



Building Collaboration Skills

Collaboration 2009 Learn it. Live it. Love it

Building Collaboration Skills

- 1. What is collaboration**
- 2. When to choose collaboration**
- 3. Determining readiness**
- 4. Collaboration process**
- 5. Successful collaboration**
- 6. Ineffective collaboration**
- 7. When collaboration does harm**
- 8. Barriers to collaboration**
- 9. Making collaboration work**

What is Collaboration?



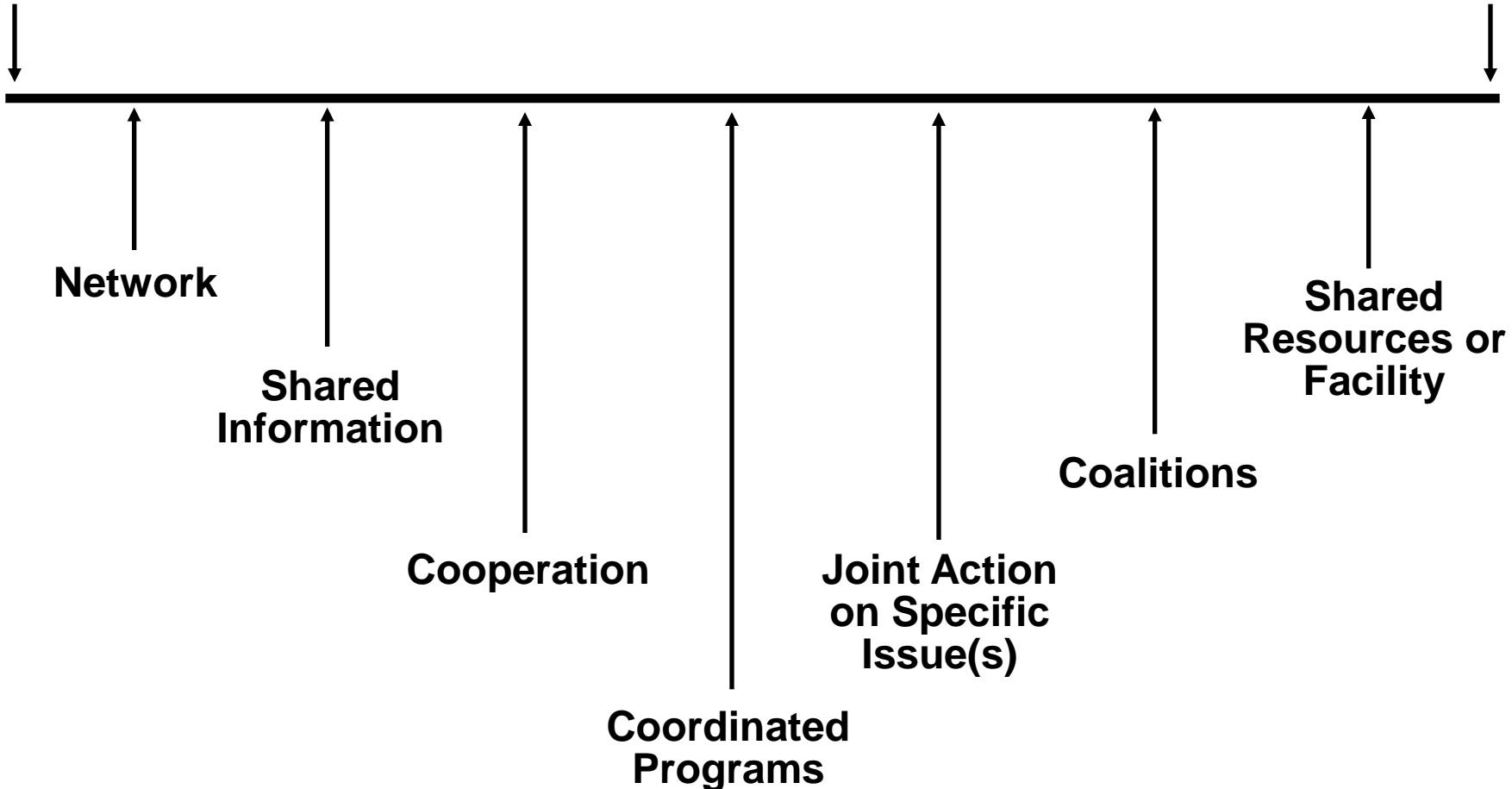
The Red & Green Game

| RED | GREEN |
|-----|-------|
| | |

Continuum

WORKING ALONE

COLLABORATION



Definition

“Collaboration is a process through which parties who see different aspects of a problem can constructively explore their differences and search for solutions that go beyond their own limited visions of what is possible.”

