

Ten principles of collaborative practice

1. One identified means for overcoming barriers to collaboration is the delivery of cross-sector professional training and development.
2. Collaborative working is more likely to succeed if it is supported by senior managers who have authority over the utilisation of resources.
3. Training that provides practitioners with knowledge about other services, and skills to work together as a team, may be an important consideration when formulating an effective strategy to build collaborative partnerships.
4. Regular project team-building events, project team meetings as well as whole cross-sector team visits are essential for cross-sector partnerships.
5. Co-location, for instance, allows staff members from different agencies or teams to get to know each other personally. Such informal contacts promote mutual understanding, sharing of information and a sense of trust on an inter-personal and cross-sector level (“learning across professional boundaries”).
6. Studies identify *trust* as one of the most important underlying principles of improved cross-sector cooperation.
7. Cross-sector collaboration provides practitioners with an opportunity to identify shared interests and exchange knowledge and ideas.
8. Over time, participants of collaborative initiatives can overcome professional barriers by trying to understand another agency’s culture.
9. Staff members are more likely to engage in collaborative practices if they understand the advantages to collaboration and are confident in their knowledge about how to collaborate. Such knowledge and skills can be obtained and developed during joint training sessions.
10. It takes time and effort for cross-sector collaboration to become successful. An “effort” means careful preplanning and continuous work on the collaborative project. Preplanning may include the organisation of a project committee that identifies “potential problems, key issues and similarities/differences between the cultures of participating agencies or teams,” and the definition of goals and outcomes of collaboration.