Collaboration Guide
Building Collaboration

Instructions:
Use this chart to identify ways to build collaboration in teams. Focus on your area of need—among team members, with internal leaders, or between external leaders and your team. Consider your situation and use the tips provided to create your plan of action.

**Team Member Collaboration**

| Interpersonal Understanding | • Take time away from group tasks to get to know one another  
|                            | • Have a “check-in” at the beginning of the meeting—that is, ask how everyone is doing  
|                            | • Assume that undesirable behavior takes place for a reason. Find out what that reason is. Ask questions and listen. Avoid negative attributions.  
|                            | • Tell your teammates what you’re thinking and how you’re feeling  
| Perspective Taking | • Ask whether everyone agrees with a statement  
|                    | • Ask quiet members what they think  
|                    | • Question decisions that come too quickly  
|                    | • Appoint someone to consistently question the group’s choices  
| Confronting | • Set ground rules and use them to point out errant behavior  
|             | • Call members on errant behavior  
|             | • Create playful devices for pointing out such behavior. These often emerge from the group spontaneously. Reinforce them.  
| Caring | • Support members; volunteer to help them if they need it, be flexible, and provide emotional support  
|        | • Validate members’ contributions  
|        | • Let members know they are valued  
|        | • Protect members from attack  
|        | • Respect individuality and differences in perspectives. Listen.  

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Never be derogatory or demeaning.

**Internal Leader Collaboration**

| Team Self-Evaluation          | Schedule time to examine team effectiveness  
|                              | Create measurable task and process objectives and then measure them  
|                              | Acknowledge and discuss group moods  
|                              | Communicate your sense of what is transpiring in your team  
|                              | Allow members to call a “process check” (For instance, a team member might say, “Process check: is this the most effective use of our time right now?”)  

| Seeking Feedback              | Ask your “customers” how they are doing  
|                              | Post your work and invite comments  
|                              | Benchmark your processes  

| Creating Resources for Working with Emotion | Make time to discuss difficult issues, and address the emotions that surround them  
|                                            | Find creative, shorthand ways to acknowledge and express the emotion in the group  
|                                            | Create fun ways to acknowledge and relieve stress and tension  

| Creating an Affirmation Environment | Reinforce that the team can meet a challenge. Be optimistic. For example, say things like, “We can get through this” or “Nothing will stop us.”  
|                                      | Focus on what you can control  
|                                      | Remind members of the group’s important and positive mission  
|                                      | Remind the group how it solved a similar problem before  
|                                      | Focus on problem solving, not blaming  

| Solving Problems Proactively | Anticipate problems and address them before they happen  

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Take the initiative to understand and get what you need to be effective
• Do it yourself if others aren’t responding

**External Leader Collaboration**

**Organizational Understanding**
• Find out the concerns and needs of others in the organization
• Consider who can influence the team’s ability to accomplish its goals
• Discuss the culture and politics in the organization
• Ask whether proposed team actions are congruent with the organization’s culture and politics

**Building External Relationships**
• Create opportunities for networking and interaction
• Ask about the needs of other teams
• Provide support for other teams
• Invite others to team meetings if they might have a stake in what you are doing

Consider these recommendations to address and enhance your team’s collaboration.