



BENEFITS and BARRIERS to WORKING COLLABORATIVELY

Considering working collectively or collaboratively on an important societal issue? Here are the advantages and disadvantages of such an approach.

Benefits

- ☺ **Quality.** Comprehensive analysis of the problem improves the quality of solutions.
- ☺ **Diversification.** Multiple views of the problem.
- ☺ **Reduced impasse.** The risk of impasse is minimized because differences are explicitly addressed and decisions are made collectively.
- ☺ **Stakeholder's interests.** The process ensures that each stakeholder's interests are considered in any agreement.
- ☺ **Ownership.** Parties retain ownership of the solution.
- ☺ **Expertise.** Parties most familiar with the problem, not their agents, invent the solutions.
- ☺ **Acceptability.** Participation enhances acceptance of solution and willingness to implement it.
- ☺ **Innovation.** The potential to discover novel, innovative solutions is enhanced.
- ☺ **Relationships.** Relations between the stakeholders improve.
- ☺ **Cost.** Costs associated with other methods are avoided.
- ☺ **Continuity.** Mechanisms for coordinating future actions among the stakeholders can be established.

Barriers

- ☹ **Mission/visibility.** Organisational commitments create disincentives due to a perception that collaboration will dilute their mission and their visibility.
- ☹ **Adversity.** Long-standing adversarial relationships stemming from deep ideological differences and historical usage of the judiciary process to resolve conflict.
- ☹ **Power.** Concern about preserving one's own power base if their interest becomes secondary to a more powerful one.
- ☹ **Resource management.** Fiscal policies that concern that allocation of scarce resources.

Facilitation, mediation, evaluation, graphic recording, capacity building:

- Effective organizations
- Multi-organizational collaborative solutions

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Benefits and Barriers to Working Collaboratively

- ☹️ **Risk management.** Perception of risk can cause one to focus on some problems and ignore others.
- ☹️ **Organisational culture.** Administrative policies impede collaboration with budget restraints and budget cycles. Also an established reward system is based on individual performance rather than collaboration.
- ☹️ **Self-interest.** Willingness and capacity of the individuals and organizations to undertake the shifts in thinking necessary (i.e., shifting from personal and organizational self-interest to meaningful collective interest.).
- ☹️ **Leadership.** The absence of leadership and a facilitating infrastructure to support the development of collaboration.

Source: Gray, B. 1991. *Collaborating: Finding Common Ground for Multiparty Problems*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

