

Building Trust Across Partners

The quality of the relationships across partners will have a profound impact on the Partnership Agreement and the way the project gets implemented. Personality types that are not aggressive or competitive, but rather are committed to a sense of commonwealth and joint action, are vital to building trust and developing a unified front. Research conducted by the Wilder Research Center has shown that mutual respect, understanding, and trust are among the most frequently cited factors in successful collaborations, read more [here](http://www.nhi.org/online/issues/129/savecollab.html).

Here are some tips for working through a negotiation while also building trust:

* Focus on creatively trying to build the “pie” or how the partnership helps achieve more than each contributor could on their own
* Avoid focusing on positions and personalities, look instead mutual interests
* Ask open (rather than closed) questions
* Summarize what has been said to make sure everyone understands each other
* Schedule meetings at times and locations convenient to all partners
* Provide sufficient time for decision making
* Show respect and sensitivity for cultural and other differences
* Be flexible, consider other options, and be willing to compromise
* Create opportunities for different kinds of interaction (standard meetings are not always the best way to build relationships)