# About the Office of Strategic Consulting

**Office of Strategic Consulting**

Internal UW–Madison consulting office

Partners with academic and administrative units across campus to enhance organizational effectiveness

Provides services to support strategic initiatives, change, and improvement efforts while also helping others build knowledge and skills

**Services:**
Strategic planning, process improvement, organization design, enhancing culture and climate, leadership coaching, change management, and project management & delivery

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# Our Session's Purpose

- Establish a shared understanding and language around collaboration.
- Introduce tools and concepts to collaborate more effectively.

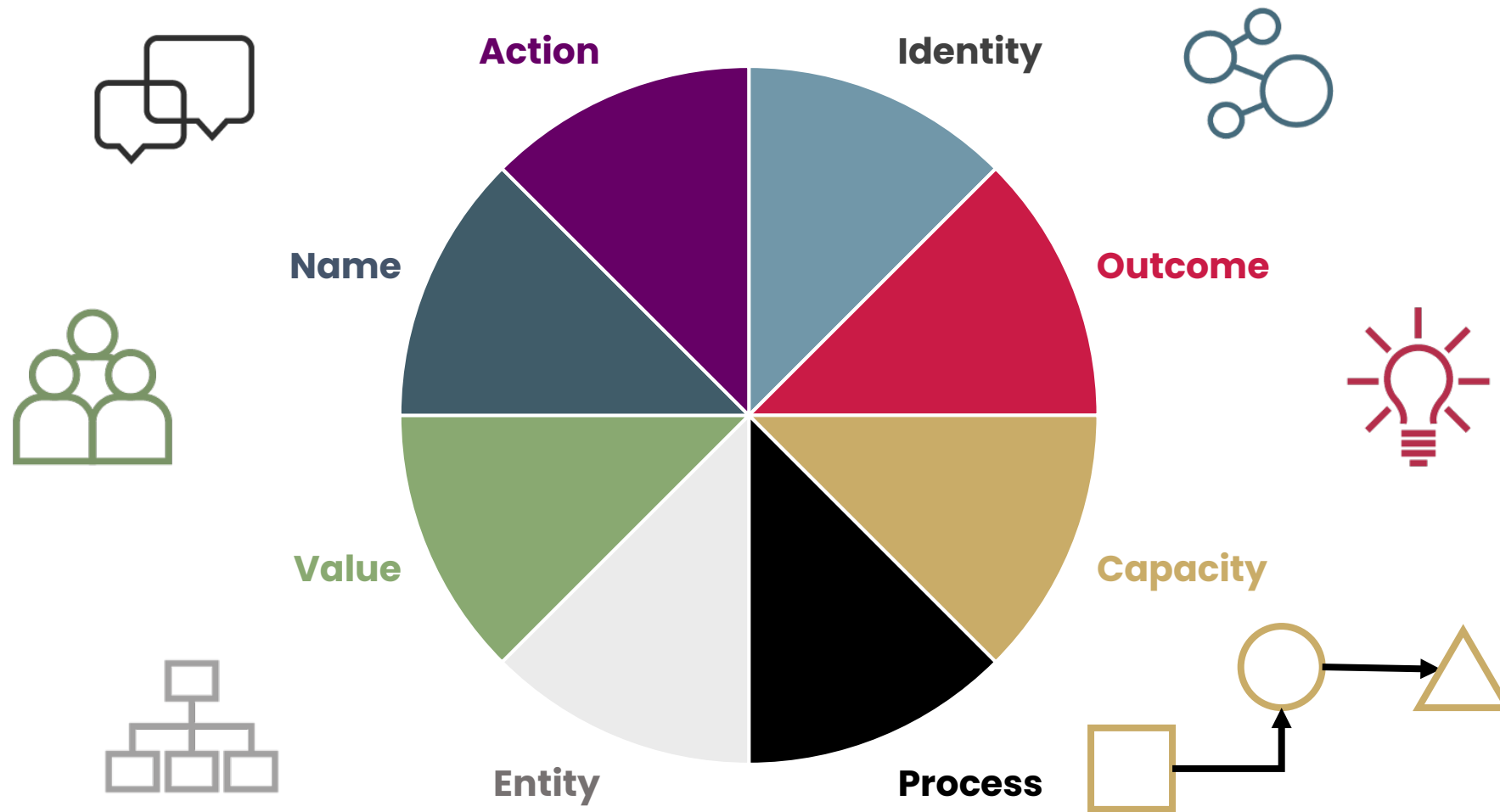| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **What is it?** | **Who does it?** | **Why do it?** |
| **When does it work?** | **How to succeed?** | **Where to next?** |

# When You Hear the Word "Collaboration," What Comes to Mind?

**Annotate!**

# The Many Names and Functions of "Collaboration"



Action

Identity

Name

Outcome

Value

Capacity

Entity

Process

# Think of a Collaborative Initiative Important to You.
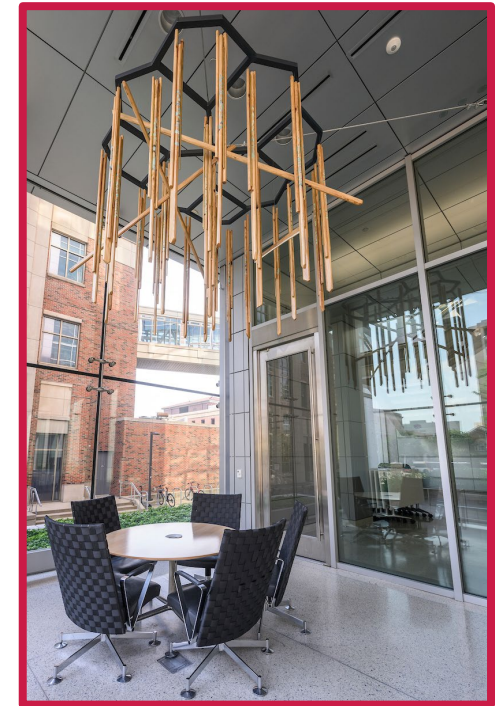
# Why Collaborate?

**Shared Leadership Teams Experience:**

- Less conflict

- Greater consensus

- Higher intra-group trust

- Cohesion

*"Organizations found that they could do more with less (funds) by doing more with more (leadership)."*

