

### Why is it important that teams prepare for collaboration?

Team members come to the team with different backgrounds, skills, and experience, as well as different goals and expectations for working together. If team members come ready to bridge these differences, teams can be more successful in achieving their goals. Team members can prepare for collaboration through deliberate self-reflection, skills development, and practice.

### What can all team members do to get ready?

- 1 Commit to inclusive collaboration.** Each team member should actively commit to both the work and the people involved in it. This commitment includes being open-minded and respectful of different viewpoints, as well as being willing to share credit and decision-making authority.

**Try this:** Assess your readiness for inclusive collaboration by asking yourself:

- What do I need to thrive as a member of a collaborative research team?
- What do I hope to gain?
- Am I prepared to share and discuss concerns with team members?
- Am I willing to share decision making with team members?

After asking yourself these questions, write down any needs, concerns, or goals you identified to share with your team.

- 2 Seek additional background knowledge and skills.** Consider whether you have the background knowledge on relevant topics and skills to contribute to the team.

**Try this:** Attend a conference or meeting on a topic that is relevant to the study but outside your primary field of training. Learning the language and methods of other disciplines can help you work with team members more effectively.

**Try this:** Attend a training in unconscious bias or racial inequity.

**Try this:** Talk with team members who have previous experiences on a research team about those experiences.

**Try this:** Talk with team members who have expertise in a topic relevant to the study with which you are less familiar.

**Try this:** Review [PCORI's Research Fundamentals Learning Package](#).

### What can all team members do to get ready? *continued*

- 3 Be self-aware of your personality and how you approach conflict.** Self-awareness of your personality – and those of your team members – can help the team work better together. In addition, developing skills to work through differences with team members can enhance collaboration.

**Try this:** To better understand your own personality type and how you relate to others, take a [personality test](#) to identify your strengths and preferences.

**Try this:** To learn how you interact when in conflict and how to adapt your style of interacting to get along better with others, take the [Thomas-Kilmann conflict mode assessment](#).

- 4 Prepare to give and receive feedback.** As a team member, you will be asked to give and receive feedback. Learn the best ways to give constructive feedback, and practice receiving feedback with an open mind and without getting defensive.

**Try this:** Become familiar with the [Situation – Behavior – Impact \(SBI\) feedback tool](#).

**Try this:** Practice giving and receiving feedback using the SBI feedback tool with a friend or team member. Reflect on and discuss the experience of giving and receiving feedback, and how you can improve.

- 5 Develop skills to use preferred technology and systems.** A big part of collaboration is being able to communicate and perform tasks effectively using the team’s chosen technology and systems, such as teleconferencing or software to share files or analyze data.

**Try this:** Determine what technologies your team will use to communicate and perform tasks. As needed, ask for training in any technologies or systems with which you are unfamiliar.