UC Irvine 趙 Chao Family Comprehensive Cancer Center

Collaboration Session Introduction

Melanie Funes, PhD

2026 Scientific Retreat

November 5, 2026

Collaboration Session: 90-Minute Topic-Based Format

Start of the collaboration process, not the end

Goals

Collaboration Catalyst

Create a structured, high-energy environment to **generate new cross-program ideas, identify unexpected connections, and form collaborative teams** around a shared scientific topic.

Data Gathering Exercise

Capture and cluster concepts to identify recurring themes, cross-program convergence, unmet needs, and investigator interest. Use data to **inform new pilot funding opportunities, working groups, and strategic initiatives**.

Structure

3 Rooms, 1 Topic each, 90 minutes

- 10 participants per table
- Mixed representation (Programs and scientific discipline)
- Program Leaders split across rooms as moderators/facilitators
- Standardized materials and instructions at each table

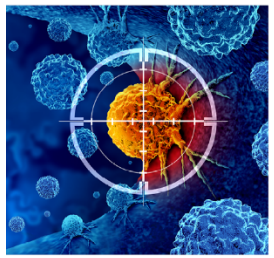
Room Assignment:
Check the **BACK** of your name tag

Common Question Framework

- **Big Scientific Opportunity**
  What important problem within the topic could we address?
- **Unexpected Collaboration**
  What could be combined (disciplines, technologies, datasets, populations, models, etc.) to address this problem?
- **Fundable Next Step**
  What pilot project could generate preliminary data needed for a competitive collaborative grant within 12-18 months?

COLLABORATION SESSIONS

1:15pm Concurrent Collaboration Sessions

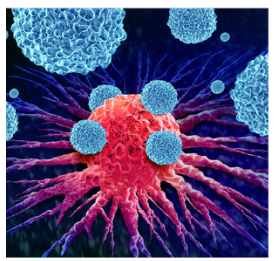


Targets to Therapy

Cliffs Room

This session will explore how molecular target identification and validation connect with drug discovery, medicinal chemistry, and pharmacokinetic and toxicity testing. Discussions will focus on advancing promising compounds through cellular and animal models toward human studies. The goal is to connect investigators across this pipeline and strengthen the collaborations essential to translating discoveries into treatments.

BIDD	SPT	CC
TOPIC LEAD Brian Paegel, PhD	John Lowengrub, PhD	Gelareh Sadigh, MD



Tumor Microenvironment

Breakwater Ballroom

This session will bring together investigators to explore how cancer cells interact with immune, stromal, and metabolic environments to influence tumor progression and treatment response. Participants will identify unanswered questions that benefit from shared expertise across cancer types and research programs. The goal is to develop collaborative projects that advance therapeutic strategies and build teams for R01s and multi-investigator grants.

BIDD	SPT	CC
Anand Ganesan, MD, PhD	TOPIC LEAD Roberto Tinoco, PhD	Wendy Cozen, DO, MPH



