

COLLABORATION—A KEY TO SUSTAINING SUCCESS!

OVERVIEW

A participatory activity to examine three approaches of working together and to share ideas about building community collaborations

OBJECTIVES

To distinguish between cooperation, coordination, and collaboration and identify examples of each
To examine how the group can be successful in collaboration

TIME REQUIRED

Approximately 30 minutes

Note: Before the activity begins, it is necessary to set up a wall that is divided into three parts titled "cooperation," "coordination," and "collaboration."

WHAT	TIME	HOW	MATERIALS
Step 1: Setting the context	5 min.	<p>Say to the group, "One of the ways that people, groups, and communities resolve problems over the course of time is to bring people together in new ways. Creating collaborations allows groups to come together to solve problems.</p> <p>People often use the word collaboration to describe any time people work together to achieve a goal. Really, it is a little more complex."</p> <p>Refer to the handout on the following page—either make copies or make a version of it using flip chart paper. Briefly review the key concepts of cooperation, coordination, and collaboration. Solicit examples of each from the group.</p>	Copies of Handout 6B or flip chart with diagram on it.
Step 2: Brainstorming	10 min.	<p>Say to the group, "For the next five minutes, we are going to think about how these three concepts apply in our own community. Each person should take a set of sticky notes, write the name of a group, organization, network, or alliance on each note, and place the note under the appropriate heading." Solicit some examples to get people going.</p> <p>After everyone has put up the notes (5 min.), give time for people to ask any questions of clarity related to what is written or where it is placed.</p>	Sticky notes
Step 4: Reflection	15 min.	<p>Ask the group the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Looking at the wall and the three areas, what gets your attention? ■ What parts of this exercise were easy or difficult for you to do? ■ Why do you think that certain columns are fuller than others? ■ What does this tell us about our work? ■ What new insights about collaboration have you gained? ■ What are the things that this group needs to do to build collaboration? 	

THREE MODELS OF WORKING TOGETHER

COOPERATION

Short-term, informal relations that exist without any clearly defined mission, structure, or planning effort. Partners share information only about the subject at hand. Each partner retains authority and keeps resources separate, so there is practically no risk.

COORDINATION

More formal relationships and understanding each other's missions. People involved focus their long-term interaction on a specific effort or program. Coordination requires some planning and division of roles. Authority is still with individuals, but more risk exists. Power can be an issue. Resources are made available to participants, and rewards are shared.

COLLABORATION

Participants bring separate organizations and groups into a new structure with full commitment to a common mission. Requires comprehensive planning and well-defined communication channels operating on all levels. The structure determines authority, and risk is high because each partner contributes risk and reputation. Partners pool or jointly secure the resources, and they share the results and rewards.

Low Intensity

High Intensity



(Adapted from *The Collaboration Handbook*, Amherst H. Wilder Foundation, 1997)

