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Build Your Team on Purpose
Collaboration Agreement DRAFT

Make the Implicit Explicit

This Collaboration Agreement Template is designed to help your team be explicit about the details of your collaboration. When team members assume that there is agreement about how the team will work together, and the assumptions are incorrect, it can lead to misunderstanding, tension, and even conflict. Devoting time and effort early in your collaboration to putting agreements in place will help set you up for successful relationships and team dynamics so you can focus on the scientific and technological aspects of your program.

This Collaboration Agreement Template is designed to catalyze dialogue focused on developing agreed upon norms, structures, and processes that will guide the team in its work together.

Objectives

- Articulate the key team values that will ground the team's science and its relationships
- Establish transparency in *how* you approach your collaboration (making the implicit explicit)
- Clear shared vision among members
- Recognize that team members need to be flexible over time and willing to adapt, both as it pertains to the science and the relationships
- Establish agreed upon expectations for working together that serve as the foundation for team accountability
- Intentional preparation for disagreements and even conflicts, with the goal of having the team learn to engage in productive conflict

Instructions

1. Read through the full template and notice the points of alignment with the TEMS model.
2. Decide how you are going to write the collaboration agreement.

      a. Consensus, an individual, team subset?
      b. How will input be collected from others? (if at all?)
3. Communicate this decision to the full team and ask if there are any questions or concerns about the approach.
4. Decide which elements and question are most important to start with. Every team is different.
5. Select a starting point and begin outlining your agreements.
6. When working as a group, discuss the questions and gather input. Catalyzing a dialogue about each topic area will ensure incorporation of various views and will likely lead to content that a greater number of people will be comfortable with.
      a. During the dialogue, teammates should articulate and compare their reasons for responding as they do, capturing difference in views that merit additional discussion.
7. When developing norms and processes where successive steps are required, include, at a minimum:
      a. Steps for initiating the process
      b. Proposed collaboration steps to be followed by all members
      c. Any expectations that are necessary for clarity
      d. How team members are expected to hold themselves and their teammates accountable for following these steps and consequences for not doing so.

You may decide to skip some questions initially and come back to them later. This is fine and at the same time, do not put them off too long. It is ideal to have a processes decided and documented before a need arises. In that way it will be easier to come to an agreement and integrate different views, than if views have already formed. For example, it is easier to come to an agreement about how to manage conflict, when the team is not in conflict.

For your team to realize the full value of your collaboration agreement, consider it to be a living document. Keep it in a shared space so all team members can access it and refer to it as they encounter the situations described in it.

Section 1: Strategic Planning

What is Our Strategic Direction?

1. What is our Team Vision? *The vision is aspirational in nature and describes a future where the team's work has had positive impact. It it what draws people to become engaged*.

    a. For our science?

    b. For how we will work together?

2. What is our Mission Statement? *The mission focuses on (i) what you do, (ii) how you do it, and (iii) for whom* (e.g. Red Cross: (i) To prevent and alleviate (iii) human suffering in the face of emergencies (ii) by mobilizing the power of volunteers and the generosity of donors.)

3. What is the major focus of your collaborative project?

4. What are the major goals of the collaborative project? *These are the theme areas that you are addressing that, together, will help address your major focus (3 above) and ultimately your vision (1 above)*

Defining Project Success

1. For each team member: How do you think about success in the context of this collaboration?

    Scientifically:

    Team Relationships:

2. Collectively, how will we know if the project is a success?

    a. What are the characteristics of successful scientific outcomes or deliverables?

    b. How will we know our team has created a successful team dynamic?