***Collaboration* by Barbara Gray**

The object is to create a richer, more comprehensive appreciation of the problem and to develop more effective solutions than any individual or organization could develop alone.

Definition

“A voluntary, strategic association of public, private and nonprofit organizations joined together to enhance each other’s capacity to achieve a common purpose by sharing risks, responsibilities and rewards.”

**Art Himmelman, Hubert Humphrey
Institute for Public Policy**

The objective is that multi-sector collaboration must be more than an organizational strategy or technique; it must include philosophical and political transformation of the public, private and nonprofit sectors.

Definition

“Collaboration involves a more formal and sustained commitment than either cooperative agreements or coalitions. Collaboration builds on the conviction that, while retaining uniqueness and autonomy, organizations that share values and goals can accomplish more by working together than working alone.”

Community Collaboration Manual
National Voluntary Health and Social Welfare Organization

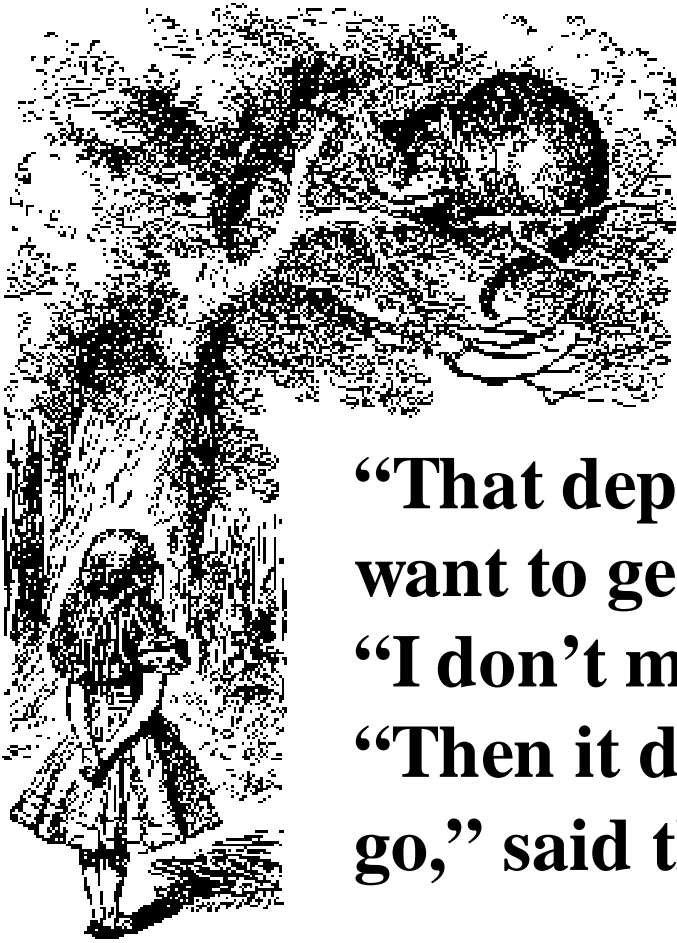
Critical Dynamics

- 1. Stakeholders are interdependent**
- 2. Solutions emerge out of constructive resolutions of differences**
- 3. Decisions are jointly owned**
- 4. Stakeholders assume collective responsibility for future direction**
- 5. All players are equal**
- 6. Collaboration is an emerging process (Stakeholders grow in their capacity to collaborate)**

When to Choose Collaboration



What do You Want to Accomplish?



“Cheshire Puss,” Alice began. “Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?”

“That depends a good deal on where you want to get to,” said the cat.

“I don’t much care where...,” said Alice.

“Then it doesn’t matter which way you go,” said the cat.

—*Alice in Wonderland*

When to Collaborate

- 1. Eliminate duplicated services**
- 2. Achieve common outcomes**
- 3. Higher quality of service**
- 4. Improve organizational skills, commitment, and fellowship**
- 5. Innovation**
- 6. Deeper understanding of issues**
- 7. Strengthen and improve programs**
- 8. Strengthen political clout**
- 9. Change public policies**
- 10. Solve problems more effectively**

Determining Readiness



Collaboration starts within your own organization.

What must be changed to make collaboration work for you?

Are You Ready?

