:

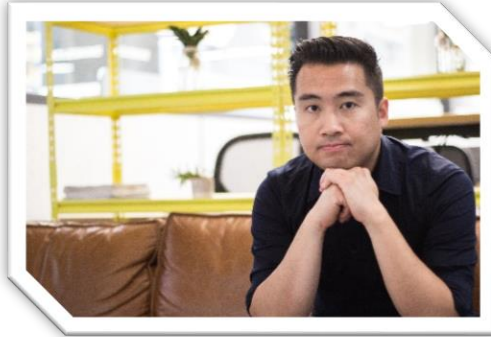
Section Title	Detail	Purpose
Icebreaker	Place participants in Zoom breakout rooms (3 per room)	Set the tone: Interactive, Be Present, Get them active and talking.
Lecture	<p>Topic: The concept of Adaptive Leadership, Advocating for one’s own ideas, and Daniel Goleman’s Emotional Intelligence model – a framework that includes the lessons from Part 01, where we use the skills learned and integrate it for team leadership application.</p> <p>Demo: Alvin will demonstrate what adaptive leadership looks like in an empowered team environment.</p>	Alvin will role model the application of Part 01 (Active Listening, SCARF model) to allow for tough conversations to happen.
Activity	In the same group participants will role model a team interaction scenario	Participants will build on the skills from Part 01 to create an empowered team dynamic
De-Brief	Participants return to the main room. Alvin will de-brief lessons learned	Alvin will coach and identify key themes that are relevant to accessing our most creative problem solving mindset, instead of the reactive, emotionally-triggered version of us.
Activity	In a new group of 3, participants will provide an example of their own – a real team scenario that they are looking to improve. They will leverage the communication skills of their group to help identify a different communication tactic that the person might try next.	Through a real, practical example, participants will be empowered to try something different in a scenario that they are looking to improve.
De-Brief	Participants return to the main room. Alvin will de-brief lessons learned.	Alvin will coach and guide participants to identify a new communication-related habit that they will commit to taking on



Closing	Closing: Collaboration is most enabled when we choose to listen, see, and understand the person(s) across from us. Healthy collaboration also requires that we have a distinct role where we are all accountable for the outcome that we create together as a team.
Open Q&A	Alvin will officially end the workshop portion, and allow participants to drop off. He will address any questions from the group for up to 30 minutes.

Leadership Coach & Trainer - Profile

Alvin Pilobello | Leadership Coach, Emotional Intelligence Workshop Facilitator



Alvin is an experienced leadership and emotional intelligence workshop facilitator, professional coach, and community builder. After 10 years in international civil engineering consulting firms, Alvin started his own entrepreneurial venture through mindspaceIMPACT, delivering 1-on-1 coaching, emotional intelligence workshops, and training on leadership, communication, and other soft skills.

From September 2015 to September 2019, Alvin led the entire volunteer North American young professionals group for the Water Environment Federation (www.wef.org), which is an industry association of 33,000 passionate water environment professionals across Canada and the USA. Alvin leads salsa dancing training classes through SalsaSoul Production since 2013, which has directly influenced his ability to create engaging workshop experiences.

He immigrated to Hamilton in 2002 from the Philippines and the Middle East, and earned his Bachelor's in Chemical Engineering from McMaster University in 2009. He completed his coaching training with the Coaches Training Institute in Toronto, New York, Chicago, Singapore, and Barcelona.

Founder, mindspaceImpact | 2018 – Present

- **Leadership Training:** Provides 1-on-1 coaching for business leaders, entrepreneurs, and young professionals, evolving how they create emotionally-intelligent decisions and conversations to manage their teams, and their professional and personal relationships.
- **Workshops:** Designs and facilitates workshops and training programs covering emotional intelligence topics, including Meaningful Conversations, Crucial Conversations, Self-Awareness and Captivating Your Audience. Alvin focuses on integrating verbal, non-verbal (body language), and mental (mindset, emotional patterns).
- **Past / On-Going Clients:** Manulife Financial, Ontario Association Of Certified Engineering Technologists and Technicians (OACETT), the Water Environment Federation, McMaster University (Schools of Business and Engineering), Youth Employment Services, the City of Hamilton, STAPLES Canada, ACCES Employment, and Asians without Borders.

Senior Leadership Coach & Trainer, Leaders@Scale | March 2020 – Present

- **Leadership Training:** Delivers Leadership development training in 6-12 month engagements to executives and leaders in Canadian technology companies in scale-up stages.
- **Coaching:** Coaches executives and leaders of global tech companies across diverse industries (finance, food, law, enterprise software, construction, etc.)
- **Strategic Talent Development:** Closely works with tech company's people operations and human resources teams to identify growth opportunities for their top leaders, and crafts strategic changes to the content delivery in order to support the growth of the individuals.



Management Consultant, International engineering consulting firms | 2009 – 2019

- **Workshop Facilitation:** Led multi-stakeholder workshops for Ontario municipalities for the strategic management of public infrastructure assets, including water and wastewater facilities, public buildings, parks, recreational facilities, roads and bridges, etc.
- **Change Management:** Facilitated process improvements and the re-prioritization of municipal infrastructure budgets to minimize public and environmental safety risks and service disruption.
- **Stakeholder Management:** Managed construction management projects across the Greater Toronto Area, including engineering designers, contractors, and the public.
- **Award:** Ontario's Water industry Young Professional of the Year (2011, www.weao.org)

Salsa Dance Instructor / Choreographer / Performer | 2007 – Present

- Salsa Dance Instructor (since 2013) across the Greater Toronto Area, including the popular weekly Salsa at the Waterfront events in Hamilton, teaching salsa dancing for 150+ people.
- Since 2007, performed with multiple teams in the GTA, Ottawa, and Montreal. I have coached and choreographed salsa dance performance teams, performing at multi-cultural festivals.

Chair, Young Professionals Committee, Water Environment Federation | 2012 – 2020

- Led a 40-strong volunteer Young Professionals (YP) team from across the USA and Canada to run 9 leadership development programs, managing 100 university clubs, design competitions for 30+ university teams, and annual community building projects in Chicago and New Orleans.
- Developed Leadership Training programs for the annual Water Young Professionals Summit, training 150+ of the brightest water environment YP leaders from across North America on leadership competencies. Since 2012, I helped lead, design, and arrange speakers for the annual Summit program, which have been held in Miami, Phoenix, Savannah, Austin, and San Diego.