

Barriers to Collaboration

Collaboration stresses sharing risks and responsibilities towards a jointly defined goal such as preventing a stressed out caretaker engaging in child abuse. It increases the likelihood that the goal can be met. However, three powerful, common barriers that might impede collaborative efforts or working together of agencies are time, trust and turf.

Time:

Collaborative efforts take time to develop. Short-term, collaboration will take more time and effort than providing services independently; however, long-term it will save time.

Turf:

Turf issues surface when an imbalance, perceived or real, of benefits to the collaboration partners occurs. For example, one agency might see that another agency reaps more benefits from the collaborative effort; or, one agency takes on less responsibility, or has more decision making power. Partners do not see each other as equally involved in benefiting of the collaboration.

Trust:

Lack of trust becomes a barrier in collaborative efforts. Trust can be influenced by prior or current troubled working relationships, or by lack of understanding on how agencies or disciplines operate, or by personal factors such as personality or temperament of an agency representative.

To the degree that agencies are able to overcome the three main barriers: time, turf and trust, they will engage in collaborations of different complexity and commitment. The ability to overcome barriers will be reflected in the progressive continuum of collaborative strategies:

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