



Top Network CONNECTIONS

Connections is here!

Welcome to the first issue of ToP Connections! We are pleased to bring this new publication to our community to help inspire and inform our members about the ToP Network mission.

Beth and I are delighted to be your ToP Network Board Co-Chairs in 2025 and are excited to share with you our thoughts and goals in our upcoming columns each month. We'd also like to give a big thanks to Mike Beebe as our past co-chair. His dedication to our group has been fabulous and we deeply appreciate all he's done for the organization!

We hope you like the launch of our newsletter and know it's a work in progress that will evolve in ways that best support our members. We are happy Melissa Zelenak is giving us hand with our communications efforts. Our goal is helping our community learn and grow. We look forward to great things with you in the new year.

Journeying together,

Shelby & Beth



Shelby Pierce, Beth Stoffmacher, Suzanne Esber, Emily Kujawa, Ian Johnson, Karie Terhark, Manal Sayid, Rachael Mizuno, Ronda Alexander, and Mike Beebe

Thank you so much to our 2025 Board members! We appreciate everything you will get done for the ToP Network during your term! Stay tuned for next month's issue of ToP Connections and learn more about our new 2025 board members.



SAVE THE DATE
February 20-22, 2025

[Click here to register](#)

Registration Fee:
\$100 for ToP Network Members
\$250 for Non-Members

10 Scholarships
available to members!

Inside this issue:
The Gathering 2025
Meet our Members: Librada Estrada
ToP Member Benefits



Scan here
to find the
ToP
Network
online!

The Gathering - 2025

The Strategy of Transformation - Cultivating Personal and Organizational Impact

This year's ToP Network Gathering offers a unique blend of learning and collaboration! Join us for workshops exploring topics such as facilitation design, tangible business and organizational skills, strategic planning, and self-care for facilitators.

ENGAGING PLENARY, WORKSHOPS & NETWORKING BREAKS

JOIN A DYNAMIC PLENARY SESSION AND FOCUSED SMALL-GROUP WORKSHOPS EXPLORING FACILITATION, TRANSFORMATION, AND PROFESSIONAL GROWTH. CREATE YOUR OWN ZOOM MEET-UPS TO DISCUSS TOPICS THAT INTEREST YOU OR HAVE THOSE INFORMAL CONVERSATIONS. WE WILL PROVIDE RECORDINGS OF THE SESSIONS TO REGISTRANTS POST-GATHERING.

STRATEGIC PLANNING

BE PART OF SHAPING THE FUTURE OF THE TOP COMMUNITY BY PARTICIPATING IN OR OBSERVING THE TOP NETWORK'S STRATEGIC PLANNING SESSIONS.

COMMUNITY BUILDING

CONNECT WITH COLLEAGUES FROM AROUND THE WORLD ON THE WHOVA APP. EXCHANGE IDEAS, SHARE RESOURCES, AND BUILD MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS.

February 19-22, 2025 Virtual by Zoom Schedule Overview

Feb 19 (7:00 am PT - 2:00 pm PT): ToP Trainer Meetup for Apprentice, Mentor, Qualified trainers

Feb 20 (7:00 am PT - 4:00 pm PT): ToP Gathering Plenary, Workshops, & Networking Breaks

Feb 21 (7:00 am PT - 4:00 pm PT): ToP Network Strategic Planning Sessions

Feb 22 (7:00 am PT - 1:00 pm PT): ToP Network Strategic Planning Sessions

Registration Fee

Feb 19 - No Charge

Feb 20 \$100 - ToP Network member
\$250 nonmember

Attendance pays for session recordings provided post-Gathering

Feb 21 & 22 - No Charge

Registration deadline: Feb 14

Meet our Members

Librada Estrada: Dedicated to Diversity and Development

If you've enrolled in a ToP BBIPOC personal development course with the ToP Network, you may say muchas gracias to Librada Estrada for being a big part of making them happen. Her dedication to bringing diversity and inclusion to the network is clear and something that gives her satisfaction and joy. As the first Latina Co-Chair of the ToP Network board, her work has helped the organization grow and look toward a future of that includes everyone.