Section 2: Collaboration Planning

What are Our Fundamental Values and Beliefs? *What mindset and attitude do we agree to bring to our collaborative work?*

1. What are our team values and core beliefs?
   a. Foundational
   b. Scientific
   c. Relationship

What are Our Agreed Upon Team Norms? *How do we agree to behave and act when we are engaging with each other?*

2. What shared norms can we agree to?
   a. (e.g. listen to learn)
   b. (e.g. don't interrupt others)
   c. (e.g. raise your hand to speak)
   d. (e.g. ask for every participant's view)
   e. (e.g. invite different points of view)
   f. (e.g. speak like you are correct, listen like you are wrong)

What are Our Agreed Upon Team Expectations? *What structures, processes, and policies will guide the team's work, scientifically and relationally. Without expectations, accountability is not possible.*

3. What are the expected contributions of each team member? What are their roles and responsibilities?

Name	Role	Responsibility

Differences

4. Recognizing and capturing our differences: What processes will we use for....
   a. Recognizing when we are seeing something differently?
   b. Capturing the topic(s)?

c. Discussing and exploring them with team members?
Step 1.
Step 2.
Step 3.
Etc....

5. How do our preferences differ as they relate to our leadership, communication, and style for giving feedback?

6. Given our different backgrounds, cultures, and tacit expectations we have not shared yet, what does each team member believe the other team members should know about them?

Psychological Safety and Trust

7. What (1) perspective and (ii) strength/talent does each team member bring to the research project?

Name	Perspective	Strength/Talent

8. How might the differences above serve as a strength for the research? How might they lead to a deeper understanding of our project?

9. For each team member, what
    a. Role does task (cognitive) trust play in building trust with others?
    b. Role does relationship (affective) trust play in building trust with others?
    c. Motivates you most about participating on this team?

Name	Cognitive Trust	Affective Trust	Motivation

10. Using the below process, we ensure every team member feels safe to take a risk in our group *(e.g., present ideas about the science that others may think will not work, raise concerns about team dynamics, etc...)*
    a. *Thinking of the most junior, most reserved, or newest team member – ask yourselves whether they are feeling psychologically safe – if not, what must the team do differently?*
    Step 1.
    Step 2.
    Step 3.
    Etc....

Striving for Productive Conflict or Successfully Managing Conflict

11. What will be our process to encourage all team members to raise concerns, at the earliest appearance of tension?
    Step 1.
    Step 2.
    Step 3.
    Etc....

12. How will we approach and address scientific conflicts when they arise?
    Step 1.
    Step 2.
    Step 3.
    Etc....

13. How will we approach and address relationship conflicts when they arise?
    Step 1.
    Step 2.
    Step 3.
    Etc....

14. What process does the team follow if it cannot resolve an internal conflict (scientific or relationship) among us?
    Step 1.
    Step 2.
    Step 3.
    Etc....

Communication

15. What will our communication norms be?

Logistics
   a. Day-to-day communication channel (top-down and bottom-up):
   b. Shared collaboration portal:
   c. Video conferencing:
   d. Core hours: (including time zone differences):
   e. Full group messages or updates
   f. Etc...

Scientific and Relational
   a. Leadership meeting frequency and schedule:
   b. Full team meeting frequency and schedule:
   c. Facilitation approach:
   d. Frequency of team meetings:
   e. Agenda establishment
   f. Etc...

In what venue will the following occur:
   a. Research planning
   b. Research updates
   c. Problem Solving
   d. Decision-making
   e. Collaboration and Team Dynamics

Attendance expectations:
   a. Who is expected to attend which meetings and events?
   b. What steps are taken if expectations are not met?

Decision-Making and Problem Solving

16. How will important project decisions be made for this team? *(e.g., research direction, coordination, budgeting, team functioning, personnel decisions, data management, etc...)*
   a. Not all decisions are equal. Some need to be made collaboratively while some can be made individually.

b. What different decision rules align with the decisions this group needs to make? *(e.g. consensus, voting, sub-group recommendation, individual with input, individual alone)*
c. For each type of decision that needs to be made, indicate the decision-rule that will be used, and the person responsible for the decision-making process.

