

# Collaboration

This learning tool has the goal of helping users to:

1. Understand the skill
2. Reflect on and identify ways they use the skill
3. Participate in activities to build skills

## What is collaboration?

The Office of Skills for Success defines collaboration as:

Your ability to contribute and support others to achieve a common goal.



# Reflection

There are many tasks that require adaptability.

Check off the adaptability tasks that you can confidently complete.

- Work on a task with a small group of people, whom I know.  
*For example, plan a meeting with your work team.*
- Be respectful and cooperative, when working on a task with others.  
*For example, listen to everyone’s ideas and be respectful.*
- Discuss different perspectives with others, without creating conflict.  
*For example, share your opinion without expecting everyone to agree.*
- Work on a task with a small group of unfamiliar people.  
*For example, plan a PD event with co-workers from different departments.*
- Work on a task with people from different cultures and/or backgrounds than your own.
- Work on a task with a large group of people.  
*For example, organize a community event with several different organizations and businesses.*
- Adjust your work approach to include the strengths of others.  
*For example, adjust your own contributions to the group.*
- Discuss, negotiate and resolve difficult interactions respectfully.  
*For example, help a diverse group reach a decision by consensus.*



Look at the tasks you did not check off. We call these your “skills to build”.

## How do you use your collaboration skills at home and/or at work?

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# Activity One

You work at a shop in your band's Resource Centre.

Your co-worker, Mark, has been busy organizing a merchandise display for an upcoming sale. He has lots of experience setting up these displays.

Halfway through the day, Mark tells you that he needs help and asks whether you have any experience setting up displays. You do not.



**Which of the following responses show that you are willing to collaborate with Mark on this task?** *(Select all that apply)*

Ask Mark what he needs help with and follow his directions.

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Tell Mark that you haven't set up sales displays before, but you're eager to learn.

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Offer to start by working on the displays that Mark has already started and tell him that you will let him know if you have questions.

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Tell Mark that since you have no experience with this task, you cannot help.

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# Activity One: Review

## Skills Coach Answer:

### The first three responses demonstrate a willingness to collaborate:

- Ask Mark what he needs help with and follow his directions.
- Tell Mark that you haven't set up sales displays before, but that you're eager to learn.
- Offer to start by working on the displays that Mark has already started and tell him that you will let him know if you have questions.



The last response option, 'Tell Mark that since you have no experience with this task, you cannot help' does not show a willingness to collaborate. This response shuts down Mark's request and leaves him to complete the task on his own.

The Skills for Success has three levels of complexity, or difficulty, for collaboration tasks: entry, intermediate, and advanced.

This is an entry-level collaboration task. To demonstrate collaboration in this situation, you must be willing to engage with a single person whom you know well. Asking questions, following directions, being open to learning, and offering to try out the new task all show that you are open to collaborating with Mark.



# Activity Two

You are volunteering at a drum making workshop as part of the festivities to celebrate National Indigenous People's Day.

There were supposed to be four volunteers running this workshop, but unfortunately one person is sick and can no longer attend.



**Which of the following actions demonstrate collaboration?** *(Select all that apply)*

Have a discussion with the other two volunteers about how to divide up the responsibilities so the workshop can be run by three people, instead of four.

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Cancel the workshop.

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Suggest that everyone take turns throughout the day, covering the absent person's portion of the workshop.

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Find an additional volunteer who can help run the workshop and train them on what to do.

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## Activity Two: Review

### Skills Coach Answer:

- **Discuss with the other volunteers: how to divide the responsibilities so the workshop can be run by three people, instead of four.**
- **Suggest that everyone take turns throughout the day, covering the absent person’s portion of the workshop.**
- **Find an additional volunteer who can help run the workshop and train them on what to do.**



Cancelling the workshop does not demonstrate collaboration. This response avoids the problem, rather than working with the people available to collectively build a solution.

This is an intermediate-level collaboration task. To demonstrate collaboration in this situation, you must be willing to engage with multiple people whom you may not know well. You may also need to take on a leadership role within the group and help organize or train others.

### Importance of Collaboration skills

The collective nature of many Indigenous communities’ places emphasis on collaboration. Individuals bring their strengths and identities contributing to collaboration to complete tasks and achieve common goals.

Today’s workplaces are becoming more diverse and many jobs require you to work with others from different backgrounds and cultures to complete tasks, solve problems and achieve a common goal. Collaboration helps us to perform in a team so others feel valued and supported. Strong collaboration skills help individuals to manage difficult interactions and contribute thoughts and ideas in a respectful way.

For more information on Collaboration visit the skill components and proficiency descriptors on the [Skills for Success](#) Website. For more information on the Indigenous Skills for Success Journey Refresh Project please visit the [Douglas College](#) Website.

## Continue the Journey

### How can you continuously improve your collaboration skills?

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