Librada graduated from Boston University with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and then went to graduate school at George Washington University where she earned a Master of Public Health in Health Promotion/Disease Prevention. In the year 2000 or so Librada learned about ToP facilitation methods, and like many ToP members, became enamored and set herself on a path to learn more.

Encouraging Librada on her journey was her friend and fellow ToP facilitator, Terri Mills, who introduced her to Deb Burnight. "All roads lead to Deb," said Terri to Librada when it comes to learning ToP methods. With Deb as inspiration, Librada went full speed ahead and eventually opened her own

consultancy in 2012. As an Erness Wright Irvin ToP Trainer Fellow, Librada is on the dual training track with ToP, working on the Certified ToP Facilitator (CTF) and Apprentice Trainer programs. Collectively, trainers have donated over \$24,000 for this fellowship program and Librada is taking full advantage of this opportunity to help herself and others.

Some advice she offers to anyone learning about ToP is to give yourself permission to use the methods and learn something new each time you use them. She also says that focusing on gaining confidence in small steps and getting to know folks in the ToP network is important. Librada believes that building relationships with others who are knowledgeable and practicing the ToP methods will help people succeed in their careers and achieve their goals. "The folks in the ToP Network are some of the most generous and supportive people I've ever met," she said. "Engaging in network activities will provide you an opportunity to experience the methods as a participant and to observe folks using them with real groups."



There are many people to thank for their dedication to the ToP Network! At this time we'd like to extend a huge thank you to the 2024 ToP Network Board members. Their volunteer service and dedication to the ToP mission is deeply appreciated and we wish them the best in 2025 and beyond.

At The Gathering-2025 virtual participants will get to meet Librada in person and find a vibrant, dedicated facilitator who's excited and eager to go. "I love co-facilitating" she says, "and am excited to be collaborating with Ronda Alexander, the Board, and others for the three sessions. We are working to design interactive workshops that will provide opportunities for folks to share their ideas on how we can continue to grow. I'm also looking forward to being in community with folks that want to expand their facilitation practice."

As you can see, Librada loves to help people and her advice for practicing ToP methods is sound. Her dedication to diversity, equity, and inclusion has made a significant impact to the ToP Network's mission and the membership's development and growth now and into the future. *Muchas gracias, Librada!*

Why become a ToP Network member?

ToP Network is a membership-based association that connects and supports ToP practitioners in order to improve and expand the use of ToP methods. Join us today!

- Membership in a unique learning community of facilitators and trainers
- Access to ToP wisdom and experience through virtual interchange with ToP Network colleagues
- Opportunities to network with other ToP Network members for professional development and client engagement
- Input and engagement with Top Network Task Teams and the Board
- Reduced rates to the Annual Gathering, Professional Development Workshops, and events
- Access to an online Resource Library where we share the collective wisdom and writings of ToP practitioners
- Listing your ToP Network Membership as a professional affiliation on your resume

February Issue:

**Meet our
Members:
Jane Stallman**

**A ToP Review:
Becoming a
Certified
Facilitator**

**Co-Chair Corner:
Good words from
Shelby & Beth**

A ToP Review: ToP Facilitation Methods (TFM)

Focused Conversation

- A universal framework to generate meaningful, productive dialogue around any topic.
- Conduct purposeful, productive meetings and discussions
- Stimulate candid feedback
- Surface new ideas and solutions

Consensus Workshop

- Infuse a group with creative energy and bring diverse opinions and perspectives into an agreement everyone can own and support.
- Tap rational and intuitive thought processes
- Respectfully integrate diverse ideas into a larger whole
- Generate practical and creative solutions from multiple perspectives
- Minimize conflict and achieve consensus

Action Planning

- Quickly plan and prepare a group project for launch, and develop shared commitment to timelines, tasks, and success measures.
- Analyze the current reality and set inspiring goals
- Maximize group ownership and creativity
- Craft a doable plan with clear ownership, timelines and success measures