Troubleshooting Your Collaborative Efforts

Collaboration doesn't always work as planned. This worksheet provides some factors to consider if you're not getting the result you desire.

FACTORS TO CONSIDER	REFLECTION	THOUGHTS/NEXT STEPS/ FURTHER QUESTIONS
Timing	Is this even the right time to be having this conversation?	
	Could there be phases where a small step could then lead to bigger steps as success and support build?	
Resources	Are there resources that the team needs or already has that could help them reach a decision?	
	Do you have representatives from all the relevant stakeholders involved in some way?	
	Are there expert resources that could help dissolve an impasse?	
	Are there needed skills and abilities that team members haven't spoken up about?	
Safety	Do you need to attend to the emotions that may be rising for your participants?	
	Do things need to slow down a little?	
	Do people need to take a pause to discuss how things are going, clear the air, or refresh their physical well-being?	

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Purpose	If people keep reverting to discussing the problem, but the problem has been agreed on, how can you help them shift to a future focus or solutions focus?	
	Refer back to the original problem statement to see if it needs to be upgraded. Often as people learn more about the context, the problem statement can shift.	
	Is the team clear on the purpose of the engagement?	
	Keep asking, "What do we want to happen? How do we want it to be? What do we NOT want?"	
Maintain Positive Regard	Separate the issue from the person so that you can maintain and build the relationship while still investigating the issue/topic/option fully.	
	"Let's keep our focus on the topic, not on each other."	
	Are there competing stories that haven't yet been made explicit? Ask each, "How are you seeing this?"	
	Help each person to share their perceptions and hear each other's perceptions without blame or judgment.	
Other	What else comes to mind that may be in the way of a decision?	