**—Allison, Misra, and Perry (2011, 32)**

**Source:** Bergman et al. (2012, 17)

| Why do you collaborate? | How do you aspire to collaborate at work? |
|---|---|
| | |

**Annotate!**

# Have Experienced a Poorly Functioning Collaborative? What Was the "Cost"?

*"The time spent by managers and employees in collaborative activities has ballooned by **50% or more**."* (<u>Cross, Rebele, Grant, 2016</u>)
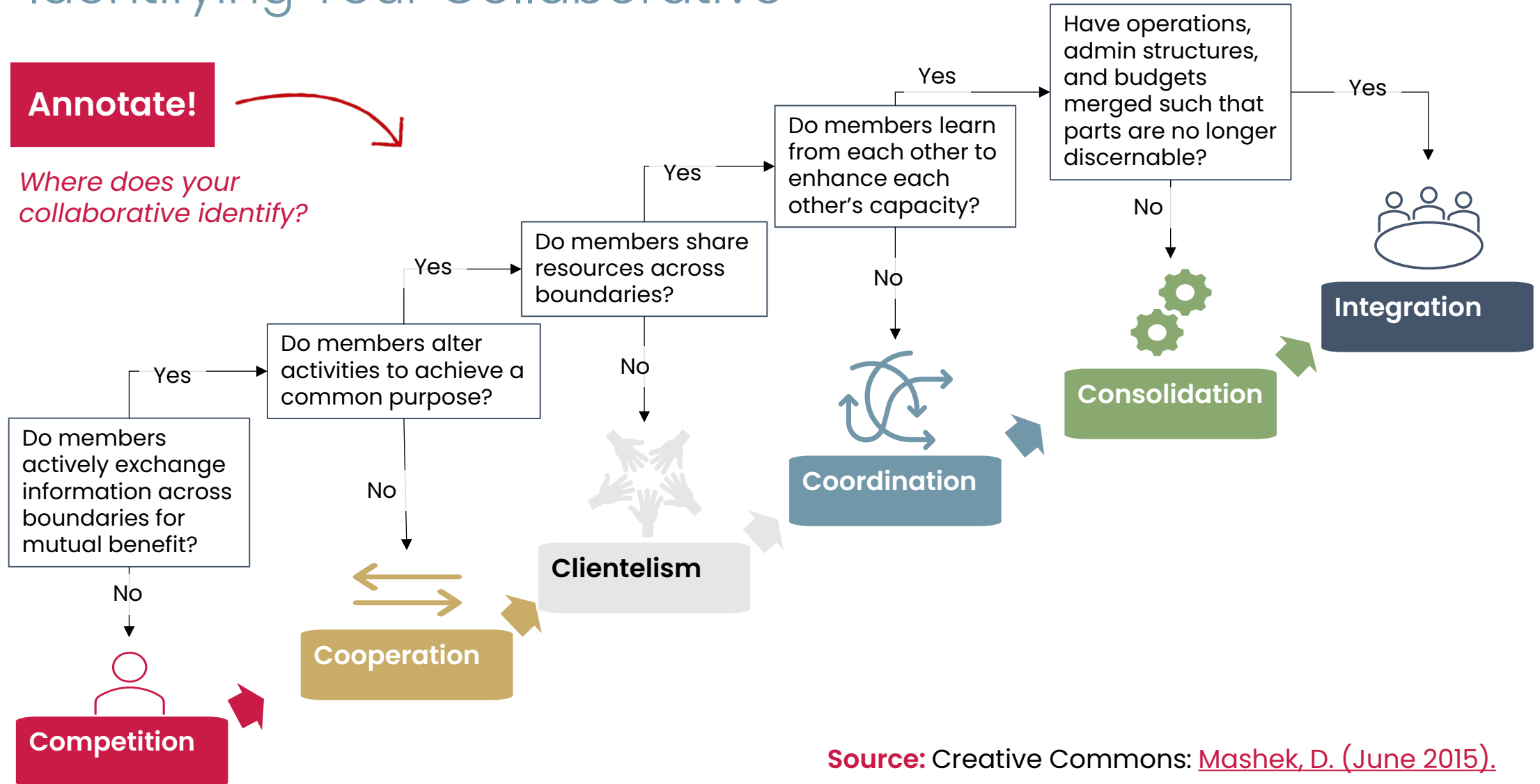
**Annotate!**

# The Collaboration Continuum*

**Competition**
- Conducting activities without input from or exchange with others

**Cooperation**
- Exchanging information for mutual benefit

**Clientelism**
- Altering activities to achieve a common purpose

**Coordination**
- Sharing resources (e.g., staff, finances, space, tools)

**Consolidation**
- Learning from each other to enhance each other's capacity

**Integration**
- Completely merging operations, administrative structures, and budgets. Parts are no longer discernable.

*See Himmelman, A. (2002) for the original Collaboration Continuum and Stout, M., & Keast, R. (2021) for an alternative. **Regardless, the continuum refers to the same underlying progression**.

