

Best Practices for Collaboration

1. **Understand your personal limitations with collaboration.** Collaboration is not easy to master. If you have internal barriers to collaborating, they will stall you from making progress. Using the included [self-reflection assessment](#) is a good place to start understanding what may hold you back.
2. **Recognize how your organization approaches collaboration.** If your organization makes it difficult to collaborate, it's important to know that your progress may be slower than you'd like. This might mean keeping a lower profile and seeking out a few trusted people who are open to collaboration. If you are already in a collaborative environment, then it may align with how you already work.
3. **Mindset matters.** The mindset you take as you approach collaboration is imperative to the success of your wellness initiative. While you may be the subject matter expert in wellness, the whole organization contributes to the well-being of employees, making collaboration crucial. You can't do it alone.
4. **Collaboration is a two-way street.** As a wellness professional, you may find it easy to gather a group of people to help you provide wellness resources to your organization—After all, you are helping employees. But be mindful not to prioritize what you think they need over what they're actually asking for. True collaboration requires compromise and ensures that all parties feel heard and benefit.
5. **Share the big picture.** Start each interaction with a problem or opportunity statement. What are you trying to accomplish together?
6. **Set clear expectations.** When you bring people together (and you are leading the group), it's important to be crystal clear about what you expect from them. That way, they can opt in or out of the group, depending on what they can commit to
7. **Address conflict early.** Not many people enjoy addressing conflict, but whenever you're collaborating, differences in opinions, unmet responsibilities, or competing priorities will arise. Addressing conflict early is crucial before it has a chance to fester.
8. **Collaboration is a continuous process.** Collaboration is not a one-time task. There are many steps to collaborating, as outlined in this toolkit. A large part of collaboration includes relationship building, and relationships require ongoing effort to build and sustain. Be sure to schedule regular reflection time to document what you've learned and make adjustments as you move forward in the process.