- 1. Why do you want to collaborate?**
- 2. What do you hopes to achieve?**
- 3. What resources—technical, personnel, time, money, etc.—can you offer?**
- 4. What do you need from others?**
- 5. What is your collaboration “ability?”**
- 6. Who will represent you? Do they have authority and time to do it?**
- 7. Who are your potential partners?**

What Can/Will You Offer?

| Describe Specific Resources | Adequate/Available? |
|--|----------------------------|
| Collaborative experience | |
| Relationships with potential partners | |
| Staff who can participate | |
| Facilities to share | |
| Equipment, materials, etc. | |
| Board willing to explore concept | |
| Other | |

Interpersonal Skills

- **Willingness and ability to:**
 - **Change**
 - **Think in new ways**
 - **Lead and follow**
 - **Take calculated risks**
- **Self starter / strong leader**
- **Include others**
- **Solve problems / articulate issues, problems tactfully, openly**
- **Strong interpersonal skills**

Collaboration Prospects

Who *might* be a good partner?

| Potential Partners (Who?) | Potential Benefits to them (Why?) | What do they bring? |
|--------------------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| | | |

What kind of Collaboration?

Betterment

Empowerment



- **Short-term effort to achieve outcome**
- **No long-term ownership; may be no significant change in relationships**
- **Can be top down**
- **Transformation of all participants**
- **Long-term joint ownership, integration of decision-making, organizational and policy change**
- **Bottom up only**