# Identifying Your Collaborative

**Annotate!**

*Where does your collaborative identify?*

Do members actively exchange information across boundaries for mutual benefit?

— Yes → Do members alter activities to achieve a common purpose?

— No → **Competition**

Do members alter activities to achieve a common purpose?

— Yes → Do members share resources across boundaries?

— No → **Cooperation**

Do members share resources across boundaries?

— Yes → Do members learn from each other to enhance each other's capacity?

— No → **Clientelism**

Do members learn from each other to enhance each other's capacity?

— Yes → Have operations, admin structures, and budgets merged such that parts are no longer discernable?

— No → **Coordination**

Have operations, admin structures, and budgets merged such that parts are no longer discernable?

— Yes → **Integration**

— No → **Consolidation**

**Source:** Creative Commons: Mashek, D. (June 2015).

# How a Group's Purpose and Power Dynamics Influences How the Group Functions

| Power-To | | Power-For | Power-Over | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Competition | Cooperation | Clientelism | Coordination | Consolidation |

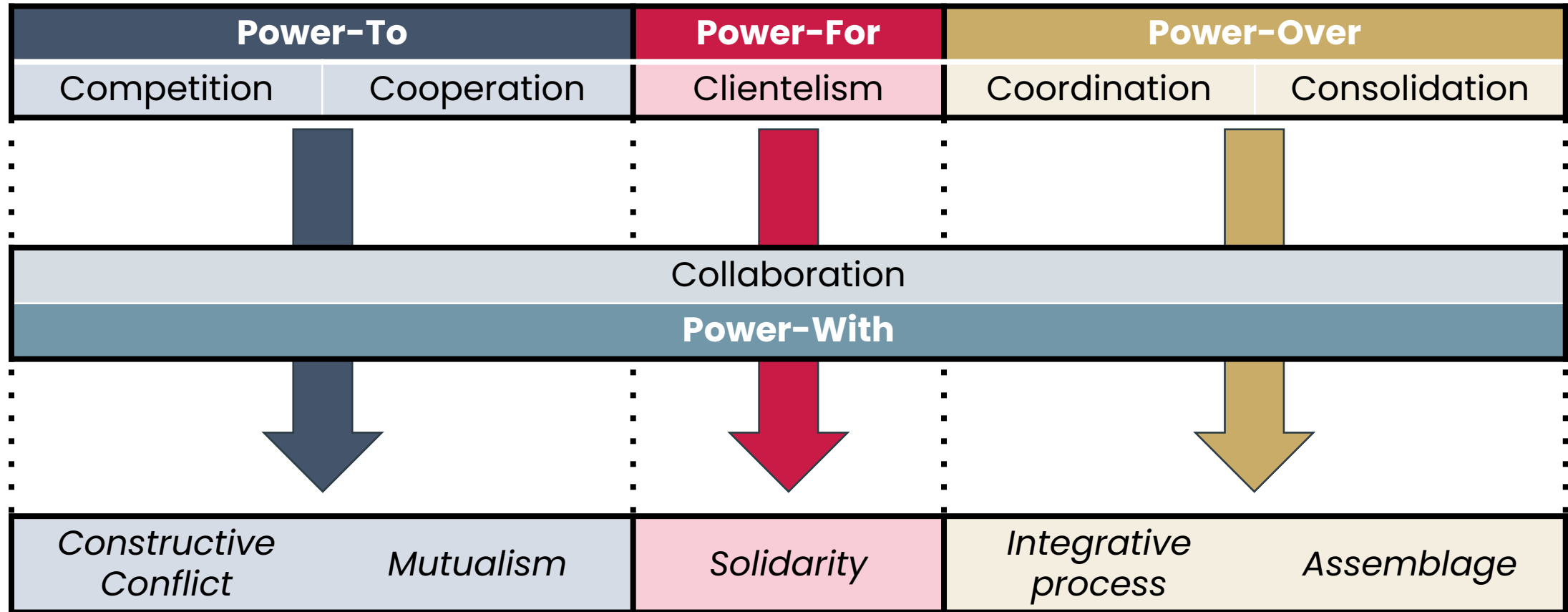**Source:** Modified version of Figure 1.2 in Stout, M., & Keast, R. (2021)

