

# Collaborative Leadership



COMMUNITY TOOL BOX

[ctb.ku.edu](http://ctb.ku.edu)

[communityhealth.ku.edu](http://communityhealth.ku.edu)

# What is collaborative leadership?

"Bringing the appropriate people together in constructive ways with good information, creating authentic visions and strategies for addressing the shared concerns of the organization or community"



COMMUNITY TOOL BOX

[ctb.ku.edu](http://ctb.ku.edu)

[communityhealth.ku.edu](http://communityhealth.ku.edu)

# Why practice collaborative leadership?

- Encourages ownership of the enterprise.
- More involvement in implementation.
- Trust building.
- Elimination of turf issues.
- Access to more and better information and ideas.
- Better opportunity for substantive results.
- Generation of new leadership.
- Community or organizational empowerment.
- Fundamental change for the better in the ways communities and organizations operate.



# Some of the major difficulties with collaborative leadership

- It's time-consuming.
- It demands the ability to face conflict directly.
- It may mean trying to overcome resistance to the whole idea of collaborative leadership.
- It can lead to groups taking what seems to you to be the wrong path.
- It demands that leaders subordinate their egos.



# When is collaborative leadership appropriate?

- When the timing is right.
- When problems are serious and complex.
- When there are a number of diverse stakeholders, or stakeholders with varied interests.
- When other attempts at solutions haven't worked.
- When an issue affects a whole organization or a whole community.
- When inclusiveness and empowerment are goals of the process from the beginning.



# Who are collaborative leaders?

- Leaders trusted and respected by all the groups and individuals they have to deal with.
- Related to diverse groups and individuals with respect and ease.
- Have good facilitation skills.
- They're catalysts.
- They nurture new leadership within the collaboration and the community.
- They have a commitment to the collaborative process and to finding real solutions to problems.
- They keep the focus on what's best for the group, organization, or community as a whole.



# How do you practice collaborative leadership?

## Lead the process, not the people

- Help the group set norms that it can live by.
- Assure that everyone gets heard.
- Encourage and model inclusiveness.
- Help people make real connections with one another.
- Mediate conflicts and disputes.
- Help the group create and use mechanisms for soliciting ideas.
- Maintain collaborative problem-solving and decision-making.
- Push the group toward effectiveness.
- Help the group choose initial projects that are doable.



# How do you practice collaborative leadership? (cont.)

- Help the group identify and obtain the necessary resources to do the work.
- Insist on and protect an open process.
- Keep the group focused on what's best for the organization, collaborative , or community as a whole.





# Know the leadership context

- The community
- The nature of the problem
- Barriers to collaboration
- The group's capacity for change