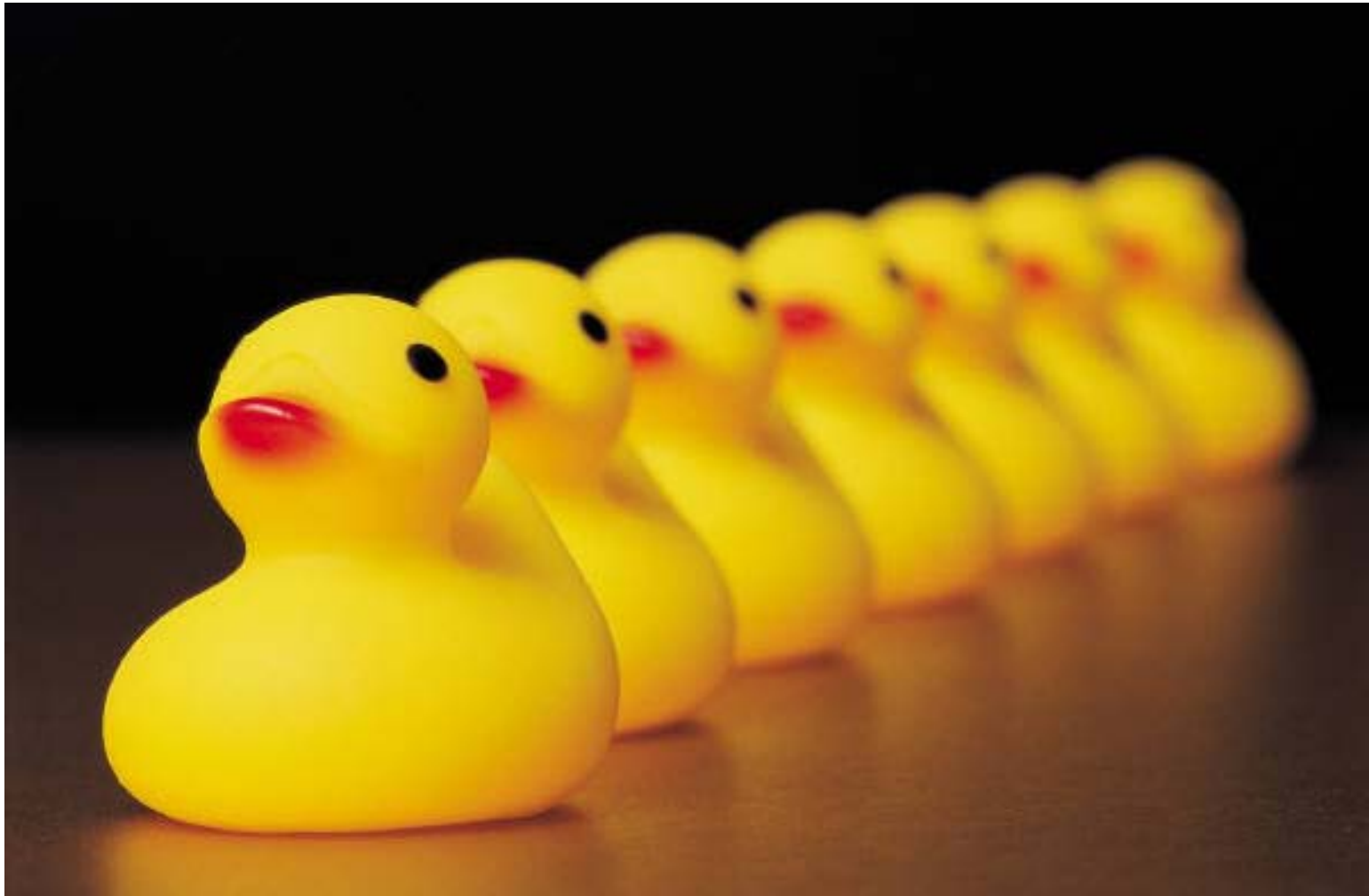
Readiness Exercise

- 1. Why do you want to collaborate?**
- 2. What outcome do you hope to achieve?**
- 3. What organizational characteristics will help collaboration?**
- 4. What organizational characteristics will hinder collaboration?**
- 5. Who must be partners?**
- 6. Why is collaboration the best choice?**
- 7. What commitment will you make to the process?**

Collaboration Works Best When . . .

- **Other methods cannot achieve goals.**
- **Not pursued only for financial reasons.**
- **You and your organization are willing to enhance / build the capacity of other organizations. (More than any other activity, this step increases the potential of collaboration.)**

Collaboration Process



First Steps

- 1. Board approves *discussion only***
- 2. Contact possible partners**
- 3. Form pre-collaboration task force:**
 - a. Agree on process to be used**
 - b. Identify outcome(s) of collaboration**
 - c. Determine who does what**
 - d. Set dates, deadlines, etc.**
 - e. Identify other stakeholders**
 - f. Assess problems you may experience**
- 4. Set meeting/retreat to define working principles (May need facilitator)**

Working Principles

In retreat, or over several meetings, decide:

- 1. Mission and vision of collaboration**
- 2. Mandates or requirements**
- 3. Constituencies you are answerable to**
- 4. What are benefits of the collaboration**
- 5. Values, working principles, etc. that participants *cannot* compromise**
- 6. Values, working principles, etc. that participants *can* compromise**

Next Steps

- 1. What will collaboration cost (tangible/ intangible) Where will resources come from?**
- 2. Who/what is weakest link in the process? How will it be managed?**
- 3. What will be role of governing boards?**
- 4. How will decisions be made?**
- 5. How will “collaborative skills” be improved?**
- 6. Agree on specific outcome / project.**

A Organize

- 1. Bring players together**
- 2. Secure commitment**
- 3. Develop common definition of the problem(s) and outcome(s)**
- 4. Discuss administrative and organizational structure**
- 5. Determine who will contribute what**
- 6. Establish ground rules**

B Basic Decisions

- 1. What are we here to do?**
- 2. Who is leader/convenor?**
- 3. Who else should be here?**
- 4. How will we manage conflicts?**
- 5. What commitments are we willing to make?**
- 6. What benefits do individuals and/or agencies need from this collaboration?**
- 7. How / when will we meet?**

C Set Direction

- 1. Meet regularly**
- 2. Select joint project**
- 3. Determine how information will be gathered and communicated**
- 4. Identify goals and objectives**
- 5. Develop action strategies**
- 6. Activate sub-groups to implement actions**

D Implement

- 1. Get “ownership” from outside groups**
- 2. Expand support base**
- 3. Monitor agreements / ensure follow-through / accountability**
- 4. Share resources / responsibility**
- 5. Formalize policies, common concepts**
- 6. Achieve some kind of outcome by this point to keep people involved**

F Institutionalize

- 1. Commit to commitment to**
- 2. Formalize:**
 - a. Income source(s)**
 - b. Services and program**
 - c. Stakeholders**
- 3. Formalize priorities, common purpose, operating procedures**
- 4. Confirm community support**
- 5. Incorporate / find home**
- 6. Adequate staffing**

Planning and Strategies ..

- **Clear, specific goals, objectives and policies**
- **Unique purpose that can only be done through collaboration**
- **Shared vision**
- **Commitment to producing outcome**
- **Personal goals = collaboration goals**

Structure . . .

- **Agreed-upon structure, practice and methods**
- **Shared responsibility for decision-making, problem solving, and follow through**
- **Member-driven agenda**
- **Adaptable, clear roles and agendas**
- **Personal stake in process or outcome**
- **Defined roles and responsibilities**
- **Effective leadership**

Communication . .