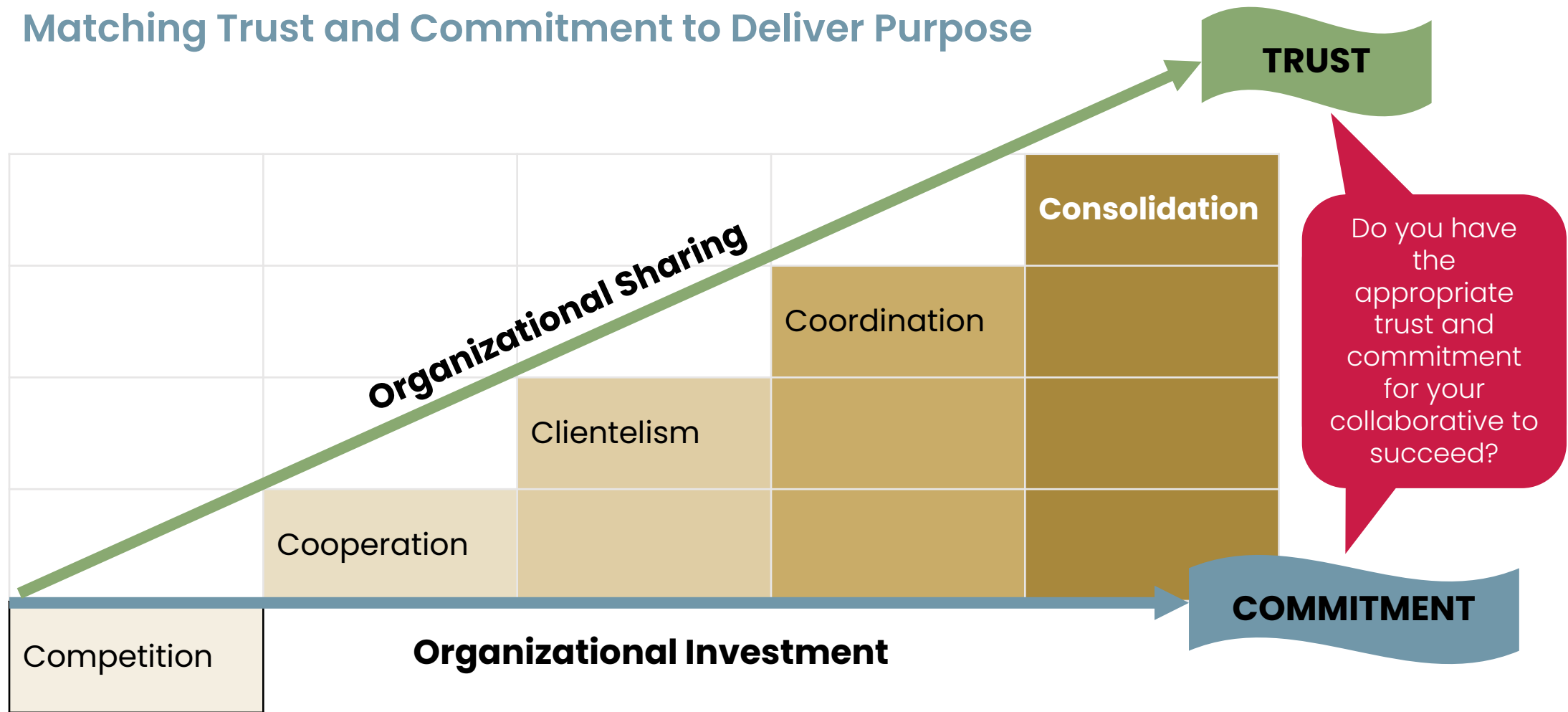# Collaboration's Transformative Power

| Power-To | | Power-For | Power-Over | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Competition | Cooperation | Clientelism | Coordination | Consolidation |

| Collaboration |
|---|
| **Power-With** |

**Source:** Modified version of Figure 1.2 in Stout, M., & Keast, R. (2021)

# Collaboration's Transformative Power

| Power-To | | Power-For | Power-Over | |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| Competition | Cooperation | Clientelism | Coordination | Consolidation |

Collaboration

**Power-With**

| Constructive Conflict | Mutualism | Solidarity | Integrative process | Assemblage |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|:---:|

**Source:** Modified version of Figure 1.2 in Stout, M., & Keast, R. (2021)

# Successful Institutional Collaboration
## Matching Trust and Commitment to Deliver Purpose



**Source:** Mashek and Nanfito (2015)

# Four Prerequisites to Sharing Leadership



Policy

System

Organization

Team

Self

Explicit Commitment to Change

Upfront Time Investment

Sound Management Practices

Engagement and Accountability
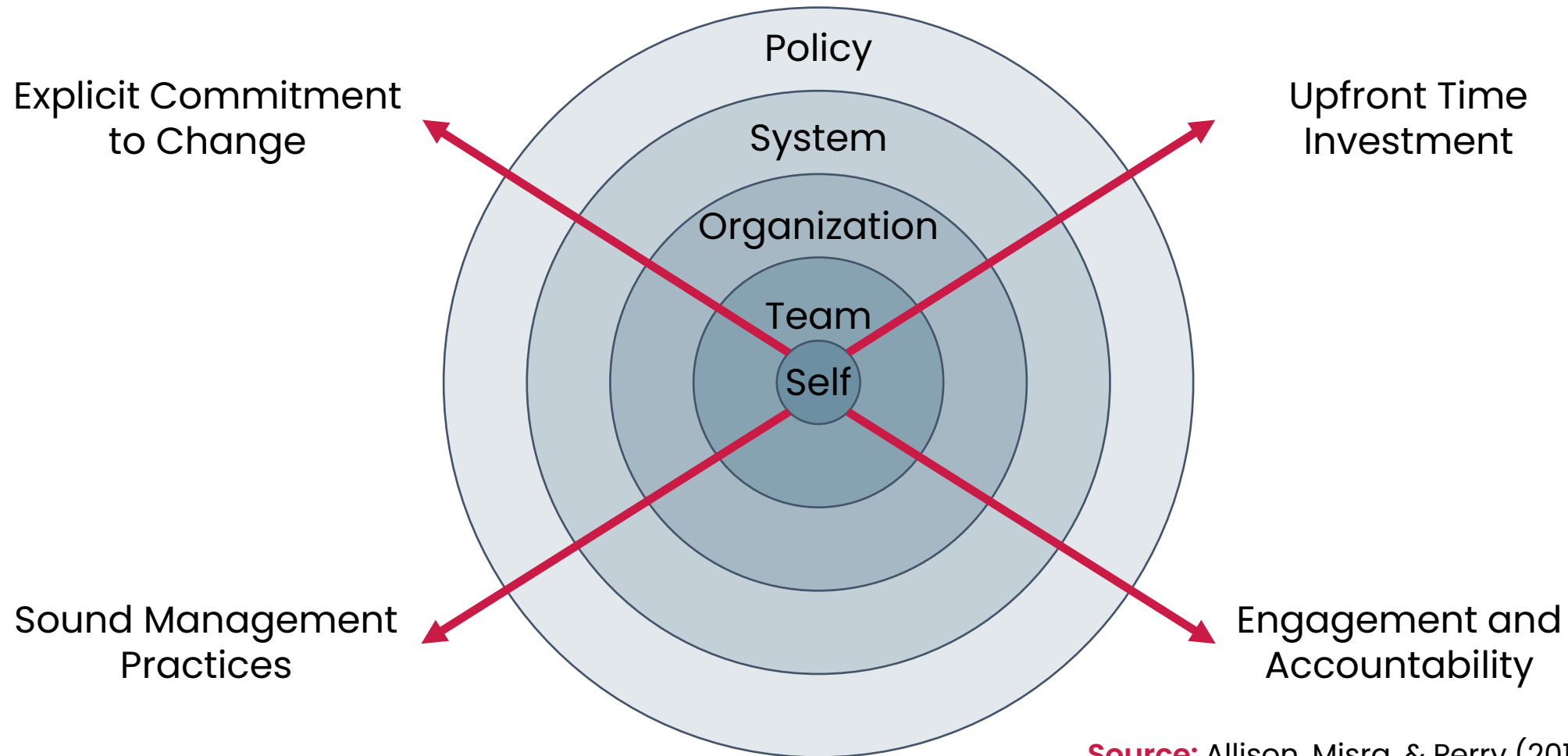
**Source:** Allison, Misra, & Perry (2011, 30)