17. How will important problems be solved and what will be the process for ensuring they are addressed by the appropriate individuals?
    a. Not all problems are equal. Some need to be addressed collaboratively while some may be solved in small groups or even individually.
    b. For each type of problem, identify the responsible person and the steps that will be taken to address it.

Name	Problem or Problem Type	Steps
		1. 2. 3.
		1. 2. 3.
		1. 2. 3.

Sharing Credit

18. What are each team members' need for credit, recognition, and reward given their position, career stage, and professional aspirations?

19. What will be our criteria and process for agreeing on authorship and credit?
    Step 1.
    Step 2.
    Step 3.
    Etc.…

20. When and how will we handle intellectual property and patent applications?
    Step 1.
    Step 2.
    Step 3.
    Etc....

21. Decision-making process for how will credit be attributed to each collaborator's institution for public presentations, abstracts, and written articles?
    Step 1.
    Step 2.
    Step 3.
    Etc....

22. Decision-making process for how and by whom public presentations will be made?
    Step 1.
    Step 2.
    Step 3.
    Etc....

23. Decision making process for how and by whom media inquiries will be handled?
    Step 1.
    Step 2.
    Step 3.
    Etc....

Accountability

24. How will team members *hold themselves accountable* for the agreements and commitments they made to this project?

25. How do team members *agree to be held accountable by other team members* for the agreements and commitments they made to this project?

26. What repercussions are all team members willing to accept for not meeting expectations? *note: Try not to think of repercussions in the punitive sense – if anyone notices a fellow team member struggling – what conversation needs to occur? who will have it? and what process will it follow?*

Onboarding New Teammates

27. This is the process we will follow to onboard new team members and, when appropriate, ensure they understand what *joint ownership* of the project means to this team. *note: This document can be used to help bring new team members up to speed.*
    Step 1.
    Step 2.
    Step 3.
    Etc....

28. What process will be followed as team members roll off the team to ensure a smooth transition and nothing falls through the cracks?
    Step 1.
    Step 2.
    Step 3.
    Etc....

Team Management

29. Governance is an important component of the team structure. How will our team determine and establish its governance structure?

30. What team processes, procedures, and structures do we need to put in place, related to governance, to be successful? *(e.g., balancing individual needs vs. team needs, standard operating procedures, agreeing on how meetings will be run, budget transparency, etc..)*

31. What governance workflows are critical for our team to define? How will these tasks be structured?

32. What tools or information need to be shared to conduct our research and collaborate effectively?
    a. How will they be shared?
    b. What, if anything do we desire be shared with us?

33. How often will we review this agreement?
    a. Where should we keep it so everyone has access to it and can refer to it?
    b. We will follow these steps to determine what is working and what can be improved?

    Step 1.
    Step 2.
    Step 3.
    Etc....

Trainees and Career Development

34. What steps will we take to ensure adequately training the next generation of scientists in:
    a. Convergence research?
    b. Team science principles?

35. How will we ensure trainees are receiving the mentoring and coaching required in team science to feel confident that they have a strong foundation from which to build further?

36. In what ways can trainees be integrated into the teams such that they have participatory experience on a team?

37. What projects and roles will be offered to and discussed with them to ensure their career goals are being integrated into how the team operates?

Inclusive Environments

38. Team Science is an exercise in differences. Differences across a wide variety of areas are essential for achieving creativity and innovation. Just like team science, inclusion and belonging should be integrated into the fabric of the effort. Adhering to team science principles and operating from a collaborative mindset – builds the trust and psychological safety for differences to thrive. Much of what is in the collaboration agreement should cover this aspect. And your team may see things that are missing.

    What needs to be added to this collaborative agreement from this perspective?

Conflicts of Interest

39. How will we identify potential conflicts of interest among team members? With others outside the team?

40. How will we negotiate the development of new collaborations and spin-off projects, if any?

41. If a team member moves to another institution or leaves the project, how will we handle data, specimens, laboratory documentation (i.e. virtual lab notebooks, paper lab notebooks) authorship, and other forms of credit?

NOTES: