

CREATIVE COLLABORATION is work together that accomplishes more than is possible separately.

When an organization collaborates well as a whole, and within its divisions and teams, the organization is healthier, more integrated, more unified, and better able to adapt to change, face challenges or setbacks, and continue to fulfill its mission.

This assessment provides leaders and managers with a practical framework to:

- start and sustain a shared conversation about effective collaboration, and
- guide work teams, leadership teams, boards, and organizations to build organizational health, adapt to change, and create better ways to work together for mission success.

This assessment introduces the framework. Leaders and managers can use it to engage staff and colleagues to think clearly about three characteristics of the culture of healthy, collaborative teams and organizations. These core dimensions shape how well the organization functions. They develop the explicit and implicit norms, i.e. how people behave, treat each other, and carry out the work. As a social organism, these characteristics are the DNA of the organization, team, or group.

These characteristics deeply interconnect with the use of four cornerstone practices. The characteristics help develop the practices, and the practices shape and strengthen the characteristics.

Together, characteristics and practices form an overall design you can use to build collaboration that delivers the full human capacity of the group, team, or organization. These practices require leadership by example at all levels of the organization to show others the way.

Use this as an individual checklist, a guide for structured group discussion, or a survey to receive input from members of an individual team or an organization. For each statement, indicate your opinion of the team's or group's current collaborative capacity. Some items focus on the presence of overall conditions and leadership behavior in the organization that can directly or indirectly affect the capacity of your team. Others directly address constructive or negative behaviors. If you are unsure, mark the "sometimes" circle. Responses of 4 and 5 indicate strengths to build upon. Responses of 1 and 2 indicate weaknesses to improve. A response of 3 may be a weakness or it may only need additional discussion to clarify the reason for a non-definitive response.

Organization Culture Characteristic #1: INTEGRITY Stakeholders (Internal - employees, staff, volunteer and External - funders, investors, and community partners) have a high level of trust in the organization and its leaders. They are confident that everyone will act ethically at all times.

1. The organization has well-defined core values and guiding principles that set standards and guide the way we do our work and the way we treat others.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

2. Everyone on the team understands how the stated values and principles apply to their work responsibilities.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

3. Members of the team consistently treat each other according to our values and principles.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

4. The team, as a group and as individuals, understand what is important to the people we serve (clients, customers, patients, users, consumers) and respect them.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

5. Organization leaders provide a clear, consistent, and ethical example at all times.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

6. Managers provide a clear, consistent, and ethical example at all times.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

7. Organization leaders actively encourage everyone to raise any ethical concerns and, when they do, leaders follow through to determine whether action is necessary.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

8. Managers actively encourage everyone to raise ethical concerns and, when they do, managers follow through to determine whether action is necessary.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

Organization Culture Characteristic #2: PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY Practice consistent behaviors that build and sustain a work environment in which everyone is willing to speak and contribute, everyone's voice can be heard, and no one's dignity is at risk.

9. In this organization, people are held accountable but mistakes are not held against people.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

10. As a team member, I can voice my questions, concerns, problems, and ideas.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

11. People in the organization are never rejected or excluded for being different.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

12. As a member of the team, it is safe for me to take a risk.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

13. It is easy to ask other team members for help.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

14. I am confident that no one on the team would deliberately act to undermine my efforts.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

15. Other team members value and utilize my skills and talents.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

16. The team leader engages all members of the team with consistent, positive communication.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

Organization Culture Characteristic #3 GROWTH MINDSET Practice consistent behaviors that reinforce a shared belief that we can all grow our capacity to develop by learning together from all mistakes and challenges.

17. Throughout the organization, starting with leaders and managers, people openly admit mistakes, discuss them, and learn from them.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

18. Organization leaders promote open channels of growth-promoting positive feedback and constructive criticism that flow in all directions (up, down, across departments/divisions).

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

19. Organization leaders and managers focus on the well-being of employees and treat them as teammates and collaborators.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

20. There is a high level of employee commitment to the organization because employees believe the organization's leaders "have their backs."

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

21. Organization leaders support risk-taking and encourage innovation to put new ideas into practice.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

22. In hiring, organization leaders emphasize potential capacity and passion for learning more than credentials and past accomplishments.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

23. There is an active program to engage employees (including leaders and managers) and help them develop on the job (coaching, workshops, apprenticeships).

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

24. There are open forums with participation by employees to review major projects and initiatives, assess successes and mistakes, and develop lessons learned.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

Core Practice #1: DIALOGUE Establish an environment of learning conversations that engage everyone’s knowledge, skills, and creativity.