Lifestyle Interventions

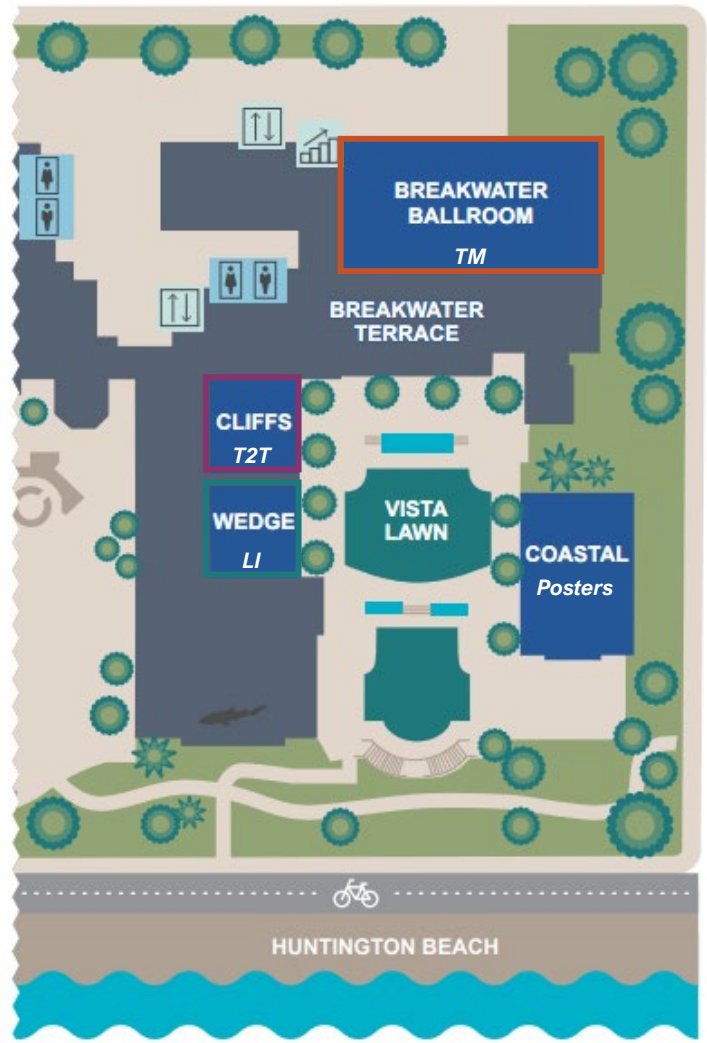
Wedge Room

This session will explore lifestyle/behavioral interventions, with an emphasis on nutrition. Discussions will include assessments (e.g., novel technologies, gut microbiome) and interventions related to biological, behavioral, and clinical outcomes (for both cancer prevention and survivorship).

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Munjal Acharya, PhD	Angela Fleischman,MD,PhD	TOPIC LEAD Joel Milam, PhD

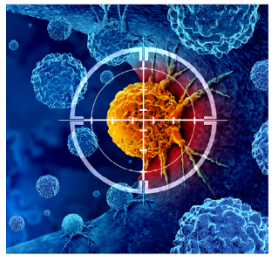
LOCATION

The Waterfront Beach Resort, a Hilton Hotel
Twin Dolphin Tower



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Targets to Therapy — Cliffs Room

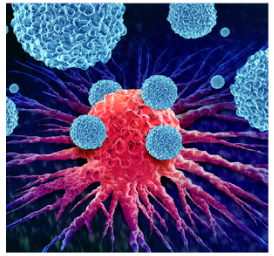
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Max: 60 participants
6 tables of 10 participants each




Jarema | Lee, PhD

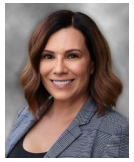


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BIDD	SPT	CC
Anand Ganesan, MD, PhD	TOPIC LEAD Roberto Tinoco, PhD	Wendy Cozen, DO, MPH

Max: 180 participants
18 tables of 10 participants each




Funes, PhD | Martinez, PhD

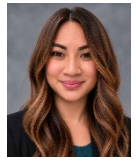


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Max: 60 participants
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Bagaporo, MBA | Parshad, MS

Common Question Framework

Big Scientific Opportunity
What important problem within the topic could we address?

Unexpected Collaboration
What could be combined (disciplines, technologies, datasets, populations, models, etc.) to address this problem?

Fundable Next Step
What pilot project could generate preliminary data needed for a competitive collaborative grant within 12-18 months?

Process

1 Reverse Pitch
10 min

- PLs introduce the scientific topic
- Frame session around **unmet problems and opportunities that require collaboration**
- Common Question Framework

2 Introductions & Ideas
10 min

- Table introductions
- Select table lead and reporter
- Work independently (and silently)
- One idea per “Idea Card”
- **Generate first. Evaluate later.**

3 Table Brainstorming
15 min

- Share ideas with the table
- Discuss
- Combine complementary concepts
- Build on ideas
- Generate additional ideas
- **Expand the possibilities.**

4 Cluster & Identify Themes
15 min

- Tables physically group related “Idea Cards” into broader themes
- Identify emerging themes
- Identify repeated ideas
- **Shift from divergence to convergence.**

5 Develop Priority Concepts
15 min

- Table selects **one or two Collaborative Concepts** and complete “Concept Cards”

6 Lightning Report Out
15 min (30 sec -1 min each table)

- Each table gives a short, standardized report-out

  “Our concept is___. It brings together ___ and ___ to address ___. The key additional expertise/resource we need is ___.”

