



A Framework for Evidence-Based Decision Making in Local Criminal Justice Systems

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Starter Kit

1g: Building a Collaborative Climate

Appendix: Ten Tips for Effective Team Participation¹

One of the hallmarks of a collaborative team is that every team member is equally important and the contribution of each member is necessary to the success of the team. These are some of the ways that individual team members can contribute to effective collaboration:

1. Show up on time, turn your cell phone or pager to vibrate, and respond only to emergencies. Give the group your full attention.
2. Show up consistently. When team members make an effort to be present, others understand that as a demonstration of commitment and are therefore more willing to make the commitment themselves.
3. Adhere to whatever ground rules or standards are established by the group. If none are articulated, set your own standards high. Better yet, suggest that the group establish ground rules and standards.
4. Be prepared and participate. If there is a group assignment (such as reading a report) or if you agree to perform a specific task for the group, do it. Take advantage of process activities to get to know other members of the team.
5. Be aware of your body language. Don't let your posture or facial expressions communicate a lack of interest or lack of respect for another team member's contributions. Instead, listen actively and make an effort to understand what others are trying to say before responding.
6. Stay focused on the vision and mission of the team. Leave personal agendas aside.
7. Practice good conflict resolution skills. Conflict, dissent, and disagreement are essential to effective problem solving. Look for ways to use the information that comes out of conflict to improve the work you are doing together.
8. Look for opportunities to exercise leadership.
9. Challenge yourself. If you are typically one who dominates conversations, sit back and listen. If you are typically reluctant to share your ideas, try to speak up.

¹ From <http://www.collaborativejustice.org/tipsideas/participation.htm>

10. Be willing to be held accountable. And be willing to hold others accountable. Holding each other accountable is a sign of respect and it demonstrates that group members have high expectations of each other.

These basic practices are fundamental to all kinds of group work, but are especially important when working in collaboration with others. Successful collaboration requires trust, and these practices help to build a climate of trust so that effective collaborative work can take place.