

Collaboration Checklist: Is the situation suitable for collaboration?

Yes No

- Both the relationship AND meeting my own needs are important.
- The parties have at least some mandate, authority or ability to decide how to solve the problem.
- There are no insurmountable power imbalances which make negotiation impossible.
- All parties are able to articulate their concerns and their needs and have the capacity to follow through on agreements.
- All parties are coming to the decision-making process voluntarily.
- I am open to the idea that there may be other solutions which meet my needs as well or better than solutions I may currently favor.
- Participation in a collaborative process does not have the potential to be harmful to either party.
- Taking the time to collaborate in this situation will not create or exacerbate an immediate danger or safety concern.

Yes

If you answered yes to all of the above, your situation is likely suitable for collaboration. If you answered no to one or more, your situation could still be suitable for collaboration, and you may need to take some initial preparatory steps, or alter or negotiate some of the steps of the process before collaboration is possible.

In other words, you may need to do more to prepare yourself to be open to collaboration or you may need to negotiate what the process looks like in order to better meet the needs of, and engage, the other person.

No

If you answered no to most or all of the questions, perhaps collaboration isn't the ideal style of problem solving in this situation. Remember, though, you can still use collaboration skills, such as active listening and sharing and asking about interests, while using another style of problem solving. For example, as a manager you may choose to use competition to make unpopular decisions about how to manage a budget cut, but leading up to that decision, you may decide to have a staff meeting to talk about the challenge, and gather information about their interests and ideas, and then share your own interests and the interests you considered before making the decision as you announce the plan.