- As read, “Concept Cards” are posted on the **Collaboration Map**

7 Room Discussion & Close
10 min

- PLs identify recurring themes across the table presentations
- Discuss
- Intent is to identify a small portfolio of the strongest opportunities
- Participants can add their names to theme area “Interested Investigator Roster” for remainder of retreat

8 Outputs & Follow-Up
Post-Retreat

Outputs
- 10 primary Collaborative Concepts
- Map of scientific themes
- Participants interested in each
- Expertise/resources needed/available

Follow-Up
- Synthesize outputs from 3 rooms
- Identify opportunities

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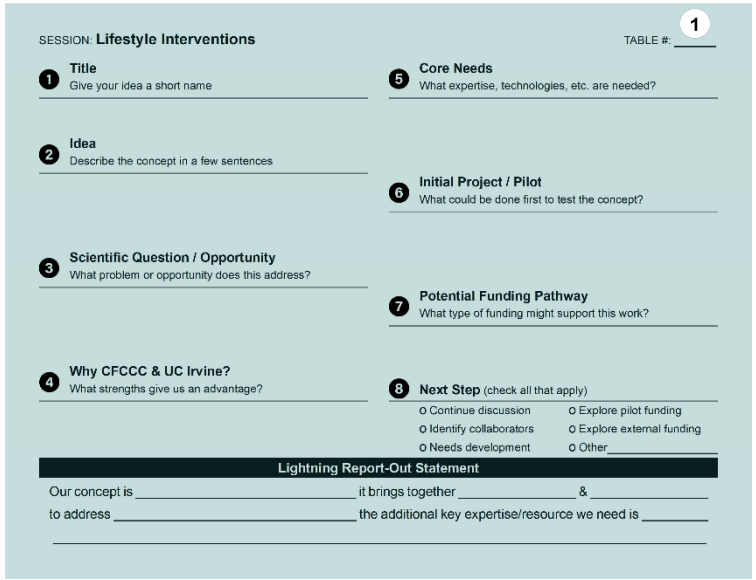
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- Synthesize outputs from 3 rooms
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Collaboration Session: Materials at each table

IDEA CARD

4.25 x 3.67

per person = 5
+ 10 extra
per table = 60



SESSION: **Lifestyle Interventions** TABLE #: 1

1 **Title** Give your idea a short name

2 **Idea** Describe the concept in a few sentences

3 **Scientific Question / Opportunity** What problem or opportunity does this address?

4 **Why CFCCC & UC Irvine?** What strengths give us an advantage?

5 **Core Needs** What expertise, technologies, etc. are needed?

6 **Initial Project / Pilot** What could be done first to test the concept?

7 **Potential Funding Pathway** What type of funding might support this work?

8 **Next Step** (check all that apply)

o Continue discussion o Explore pilot funding
o Identify collaborators o Explore external funding
o Needs development o Other_____

Lightning Report-Out Statement

Our concept is _____ it brings together _____ & _____
to address _____ the additional key expertise/resource we need is _____