- **Ongoing, open communications, both internal and external**
- **Established communication channels**
- **Clear lines of responsibility**
- **Articulate outcome**
- **Sharing all information, knowledge**
- **Conflict—a necessary ingredient**

Attitude, Behavior. . .

- **Commitment to your own role and support for roles of others**
- **Reinforcing trust**
- **Communicating respect**
- **Creating understanding**
- **Spiritual commitment**
- **Willingness to build capacity of others**
- **Commitment to positive relationships**
- **Solving interpersonal problems**
- **Honest enjoyment of each other**

Participation . . .

- **Consistent, reliable participation**
- **Clear roles and guidelines**
- **Personal and organizational matches needs of collaboration**
- **Adequate cross-section of agencies**
- **Self-interest is benefited by collaboration**
- **Success for one must be success for all**

Interpersonal . . .

- **Do things together**
- **History of working together**
- **Willingness to reduce barriers**
- **Commitment to and process for problem solving**
- **Conflict resolution**
- **Win-win politics (not zero sum)**
- **Flexibility, ability to compromise**

Skillful Collaboration

- **Leadership must be shared**
- **Build in benefits to the community**
- **Build in on-going capacity building for stakeholders**
- **Balance efficiency and participation**
- **Have a highly-skilled facilitator**
- **Meet regularly**
- **Regularly implement action**
- **Encourage (require) high level of participation**

Collaboration Growth

Evolves in 4 phases:

| | | |
|----------------------|---|--------------------|
| Non-agreement | → | Broad |
| | → | Agreement |
| Separateness | → | Integration |
| Defensiveness | → | Sharing |
| Pieces | → | Gestalt |

