

The Learning Marketplace or Open Space Technology
The California Gathering For Person Centered Practices
October 4 & 5, 2017



What is The Learning Marketplace? Based on Open Space Technology, it is a powerful approach to addressing issues and exploring opportunities around an identified theme.

Why should I participate? This is your opportunity to dive deeper into topics that speak to you and your passions. You can introduce an issue or opportunity that is important to you or join in with other groups that have identified areas you want to address.

- Because you came to The Gathering with a particular issue/question you wanted to be sure is addressed?
- Because you have an opportunity, resource or approach you want to share? (It may be the answer to someone else's question.)
- Because would like to dialogue about and share with others what you have learned?

Benefits of participating:

- You are responsible for your own agenda, naming topics that you would like to address. So you are sure to get the learning you came to The Gathering for.
- Smaller, more intimate groups create a unique learning opportunity for every person present.

When is it? There will be a time slot allotted each day for the Marketplace to occur. Additionally, participants can suggest a meeting over lunch or before or after the event.

How do I contribute to and/or host a topic at the Learning Marketplace: During "Organizing the Learning Marketplace" on the first day of The Gathering participants will have the opportunity to "post" learning topics or questions on the Learning Marketplace schedule and claim a time and place for the learning/sharing to take place. Participants are then invited to sign up to attend any of the topics that they would like to explore in more depth.

During the Learning Marketplace, you are responsible for your own learning. If your needs aren't met, let the others in your group know. If you find that a "session" isn't what you thought it was going to be, and there is another that caught your interest, it's OK to move. If you know that you're only staying for part of an activity, please let the group host and other members know.

Some things to consider about the Learning Marketplace:

- The people present are always the right people for that group. No good worrying about all those who should have come, might have come, but didn't come.
- What ever happens is the only thing that could happen with this group at this time.
- You get what you put into the group discussion; ask questions, make connections, share your learning
- If you enjoy someone's contribution during your session, make a point of approaching them afterwards to let them know!

Suggestions for Topic Hosts



Congratulations on taking responsibility for your learning and being a support and guide for others to pursue their learning. As the Topic Host you will take the lead and guide the discussion.

1. Prior to claiming your time and place to meet please consider what might be the best way for your group to engage in discussion (e.g. having a brainstorming session around a particular issue; an informal discussion over breakfast; a presentation sharing something you've been doing that you're really pleased about).
2. Have everyone introduce themselves and why they came to this group.
3. Review the general topic and ask the group members what they need from the discussion.
4. Develop agreements about how the time will be spent so that there is a common understanding and no disappointments; if you have many areas of interest prioritize them or divide the time between sub topics. *For example, if several people have things that they want to share about activities that they're doing, and you're concerned about everyone having the chance to share, you might want to suggest a certain amount of time for each person's sharing (and have someone serve as timekeeper)*
5. **Different ways you might guide the session:**
 - Suggest the group share in ROUNDS. Rounds are a great way to give everyone a chance to participate with out interruption. Explain that during a Round everyone takes a turn to share uninterrupted, they are given all the time they need or the amount of time that has been decided is allocated per person. Participants have the option to share or to pass. Ideas are often expanded upon as the conversation goes from person to person.
 - Use a Person Centered Thinking Tool to frame your conversations. *For example, on a particular topic everyone could share the information using the 4 + 1. (What did they try? What did they learn? What are they pleased about? What are they concerned about?) Or try using What's Working Well/ What's Not Working or What Makes Sense / Does Not Make Sense.*
 - Record your learning or any action steps, or resources on flip charts, note pads or computers. You can share this info with members of the group after The Gathering.
 - If you have a large group, consider separating into two groups and perhaps reconvene the last ten minutes to share learning together.

If you have any questions or concerns about the Learning Market Place please contact Liz Rodgers at lrodgers@elarc.org