25. Our team meetings are open forums where each member has the opportunity to contribute and be listened to with respect.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

26. The team leader actively seeks input from members of the team on a range of important issues.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

27. Organization leaders seek input from employees and follow up with communication about how the input was used or considered.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

28. As a team and one-to-one, we have meaningful opportunities to talk together, share ideas, and learn from each other.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

29. Our organization actively uses cross-functional teams (a team of representatives from different teams across the organization) to address challenging organization-wide issues by engaging people with different expertise and perspectives in learning conversations.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

30. Team members consistently listen respectfully to others, within and outside the team.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

31. The team leader engages members of the team in two-way conversation to make sure everyone understands their responsibilities and what is expected of them.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

32. The team leader structures and coordinates the roles and responsibilities of every member of the leadership team so everyone can talk about ways to work together effectively.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

Core Practice #2: PRINCIPLED NEGOTIATION Respectfully and skillfully deal with conflict, disagreement, and differences to maintain organizational harmony.

33. Team members confidently and creatively address strong differences and disagreements when they surface with each other and with other coworkers.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

34. The team leader confidently and creatively addresses strong differences and disagreements within the team.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

35. If I have a disagreement or conflict with someone else on the team, I have the skills to work it out respectfully and directly with the other person.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

36. When a problem/conflict/situation is too difficult for me to resolve on my own, I can get help from my team leader or someone else in the organization.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

37. If I have a serious difference of opinion or disagreement with the team leader, I can talk with him or her directly about the issue and I know that I will be treated fairly and respectfully.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

38. There is little or no *gossip* by team members. (*gossip* means spreading rumors, conversational speculation that increases anxiety, and sharing negative information with others).

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

39. There is little or no *backbiting* by team members. (*backbiting* means complaining, criticizing, or speaking negatively about others when they are not present)

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

40. Our organization's departments, divisions, and teams work together cooperatively and avoid office politics, turf conflicts, power plays, and ongoing feuds.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

Core Practice #3: VALUES BASED DECISION MAKING Leaders demonstrate integrity by using core values and guiding principles to make key decisions that they credibly communicate to internal and external stakeholders.

41. Organization leaders use a clear process to learn from people with diverse perspectives before making a key decision.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

42. Organization leaders sincerely consider the needs of stakeholders who will be impacted by their key decisions.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

43. When organization leaders make key decisions, they are transparent about who participated directly, who was consulted, and who is accountable for the decision.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

44. When our team leader makes key decisions, he or she is transparent about who participated directly, who was consulted, and who is accountable for the decision.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

45. All key decisions by the organization's leaders are well-aligned with the organization's core values and principles.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

46. All key decisions by our team leader are well-aligned with the organization's core values and principles.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

47. Organization leaders clearly communicate key decisions to internal and external stakeholders, so they can understand the values and principles that guided the decision.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

48. When organization leaders communicate key decisions to employees, they honestly acknowledge challenges, negative consequences, and downside risks.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

Core Practice #4: WISE PLANNING A dynamic, flexible plan aligns mission, core values, and guiding principles with actionable goals, uniting the organization to move toward a shared vision of success.

49. The organization has a clear, meaningful mission statement that confirms its purpose.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

50. The organization has a clear, compelling vision of success that inspires sustained, shared effort.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

51. Every organization leader and manager clearly communicates to employees how the work of each part of the organization contributes to the overall vision of success.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

52. The organization has a clear set of major goals that organize the shared effort necessary to achieve the vision of success.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

53. Each major goal has one or more clear performance indicators used to assess progress.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

54. Each member of our team understands how his or her responsibility relates to particular goals, objectives, or actions in the plan.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

55. Our team leader meets with key members of the team regularly (at least 2 times per year) to review our team's part of the overall organization plan, assess progress on our team goals, and provide a summary update to employees.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

56. If there are any changes in the vision and the major goals, organization leaders clearly communicate with everyone to maintain shared understanding and alignment.

5. Always 4. Often 3. Sometimes 2. Seldom 1. Never

Leadership Assessment Worksheet

Practices that Build Organization Health and Collaboration

<p>DIALOGUE establish an environment of learning conversations to engage everyone’s knowledge, skills, & creativity</p> <p>Strengths Gaps/Needs Improvement</p> <p>Possible Action Steps</p>	<p>PRINCIPLED NEGOTIATION respectfully & skillfully deal with conflict, disagreement, & differences to build unity</p> <p>Strengths Gaps/Needs Improvement</p> <p>Possible Action Steps</p>
<p>VALUES BASED DECISION MAKING demonstrate integrity by using core values & guiding principles to make key decisions and recommendations that are credibly communicated to stakeholders</p> <p>Strengths Gaps/Needs Improvement</p> <p>Possible Action Steps</p>	<p>WISE PLANNING commit to a plan that aligns mission, core values, & guiding principles with actionable goals to move the organization toward a shared vision of success</p> <p>Strengths Gaps/Needs Improvement</p> <p>Possible Action Steps</p>
<p>Integrity, Psychological Safety, and a Growth Mindset characteristics, attitudes, and additional dimensions of your leadership approach that strengthen the organization’s culture to sustain collaboration</p> <p>Strengths Gaps/Needs Improvement</p> <p>Possible Action Steps</p>	