*from Frank Crookes
Kellogg Community College*

Successful Collaboration



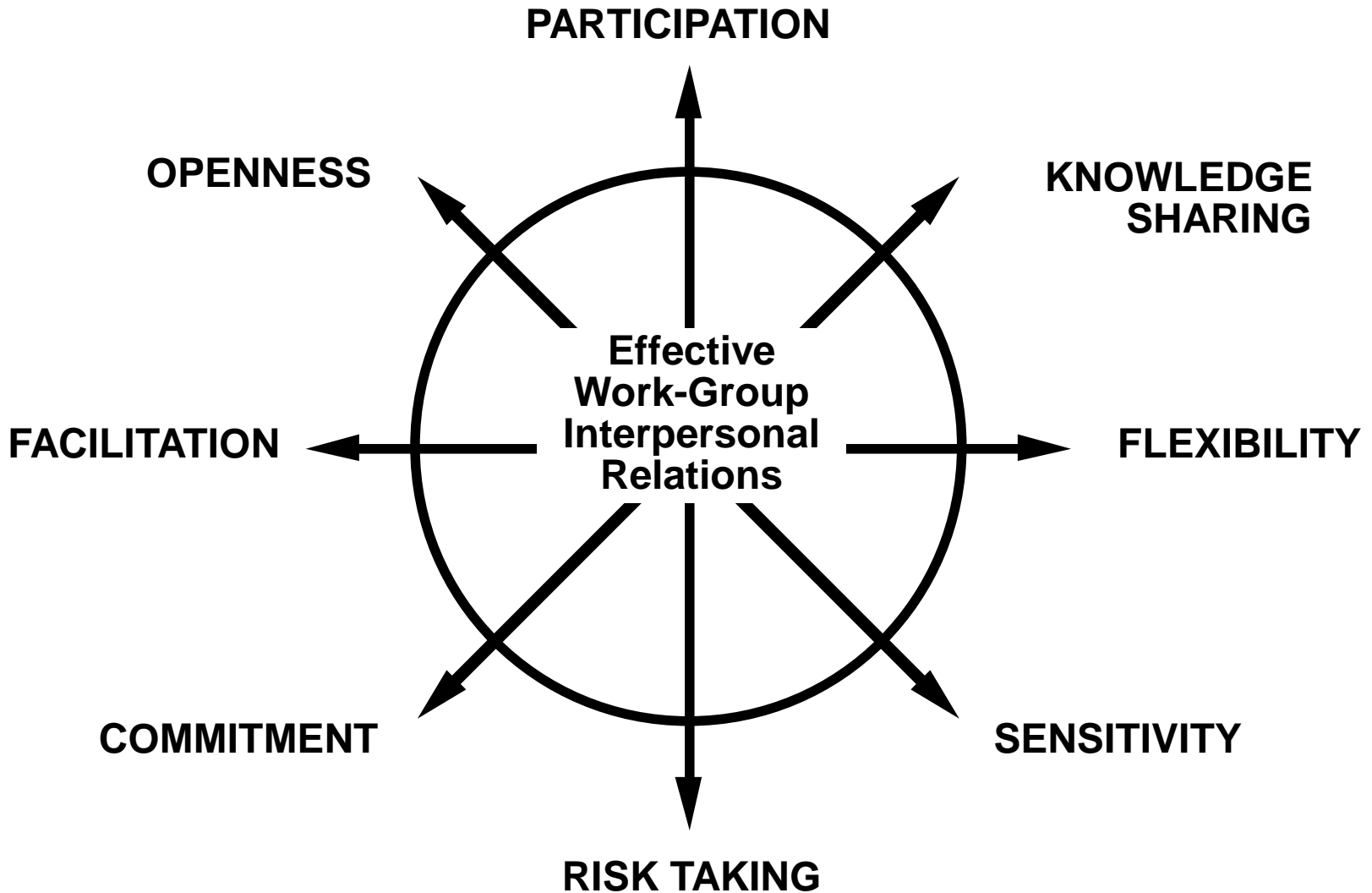
Successful Collaboration

- **Shared vision, shared power**
- **Member-driven decision-making**
- **Stakeholders linked horizontally not vertically**
- **Effective leader / convenor**
- **Clear, efficient structure**
- **Trust and respect for all**
- **Ungrudging participation**
- **Activities and programs that evolve over time**

Successful Collaborations

- **Address meaningful issue / outcome**
- **Readily available staff support**
- **Pooled funding—not categorized**
- **Adequate resources to do work**
- **Services brokered by one agency, or cross-agency case-managed**
- **Client access to wide array of services delivered in flexible manner**
