

The what, why and how of team science



UNDERSTANDING TEAM SCIENCE

Team science is when a group of scientists come together, often from different disciplines, to work collaboratively on a research project. These teams could be small, medium or large, and they could span a few or very many different disciplines.



A COLLABORATIVE CONTINUUM

Team science research happens along a collaborative continuum, starting from unidisciplinary through to varying levels of crossdisciplinarity. In multidisciplinary team science, researchers work independently, often in sequence, while interdisciplinary team science implies there is integration of methods and language among the team members. Transdisciplinary research is used when working across sectors, with specific populations or with communities of practice.



TEAM DYNAMICS

Teams go through five stages of development. Forming is when members of the team are introduced to each other, and is followed by Storming when leadership and work allocation conversations take place. Norming is when everyone understands their roles and what is expected of them, and the team begins Performing. At the end, Adjourning wraps up the project.



ACHIEVING THE BEST RESULTS

The best team science happens when members are equally motivated around a common goal, are self-aware and aware of the dynamics within the team, and have the skill sets and domain expertise to complete the project. Good leadership and mentorship provide additional strength to the team.



COLLABORATIVE AGREEMENTS

Trust can be built by discussing co-authorship and allocation of resources and work packages very early on. This is helped by drafting a collaborative agreement between the researchers concerned, setting expectations, outlining limitations, and providing potential solutions and avenues for impact.