


Table 1 The continuum of integration¹

Integration	Process	Purpose
Low  High	Networking	The exchange of information for mutual benefit. This requires little time and trust between partners. Clearinghouse for information.
	Coordination	Exchanging information and altering activities for a common purpose. Match and coordinate needs and activities. Limit duplication of services.
	Cooperation	As above plus sharing resources. It requires a significant amount of time and high level of trust between partners.
	Collaboration	In addition to the other activities described, collaboration includes enhancing the capacity of the other partners for mutual benefit and a common purpose. Building interdependent systems to address issues and opportunities. Sharing resources and making equal commitment.

What are the stages in building collaboration?²

Stage one: priority setting and problem definition

- Shared understanding of problems and goals and each partner's position
- Shared definition of the problem
- Shared commitment to the collaboration
- Identification of resources required to support the collaboration
- Collective identification of key stakeholders and the convenor

Stage two: reaching agreement

- Establish the ground rules
- Jointly agree on an agenda for the collaborative venture
- Reach agreement on how problems will be solved

Stage three: implementation

- Build external support for the solutions agreed
- Institutionalising/implementing agreements reached
- Monitoring the agreement and ensuring compliance

¹ Adapted from Himmelman A. (2001) On coalitions and the transformation of power relations: collaborative betterment and collaborative empowerment, *American Journal of Community Psychology*, vol. 29, no. 2 as quoted in *The partnerships analysis tool: for partners in health promotion* (2003), developed by John McCleod on behalf of VicHealth. It is downloadable from <http://www.vichealth.vic.gov.au/rhadmin/articles/files/partnerships.pdf>

² Walker R.(2000), *Collaboration and Alliances: A Review for VicHealth*, Melbourne.