- **Historical precedents that are incorporated into the collaboration.**

Dimensions of Collaboration





Ineffective Collaboration

Why Collaboration Malfunctions

- 1. Commitment not integrated into day-to-day operations**
- 2. Poor understanding of what, how to do it**
- 3. Poor collaboration skills**
- 4. Collaboration shunted to a staff position**
- 5. Problem, need assumptions not valid**
- 6. Leaders not committed to or able to change.**
- 7. Participants don't accept each other**
- 8. Bogged down in detail**
- 9. Tried to do too much**
- 10. Process is boring, not well managed**
- 11. People involved for wrong reasons**

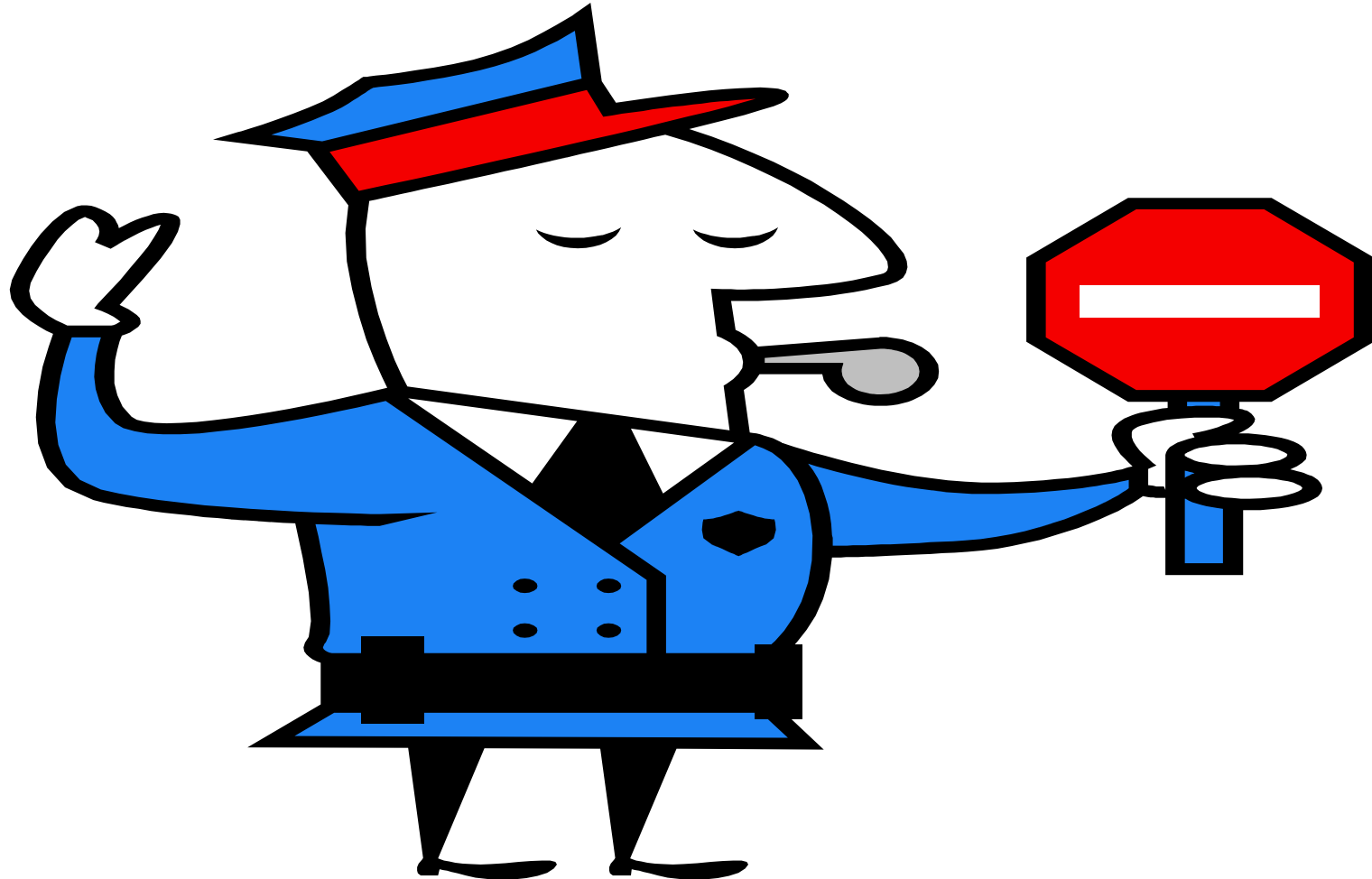
Doesn't Work When ..