# Three Building Capacity Levers

**Annotate!**

*Which capacity is most underdeveloped in your collaborations?*

## People

- Sponsors
- Champions
- Project Directors
- Skilled Partners
- (External) Evaluators
- (External) Facilitators

## Processes

- Communication
- Project management
- Decision-making
- Accountability

## Tools

- Statement of shared purpose
- Project charter
- Project plan
- Memoranda of Understanding (MOU)
- Assessment tools
- Incentives
- Professional development

**Source:** Mashek and Nanfito (2015)

# Aligning Capacities Determines to Achieve Results

**Misalignment**

Purpose | People | Processes | Tools | Desired Results

**Ideal Alignment**

Purpose | People | Processes | Tools | (Lack of) Desired Results
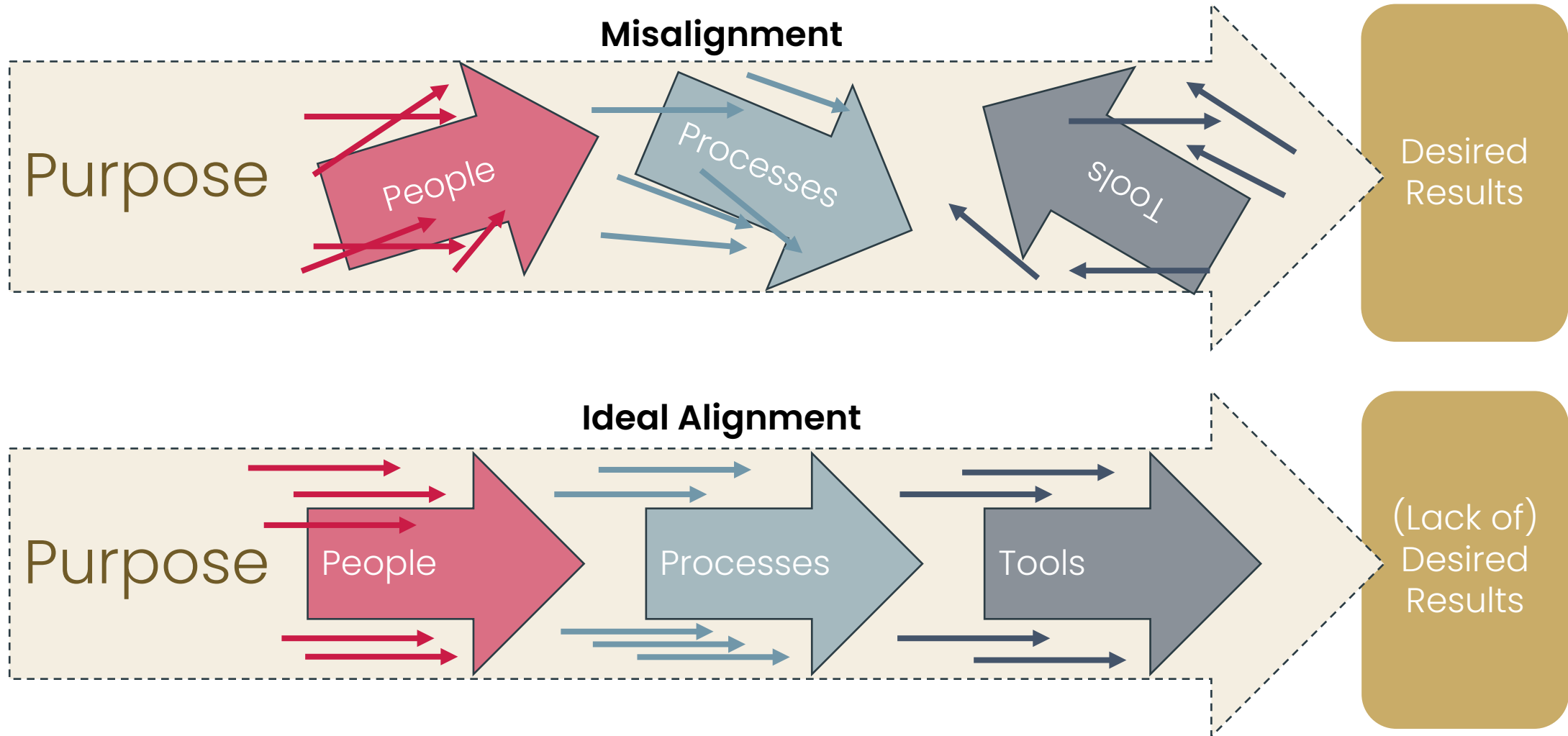
# Common Change Focus Areas that Drive Results
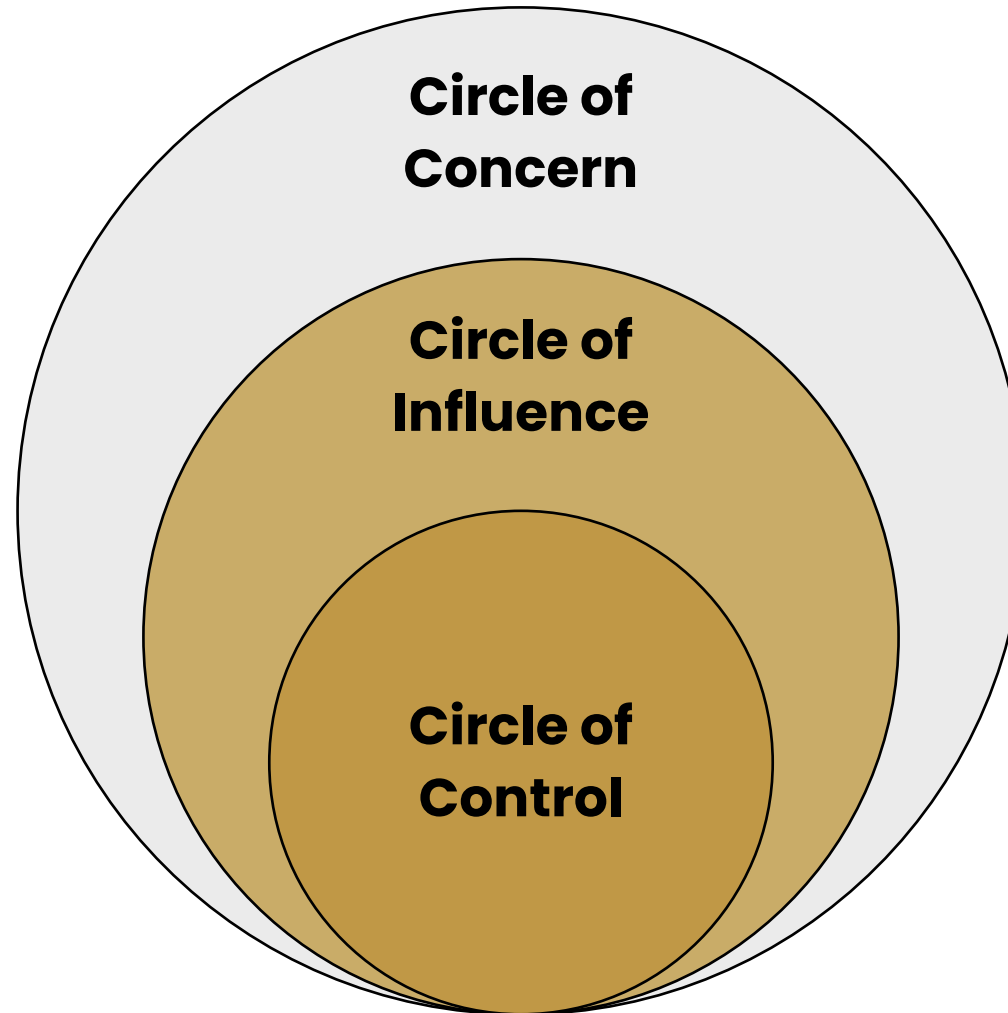
**Changes in:**

- Mindset about roles
- Culture and relationships
- Communication and decision-making processes
- Infrastructure of groups (design, tools)
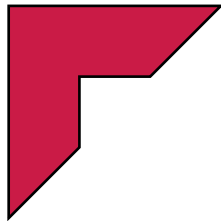
**Annotate!** *What's one step you could take to strengthen your collaborative?*

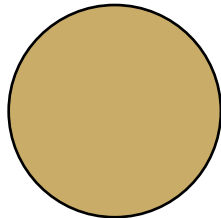# Remember Covey's Circles of Influence!

**Circle of Concern**

**Circle of Influence**

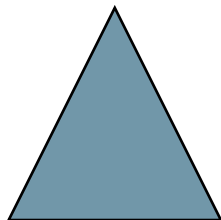**Circle of Control**

# Reflections

What have you learned that "squares" or agrees with your thinking?

What have you learned that gives you a new "angle" or perspective?

What have you learned that closes the loop or brings you "full circle"?

What changes will you make as a result of today?

# Questions and Comments

# Follow up from presentation: Decision Making Nuance

Question: How can we move from yes/no to more nuanced decision making conversations and processes?

- Bring clarity to "who decides" (Leader-Driven to Group-Driven)
    - Tell/Inform: The leader makes the decision and informs the group.
    - Consult/Advise: The leader gathers input from the group before making the decision.
    - Joint/Collaborative: The leader and group work together to make a shared decision.
    - Majority Decides: The group votes, and the majority's choice becomes the decision.
    - Consensus: Everyone in the group agrees on the final decision.
- Bring clarity to the decision details
    - Timeline: How much time is available to make the decision?
    - Importance: How critical is the decision's outcome?
    - Stakeholder Characteristics: What are the skills, experience, and perspectives of the people involved?
    - Desired Outcome: What level of commitment and support is needed from the decision-makers?
    - Nature of the Decision: Does the decision require diverse input or a significant change?

# Follow up from presentation: Agreement Continuums

Question: How can we move from agree/disagree to more nuanced conversations and processes?
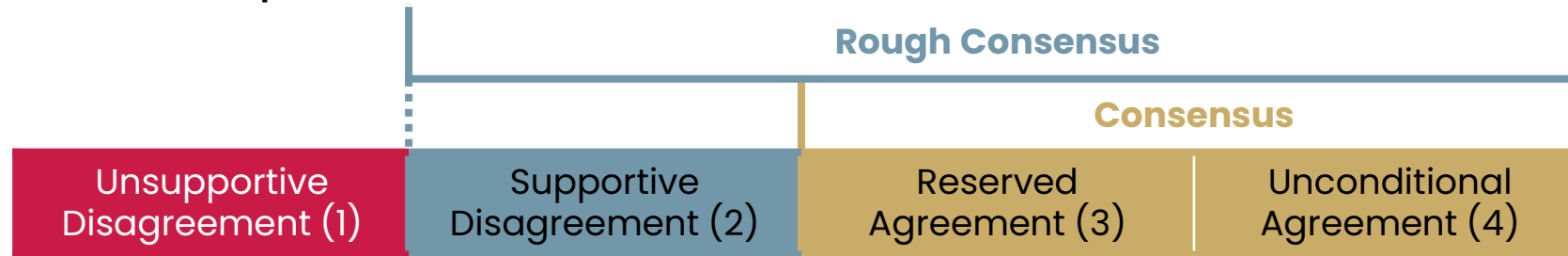


Establish a range of agreement levels to allow team to voice perspectives.

1. "No, I don't agree and cannot go forward. In order for me to support this, we will need to spend more time in dialogue."

2. I don't agree, but I can support the decision made by those who have more credibility on this topic, are more affected by this decision, or who have greater certainty.

3. I agree, but with some reservations. However, I have expressed my reservations and feel I have been heard by the group, so I can go forward in peace.

4. I agree unconditionally.

# Follow up from presentation: Agreement Continuums v2

Question: How can we move from agree/disagree to more nuanced conversations and processes?

The Gradients of Agreement is a group decision support tool described in Sam Kaner's The Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision Making. It spells out an 8-point scale for expressing support for a decision.

1. Whole-hearted Endorsement - "I really like it!"
2. Agreement with a Minor Point of Contention - "Not perfect, but it's good enough."
3. Support with Reservations - "I can live with it."
4. Abstain - "This issue does not affect me."
5. More Discussion Needed - "I don't understand the issues well enough yet."
6. Don't Like But Will Support - "It's not great, but I don't want to hold up the group."
7. Serious Disagreement - "I am not on board with this - don't count on me. "
8. Veto - "I block this proposal."

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **100% agreement**<br><br>"I really like this" | **Agreement, with minor point of contention**<br><br>"It's not perfect, but it's good enough" | **Support with reservations**<br><br>"I can live with this" | **Abstain**<br><br>"This issue doesn't impact me." | **More discussion needed**<br><br>"I don't understand this well enough yet" | **Don't like, but will support.**<br><br>"It's not great, but I don't want to hold up the group" | **Serious disagreement**<br><br>"I am NOT on board. Do not count on my support." | **Veto**<br><br>"I block this – we need to start over" |

# Follow up from presentation: Trust Building

**Question: How can we collaborate in an environment with low trust?**

- In low-trust environments, start small, add structure, make work transparent, and use process as a bridge until trust catches up.

  - **Start small**: low risk collaboration to build credibility and demonstrate follow through

  - **Create clarity**: charter or team agreement on purpose, roles, expectations

  - **Focus on process**: use neutral facilitators, ground rules, and check ins to balance voices and build trust over time

  - Build transparency: use tools that allow everyone to see progress, blockers, and commitments to reduce suspicion or hidden work

  - **Strengthen** relationships: create space for personal connection, not just transactional tasks

    o "What do you need from this collaboration to feel successful?"

  - **Name and address issues**: crucial conversations for difficult discussions

    o Center shared aspects ("*what are <u>we</u> trying to achieve here?*") instead of barriers ("*what do we disagree on?*")

  - **Work with what's possible**: use circles of control/influence to distinguish what can be controlled, influenced, or what must be let go to avoid frustration from trying to "fix" everything at once.

# Follow up from presentation: Trust Building

**Question: How can we collaborate in an environment with low trust?**

- Trust in higher ed collaborations comes from both **competence**—do people deliver what they promise—and **benevolence**—are they acting with the shared good in mind. Most collaborations that stall suffer because one of these two dimensions is missing. Our goal is to move toward *collaborative trust,* where both competence and benevolence are high.

# Recap

- Collaboration is **multi-dimensional** and requires clarity and intentional design.

- Understanding common terms, definitions, continuums, and capacities gives you a **foundation**.

# References

Ann Hill Duin, University of Minnesota, "Fostering a Collaborative Culture: Smart Change and Shared Leadership." (http://www.slideshare.net/nitle/fostering-a-collaborative-culture-071613)

Mashek, Debra. (2015). Collaboration Continuum Key Questions. 10.13140/RG.2.1.1778.1201.

Mashek, Debra. (2015). Collaboration Continuum Capacities and Supports Needed. 10.13140/RG.2.1.1253.8323.

Stout, M., & Keast, R. (2021). "Chapter 1 Collaboration: what does it really mean?". In *Handbook of Collaborative   Public Management*. Cheltenham, UK: Edward Elgar Publishing. Retrieved Aug 26, 2025,from https://doi.org/10.4337/9781789901917.00012

Arthur T. Himmelman, Collaboration for a Change: Definitions, Decision-making Models, Roles, and Collaboration Process Guide. January 2002, Himmelman Consulting, Minneapolis, MN.

# Thank You!

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# Appendix

# Partnership Blueprint (Shared Resource)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Getting Started** | Purpose | Definition | Beliefs | Assumptions |
| **Designing for Success** | Operations | Commitment | Collaboration | Control |
| **Ensuring it Works** | Adaptation | Risk | Return (Value) on Investment | Celebration |

*Where does your collaborative have strength?*
*Where might it need attention?*

**Source:** Adapted from Duin, Ann Hill. Partnering in the Learning Marketspace. San Francisco :Jossey-Bass, 2001.

# Getting Started

**Purpose**
- Why?
- What good? For whom?

**Definition**
- What is it?
- How will it affect my institution?

**Beliefs**
- What are the guiding, foundational principles?

**Assumptions**
- What will we achieve together?
- Are we better together? Why?

# Designing for Success

**Operations**
- How will it work?
- Is it feasible?

**Commitment**
- Who cares? And how much?
- Leaders, managers, individual contributors, students, partners

**Collaboration**
- Is collaboration more important than competition?

**Control**
- Who is sharing leadership? Of what work?

# Ensuring it Works

**Adaptation**
- How will the constituencies adapt to this?

**Risk**
- What if [a financial, legal, or academic risk] happens?

**Return (Value) on investment**
- What is our potential return on this change investment?
- How does it compare to the status quo?

**Celebration**
- How will we acknowledge milestones to build momentum and trust?

# Building Capacity: People and Roles

**People**

- Sponsors
- Champions
- Project directors
- Skilled partners
- External evaluators
- External facilitators

# Building Capacity: Processes for Cohesion

**Processes**

- Communication
- Project management
- Accountability
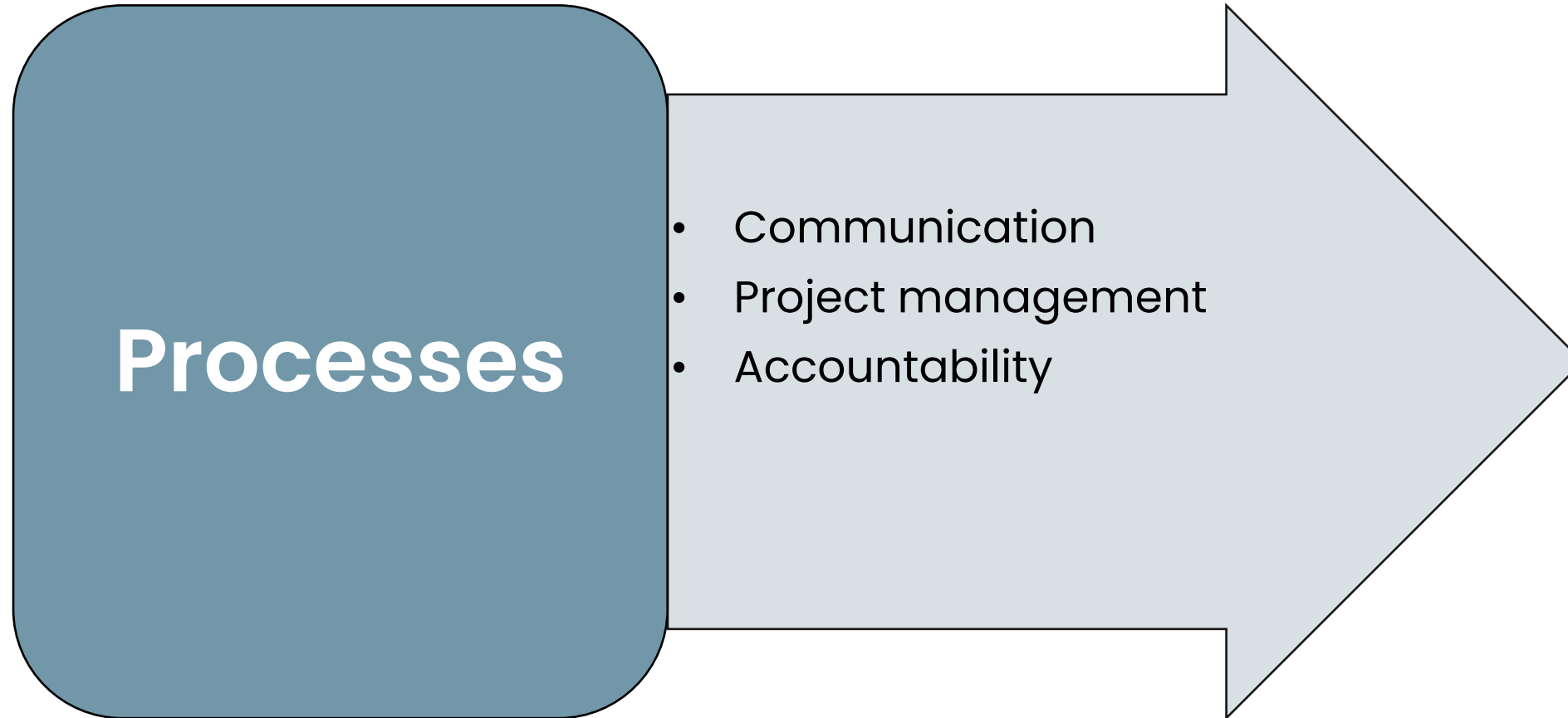
# Building Capacity: Tools for Action

## Tools

- Statement of shared purpose
- Project charter
- Project plan
- Memoranda of Understanding
- Assessment tools
- Incentives
- Professional development
- Shared leadership