

## Conditions for Achieving True Collaboration: Success Factors and Checklist

### Achieving True Collaboration: 10 Success Factors

1. Good timing and a clear need
2. Strong stakeholder groups
3. Broad-based involvement
4. Credibility and openness of process
5. Commitment and/or involvement of high-level, visible leaders
6. Support or acquiescence of “established authorities or power”
7. Overcome mistrust and skepticism
8. Strong leadership of the process
9. Interim successes
10. A profound shift to broader concerns (rather than on parochial interests)

Source: David D. Chrislip & Carl Larson. Collaborative Leadership.

Leading Justice System Change: Video Series & Tool Kit



### Checklist for Achieving True Collaboration: Success Factors

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. **The time is right and there is a clear and compelling need**
  - Timing is everything - be sure the time is right to convene local leaders and prepare a compelling message. Approach local leaders with a compelling rationale that explains the need, why the time is right, and the benefits of taking collective action.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. **Strong partner and stakeholder groups are involved**
  - Involve partner and stakeholder groups that represent many people and organizations. These groups should be well organized, respected, and able to speak and act credibly for the people / agencies they represent.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. **You have broad-based involvement of many sectors**
  - Be inclusive. Involve participants across many sectors, such as the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government, social service agencies, other justice system partners, community leaders and advocates, and people with lived experiences (vs. a few participants from the same sector). Remember to include people with lived experiences; they bring unique and beneficial perspectives.

\_\_\_\_\_ 4. **The process is open and credible**

- Design a process that is deemed fair by all involved; it is not dominated by any particular partner or stakeholder group. Leaders want to be a part of an authentic decision-making process focused on doing meaningful work (rather than rubber stamping a preconceived idea or pre-established solutions). Establishing ground rules and healthy group norms help maintain a credible and open process.

\_\_\_\_\_ 5. **You have the commitment and/or involvement of high-level, visible leaders**

- Seek the commitment and involvement of the top leaders of the many, representative organizations. If the top leaders are not able to be involved, secure their commitment to the process and agreement to delegate decision-making authority to their respective designee.

\_\_\_\_\_ 6. **You have the support or acquiescence of “established authorities or power”**

- Established authorities, or people in positions of power, must also agree to support and abide by the recommendations the group arrives at through a credible and open collaborative process. Failing to secure this support or agreement, may undermine the work of the collaborative group (and waste valuable time and resources) in the end (if the “powers that be” do not accept or follow the recommendations of the group). Explain the need and the process and seek their support or acquiescence in advance of embarking on the collaborative process.

\_\_\_\_\_ 7. **You have overcome mistrust and skepticism of participants**

- Recognize that some participants may be skeptical about whether anything significant will be accomplished. Others may mistrust the motives and objectives of those who initiate the process and/or others who are participating. Through a credible and open process, work to build trust and reduce skepticism among all involved.

\_\_\_\_\_ 8. **You have strong leadership of (and thus commitment to) the process**

- Model the way for strong leadership of the “process.” Keep partners and stakeholders at the table through periods of frustration – facilitate through the difficult conversations. Mediate differences and work to find common ground. Acknowledge small successes. Finally, enforce ground rules and promote healthy group norms and dynamics. In sum, avoid a process where top leaders merely advocate for their respective positions and fail to listen, learn, and compromise on the tough issues.

\_\_\_\_\_ 9. **Interim successes are / will be highlighted and celebrated**

- Highlight successes (small and large) along the way. Successes build credibility and momentum.

\_\_\_\_\_ 10. **You are working toward true collaboration = profound shift to broader, systemic concerns**

- It takes time, but continually work toward the broader interests of the system or community. A profound shift is a realization among leaders that the ability to do something about complex and interrelated justice system issues requires them to collaborate as equal partners rather than as advocates for particular interests or approaches that benefit individual organizations. When this occurs, focus shifts from parochial interests to the broader interests of the system.