



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, as your progress may be slower than you'd like. This may mean you'll have to be quieter about it and seek to find a few safe people who are willing to collaborate. If you work in a collaborative environment, then it may be part of how you already work.
- 3. Mindset matters.** The mindset you take as you approach collaboration is imperative to your success. Although you are the subject matter expert in wellness, the whole organization contributes to the well-being of employees. That's why collaboration is crucial when it comes to employee wellness. 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 you may be helping them in a way that's prioritizing what you *think* they need rather than what they are *telling* you they need. Collaboration is about compromise and having all parties feel like they benefited.
- 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, someone will want something different, they'll fall behind on their duties, or people will disagree.
It's vital to address conflict at the start instead of letting it fester.
- 8. Collaboration is a continuous process. Collaboration is not a one-and-done activity.** There are many steps to collaborating, as outlined in this toolkit, but a large part of collaboration includes relationship building. Relationships take work to build and maintain over time. Also, you'll want to schedule some reflection time to note what you've learned and adjust as you move forward in the process.