per table = 2

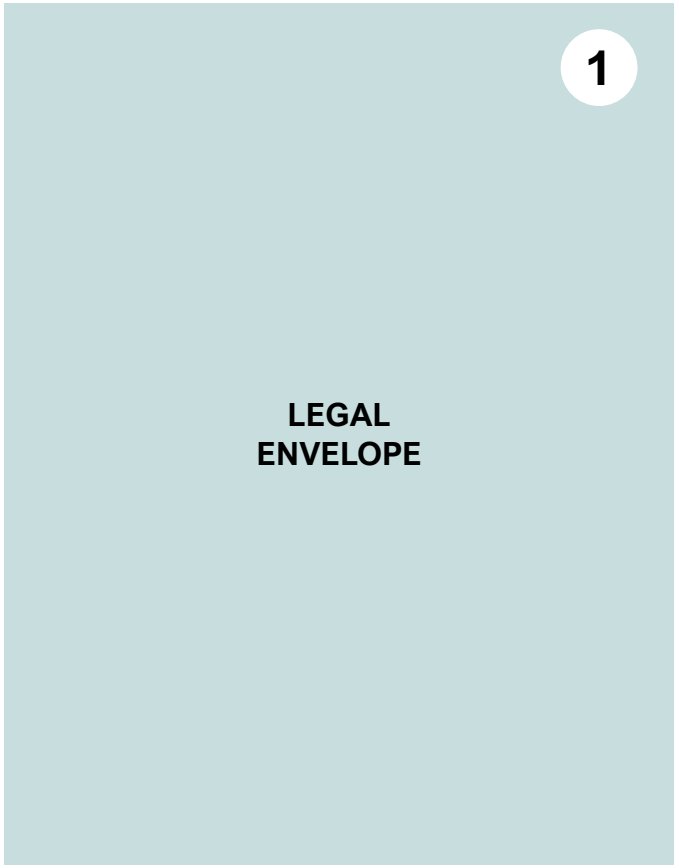


SESSION: **Lifestyle Interventions** TABLE #: 1

Roster

First Name	Last Name	Email

per table = 1

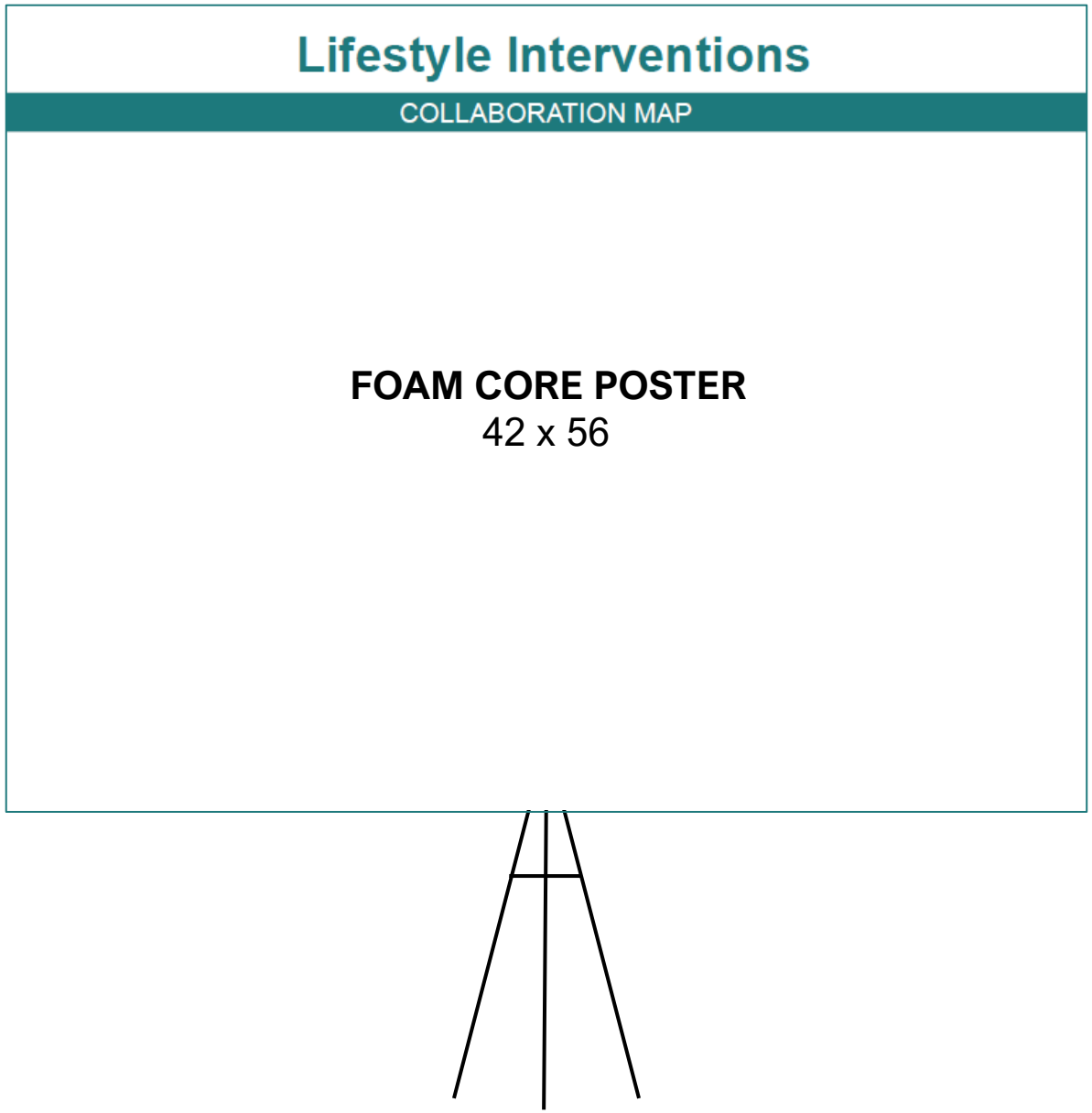


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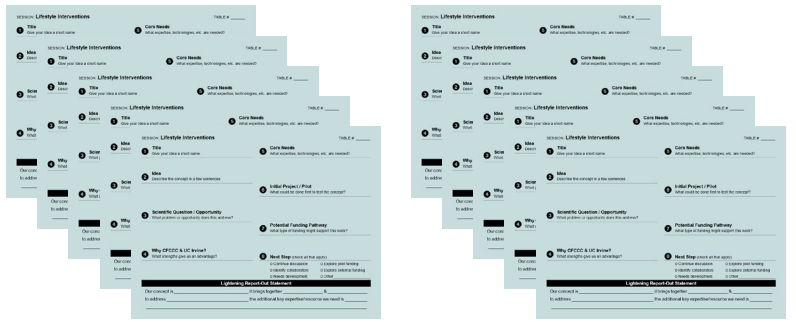
LEGAL ENVELOPE

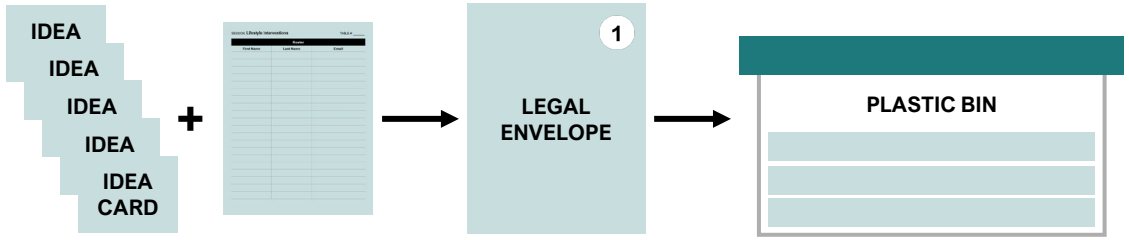
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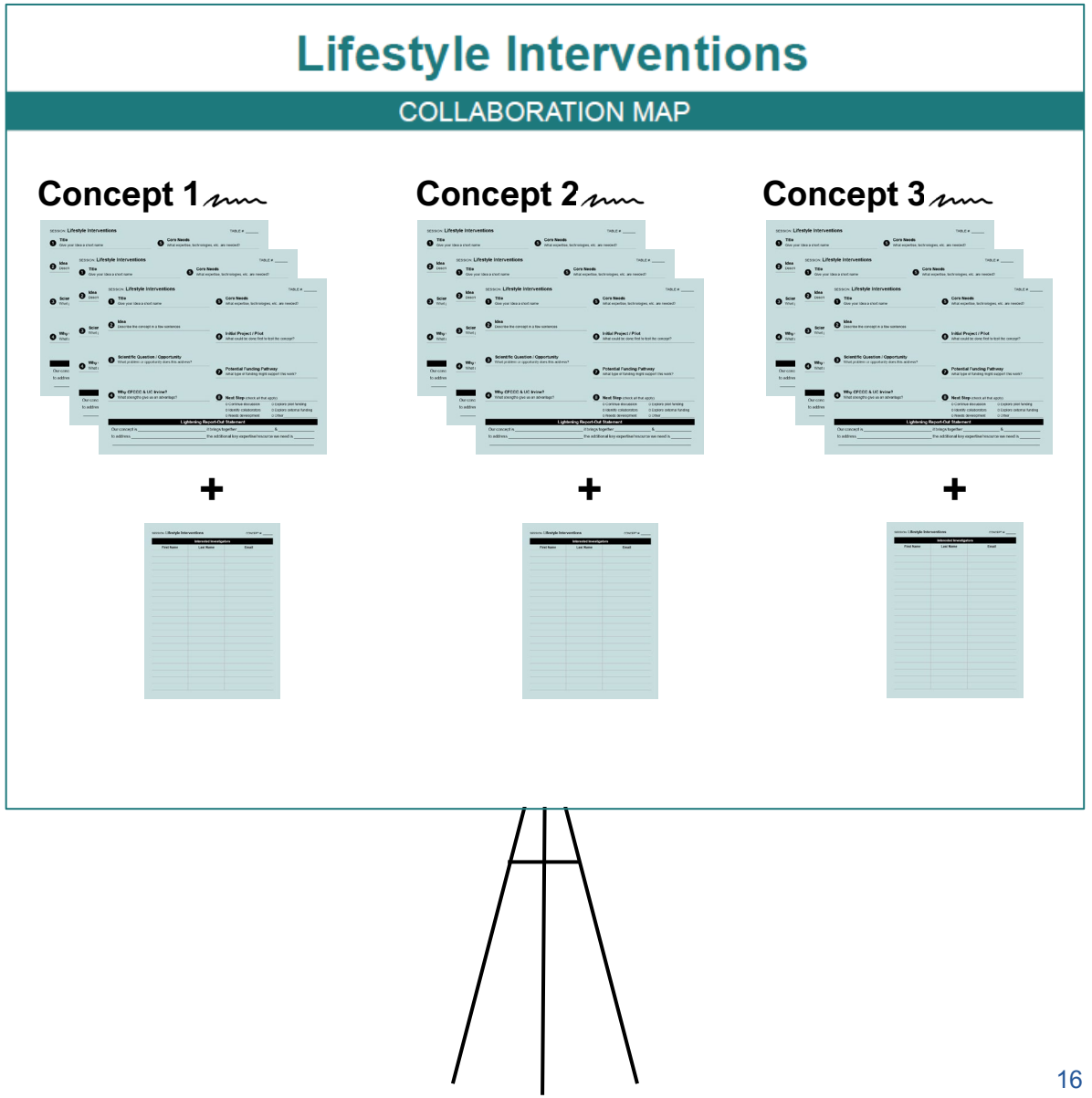
Collaboration Session: Additional poster in the room



