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Roundtable Session Guide

What is a Roundtable Session?

At a Roundtable Session, you will debate and discuss issues relating to your practice area with a small group of colleagues at the **same level of experience** as you - new, experienced or advanced. It is recommended that a facilitator, who is internal or external to the group, leads the discussion.

The world of a sole or small firm lawyer or paralegal can be quite isolating and it can be a challenge to keep up on changes in the law. Roundtable Sessions give you the opportunity to have interactive peer to peer discussion, to share your experience, and to learn from others. This will also be an opportunity to network and to socialize with other practitioners in your area of law who are at the same level of experience.

Why organize a Roundtable Session?

It is generally recognised that people can accomplish and learn more by sharing their skills and resources than by working alone. When sharing ideas and interacting with others, your understanding of the issues is greater than if you were on your own.

“Thank you for your work in organising [the Roundtable Session]. ... I get more out of those two hours than I get in two days at many other programs.” -- Bryan Buttigieg, Lawyer

Some other benefits of participating in a Roundtable Session include:

- Hearing other perspectives on issues
- Pooling together a wider range of experience and knowledge
- Stimulating looking at the problem from many angles
- Receiving feedback on your ideas and thoughts
- Observing how other people work and think

Is a Roundtable Session an eligible activity for the CPD Requirement?

For participants: Yes, participants at a Roundtable Session of two or more lawyers or paralegals that is organized for the purpose of discussing content that comes within the CPD definition is eligible for the CPD Requirement.

For facilitators: Yes, lawyers or paralegals who facilitate a Roundtable Session may claim up to three hours of credit for every one hour session to reflect preparation time.

Accreditation for Professionalism Content

In order to be eligible for Professionalism Hours, the session must address topics related to professional responsibility, ethics and/or practice management and be accredited in advance by the Law Society of Upper Canada. You will need to complete an [Application for Accreditation of Alternate Eligible Educational Activities \(PDF\)](#) a minimum of 30 days in advance of the Roundtable Session date. See the Law Society's [CPD Accreditation Process](#) for more information.

Consider using one or more of the Law Society's [Professionalism Case Studies](#) in your session to obtain the professionalism credit. Case studies are based on actual situations in which a lawyer or paralegal was faced with a decision involving one or more ethical, professional responsibility, or practice management issues.

① Who should participate in the session?

Roundtable Sessions should be organized with no more than six participants per facilitator at a table. Large groups of participants should be divided into subgroups of six. It is recommended that participants are from the same geographical area, are at the same level of experience, and practise in the same area of law.

Your local law association can assist you in contacting colleagues in your practice area. Advertisements for your Roundtable Session can be posted electronically or at your local law library.

② Who should facilitate the session?

You will need to choose a facilitator for each of your topics. The facilitator, internal or external to your group, takes the role of the session leader to keep the discussion on track and productive. Facilitators are responsible for:

- Introducing the topic
- Creating an open forum for discussion
- Leading and encouraging discussion
- Asking good open-ended questions to stimulate thought
- Making sure everyone has an opportunity to participate
- Reinforcing and clarifying the content

③ What should be discussed at the session?

Limit your topics to two per hour. This allows time for introduction of the topic, a 25-minute discussion and a wrap-up of each issue. If required, there are several ways to source discussion points for your Roundtable Session:

For lawyers:

- Ask other lawyers in your area of law for topics
- Monitor online blogs dedicated to your practice area
- Review legal newspapers, magazines and law journals
- Look at CPD calendars for upcoming programs in your area of law and review the topics listed in the program agendas

For paralegals:

- Monitor online blogs dedicated to your practice area
- Look at CPD calendars for upcoming programs in your area of law and review the topics listed in the program agendas
- Review the Paralegal Society of Ontario and Paralegal Society of Canada website

④ Where and when should the Roundtable Session take place?

Your session can take place in a boardroom, restaurant, courthouse or law library. The discussion works best if participants can look at each other across a table while they talk about the issues. Consider scheduling your session over lunch, after work, or at a dinner meeting.

⑤ How long should the Roundtable Session be?

It is recommended that your session be one or two hours in length, depending on the number of topics to be discussed. No more than two topics should be scheduled per hour.

⑥ Follow-up?

Take a few minutes at the end of the session to review what has been discussed. Exchange contact information and consider staying in touch with the fellow participants.

Other resources are available for those who wish to facilitate a Roundtable Session. Please contact us at RC@lsuc.on.ca.