- **Don't not want to**
- **Done to appease others**
- **Can't see beyond own interests**
- **Differences turned into conflicts**
- **Issues ill defined**
- **Ineffective leadership**

Doesn't Work When . . .

- **People feel undermined**
- **Differing levels of expertise**
- **Differing access to information.**
- **Problems are technically complex**
- **Stakeholders are adversarial**
- **Existing process has exacerbated the problem**
- **No trust**
- **Lots of turf**
- **Not enough time**

When Collaboration Harms



Negative Collaboration

- **Loss of experimentation, which may stifle creativity**
- **Services become less attuned to special needs**
- **Loss of sensitivity to particular groups**
- **Money differences create feelings of inequity**
- **Push for immediate cost cutting or savings**
- **Bureaucratization**

Barriers to Collaboration

- **We simply resist change**
- **Cultural norm of individualism**
- **Institutional disincentives, concerns about mission**
- **Limited and/or inadequate resources**
- **Historical and/or ideological barriers**
- **Difficulty in deciding how to allocate scarce resources**

Barriers to Collaboration

- **Different perceptions of risk**
- **Technical complexity of problem you want to address**
- **Tradition of categorical funding**
- **Organizational culture may work against collaboration**
- **Collaborating for financial reasons**

Minimizing Barriers

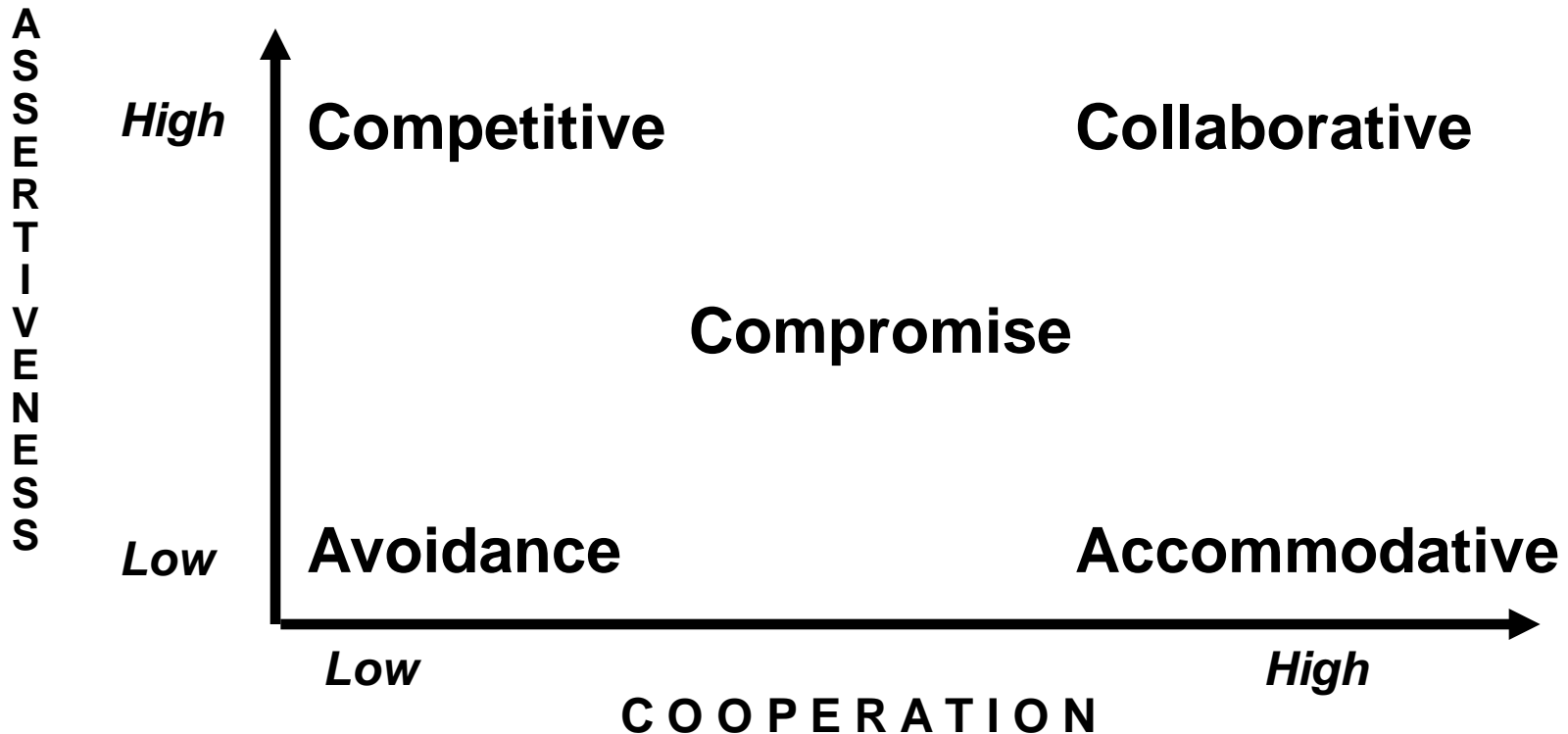
- **Clarify values up front**
- **Keep commitment and activities simple at first**
- **Clear communication is a priority**
- **Get to know each other**
- **Be “up front” about personal and agency needs**
- **Don't avoid conflict**
- **Clearly define roles of participants**
- **Make it fun**

Making The Collaboration Work



Collaboration Grid

Collaboration relies on maximum use of cooperation and assertiveness, and requires that all members feel satisfaction and value from their participation.



Intergroup Collaboration

Collaborative

Large number of interacting persons

Flexible, informal rule structure

All content areas open to discussion

Infrequent appeals to higher authority

Attitudes: Trust, friendliness, inclusion

Competitive

Small and controlled number of interactions

Rigid, formal rule structure

Close limits on what can be discussed

Frequent appeals to higher authority

Attitudes: Suspicion, hostility, disassociation from collaboration

Intergroup Collaboration

Collaborative

**Large number of
interacting persons**

**Flexible, informal rule
structure**

**All content areas open to
discussion**

**Infrequent appeals to
higher authority**

**Attitudes: Trust, friend-
liness, inclusion**

Competitive

**Small and controlled
number of interactions**

Rigid, formal rule structure

**Close limits on what can be
discussed**

**Frequent appeals to higher
authority**

**Attitudes: Suspicion,
hostility, disassociation
from collaboration**

Collaboration Definition

- **Solutions are greater than what one person, one group can develop alone**
- **Enhance each other's capacity to achieve common purpose**
- **Philosophical and political transformation**
- **Sustained, long-term formal commitment**
- **Can achieve more by working together than by working alone**
- **Build capacity of others**

Essential to Collaboration Success

Collaboration relies on maximum use of cooperation and assertiveness, all members feel satisfaction and value from their participation, and all members participate voluntarily.

Participants experience measurable personal satisfaction and added value to their organization and/or clients.

Finally . . .

- 1. Resolve problems up front**
- 2. Payoff does happen overnight**
- 3. Most of the skills required for collaboration are not taught – They are things we learn along the way**
- 4. Collaborations are living entities: they come to life, grow, develop, mature and eventually die**
- 5. Recognize (and accept) the stage in which you are operating**