

Starter Kit

1b: Administering a Collaboration Survey

Navigating the Roadmap

Activity 1: Build a genuine, collaborative policy team.

Introduction

Research suggests that the presence of genuine collaborative relationships among members of a team is a key ingredient to the team's success in achieving its vision, mission, and goals. When specific conditions are successfully met, teams are most likely to be "highly effective." Research demonstrates that the most effective teams have eight common characteristics:

- a clear and elevating goal;
- a results-driven structure;
- competent team members;
- a unified commitment;
- a collaborative climate;
- standards of excellence;
- external support and recognition; and
- a principled leadership.

Too often groups do not take the time to assess their working relationships or consider how best to foster them to increase their likelihood of success.

Working Together: A Profile of Collaboration is a survey developed by David D. Chrislip and Carl E. Larson following extensive research on highly effective teams. The survey provides teams with a "baseline" regarding their level of collaboration. Its purpose is not to "rate" the team, but to identify the areas in which team members agree the team is strong and those areas where there is room for improvement.

Purpose

To utilize the *Working Together* survey to begin a conversation among team members—a conversation that can be continued in future meetings as necessary—that will surface areas of strength and those in need of improvement with regard to the level of collaboration within the team and that will result in agreements on how you can best position your team to be as effective as possible

Participants

All policy team members should be involved in taking and debriefing the results of the *Working Together* survey.

Instructions

Conducting the Survey

- Distribute the survey to policy team members and ask them to complete it individually. The survey may be completed on paper during a policy team meeting or prior to a meeting using an online survey method such as Survey Monkey.
 - The survey instrument can be downloaded here:
<http://ebdmoneless.org/starterkit/sites/all/documents/EBDM%20Policy%20Team%20Collaboration%20Survey.PDF>¹
- If the survey is administered during a policy team meeting, the results can be tallied immediately so that the team can discuss them. Alternatively, if the survey is distributed ahead of time, the results should be tallied and then reviewed at the meeting.
- For each question, consider including the following: total number of responses (N), minimum score, maximum score, mean, range, and the number of team members who indicated that they could not answer the question because the team was “too new” and therefore the question did not apply.

Scoring and Interpreting the Survey

- **N** is the number of respondents who answered the question.
- The **minimum** and **maximum** reflects the lowest and highest answers for the question and are used to calculate the range of scores.
- The **mean** is the average of all the respondents’ scores.
 - Lower mean scores (closer to 1) reflect a greater percentage of “mostly true” or “true” answers.
 - Higher mean scores (closer to 4) reflect a greater percentage of “mostly false” or “false” answers.
- The **range** is calculated by subtracting the minimum score from the maximum score. The range reflects the variance in respondents’ answers. The higher the range the lower the level of agreement between respondents; the lower the range the higher the level of agreement between respondents.
- The column **Too New to Answer** reflects the number of respondents who felt they could not answer the question because the team had only recently begun working together.

Processing the Survey

- Share a copy of the teams’ *Working Together* survey results with the entire policy team.
- Ask team members to discuss the results of the survey and identify the areas where the greatest strength is noted. A lower mean score (closer to 1) reflects a greater percentage of “True” or “Mostly True” answers (i.e., strengths).

¹ An online version of the tool can be found at <http://www.collaborativejustice.org/assess.htm>.

- Note these on a flip chart and use this as an opportunity to affirm the team regarding its strengths. Remind them that strengths should be drawn upon to address areas in need of improvement.
- Next, ask team members to identify the areas where there seems to be the greatest opportunity for improvement. A higher mean score (closer to 4) reflects a greater percentage of “False” or “Mostly False” answers (i.e., areas in need of improvement).
 - Note these on the flip chart and take some time to process with the team areas in need of improvement. Do they reflect the fact that the team is new to working together? Do they reflect difficulties that have occurred in the past? Is it advisable to devote some future team time to identifying ways to specifically strengthen the team in these areas?
- For more tips, tools, and resources on enhancing collaboration, teams are encouraged to visit <http://www.collaborativejustice.org/>.
- Challenges in collaboration that need to be addressed should be noted so that they are considered for inclusion in the team’s action plan.²

Following Up

Re-administer the survey at future intervals (every six months is recommended for new teams) to determine changes in members’ perceptions of the team’s level of collaboration and to identify future action items.

² See 1I: Developing an Action Plan for the Policy Team’s Work.

Example: Excerpt of a Team's Working Together Survey Results

Working Together: A Profile of Collaboration							
		1= True					
Results from Our County		2 = More true than false					
Total N = 14		3 = More false than true					
		4 = False					
Statement		N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Range	Too New to Answer
THE CONTEXT OF THE COLLABORATION							
1	Now is a good time to address the issue about which we are collaborating.	14	1	2	1.07	1	0
2	Our collaborative effort was started because certain individuals wanted to do something about this issue.	14	1	2	1.14	1	0
3	The situation is so critical, we must act now.	14	1	4	1.50	3	0
THE STRUCTURE OF THE COLLABORATION							
4	Our collaboration has access to credible information that supports problem solving and decision making.	13	1	3	1.54	2	1
5	Our group has access to the expertise necessary for effective meetings.	13	1	3	1.69	2	1
6	We have adequate physical facilities to support the collaborative efforts of the group and its subcommittees.	13	1	2	1.46	1	1
7	We have adequate staff assistance to plan and administer the collaborative effort.	12	1	4	2.25	3	2
8	The membership of our group includes those stakeholders affected by the issue.	14	1	3	1.43	2	0
9	Our membership is not dominated by any one group or sector.	13	1	2	1.54	1	1
10	Stakeholders have agreed to work together on this issue.	13	1	2	1.38	1	1
11	Stakeholders have agreed on what decisions will be made by the group.	12	1	4	2.25	3	2
12	Our group has set ground rules and norms about how we will work together.	12	1	4	2.08	3	2
13	We have a method for communicating the activities and decisions of the group to all members.	12	1	2	1.08	1	2
14	Our collaboration is organized in working subgroups when necessary to attend to key performance areas.	11	1	3	1.73	2	3
15	There are clearly defined roles for group members.	13	1	4	2.15	3	1
COLLABORATION MEMBERS							
16	Members are more interested in getting a good group decision than improving the position of their home organization.	13	1	3	2.00	2	1
17	Members are able to let go of an idea for one that appears to have more merit.	13	1	3	1.92	2	1
18	Members have the communication skills necessary to help the group progress.	13	1	3	1.62	2	1

Additional Resources/Readings

Carter, M. (2005). *Collaboration: A training curriculum to enhance the effectiveness of criminal justice teams*. Retrieved from <http://www.cepp.com/documents/2005CollaborationCurriculum.pdf>

CEPP. (2005). *Collaborative justice*. Retrieved from <http://www.collaborativejustice.org/>

Chrislip, D. D, & Larson, C. E. (1994). *Collaborative leadership: How citizens and civic leaders can make a difference* (1st ed.), San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Appendix: Working Together Survey

The survey can be printed separately from <http://ebdmoneless.org/starterkit/sites/all/documents/EBDM%20Policy%20Team%20Collaboration%20Survey.PDF>