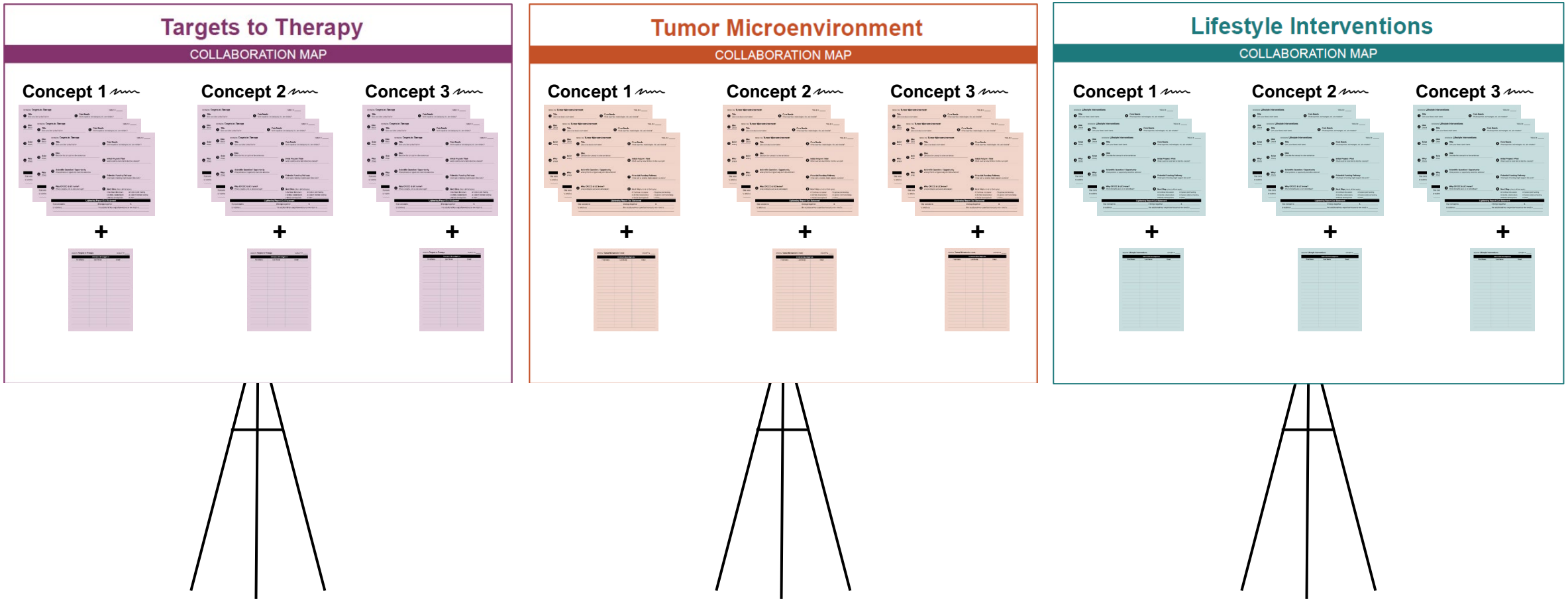
Collaboration Session: Materials during room discussion







Collaboration Session: Post-session review of concepts



UC Irvine 趙 Chao Family
Comprehensive Cancer Center

Thank You

Enjoy lunch. We will see you in the Collaboration Sessions!