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Sibley County Children’s Collaborative – Supporting Child Welfare through Collaboration

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Purpose & Significance

The Sibley County Children’s Collaborative meets the definition as a collaborative “organizational and interorganizational structure(s) where resources, power, and authority are shared and where people are brought together to achieve common goals that could not be accomplished by a single individual or organization independently” (Daka-Mulwanda, Thornburg, Filbert, & Klein, 1995, p. 219). Its functioning depends on members working together, sharing their time, skills, resources and the common goal of providing community support for children and families in Sibley County. However, effective collaboration does not come easily. In fact much of the literature regarding collaboration suggests that while collaboration is the most effective form of problem solving, it is also the most complex, progressing first from cooperation to coordination and finally to collaboration (Daka-Mulwanda, et al., 1995). While the SCCC has a rich history of interagency planning and collaboration, recent years of high membership turnover has left new members unsure of the roles and responsibilities of the collaborative. This project was designed to address the current status of the SCCC through an examination of the literature and the development of a manual.

Methodology

- A systematic review of the literature was completed using the following databases: Google Scholar, ProQuest Databases, Social Service Abstracts, Sociological Abstracts, and the Center for Effective Collaboration and Practice, Office of the Revisor of Statutes, and Minnesota Department of Human Services .
- Key search terms included: “child welfare”, “children’s collaborative”, “collaborative functioning”, “interprofessional collaboration”, and “social service collaborative”.
- Key components were identified, and implications were developed.
- A manual titled *Sibley County Children’s Collaborative – Supporting Child Welfare through Collaboration* is under development and will be presented to members of the Sibley County Children’s Collaborative.

Key Components of Collaboration

COLLECTIVE OWNERSHIP OF GOALS

- Collaborative members’ accepting shared responsibility for setting, reaching and achieving common goals (Bronstein, 2003).

FLEXIBILITY

- Collaborative members’ ability to adapt and compromise to meet collaborative goals (Bronstein, 2003).

INTERDEPENDENCE

- Collaborative members’ ability to rely on each other and work together to meet collaborative goals (Bronstein, 2003).

NEWLY CREATED PROFESSIONAL ACTIVITIES

- Tasks created to maximize collaborative members’ individual knowledge and skills in order to meet collaborative goals (Bronstein, 2003).

REFLECTIONS ON PROCESS

- Collaborative members’ evaluation of methods and strategies utilized to meet collaborative goals (Bronstein, 2003).

ABILITY

- Collaborative members must be able to work collaboratively between agencies, and engage in collaborative work (Einbinder, Robertson, Garcia, Vuckovic, Patti, 2000).

CAPACITY

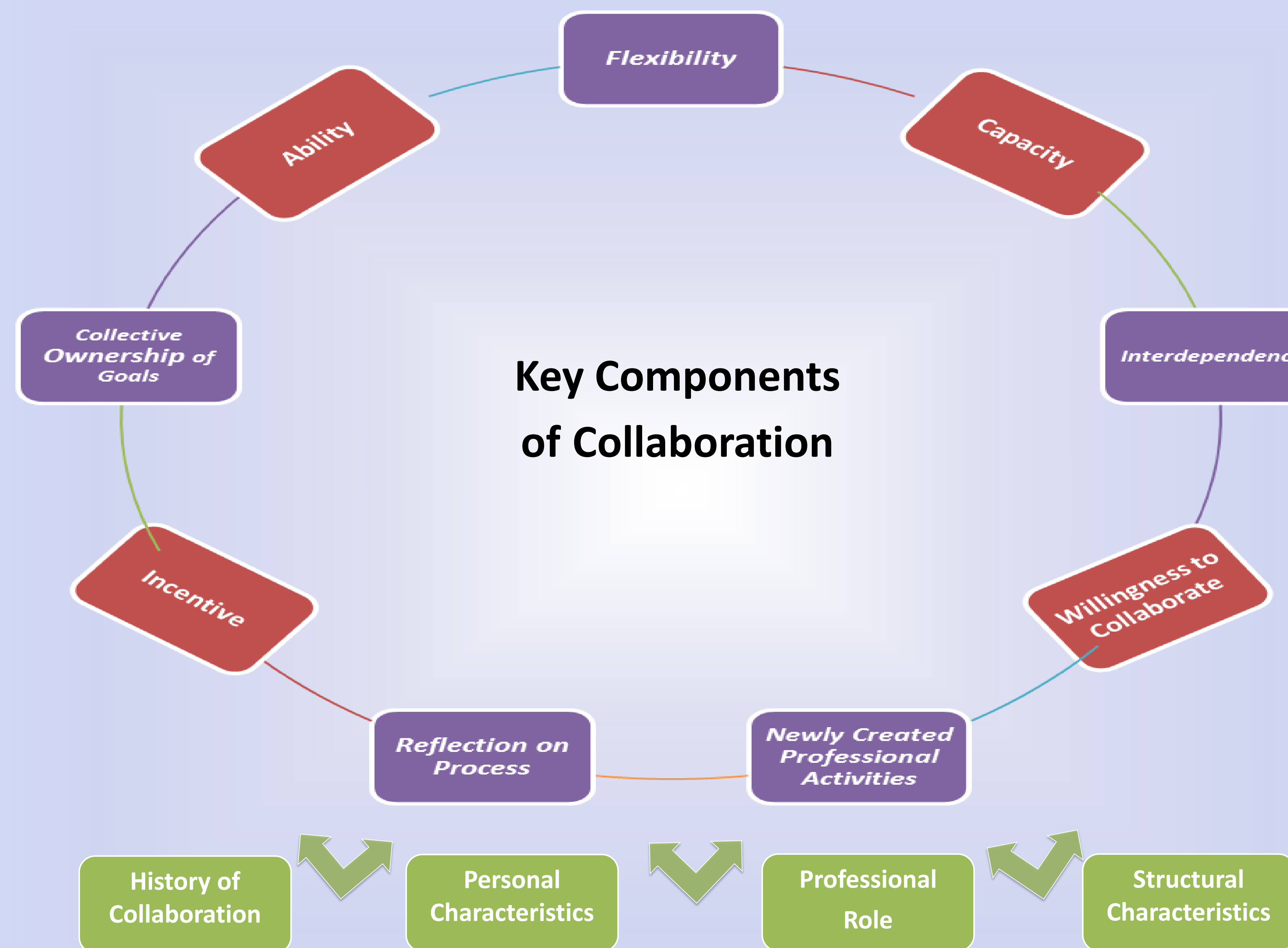
- Collaborative members must be capable of coordinating activities and working interdependently (Einbinder, et al., 2000).

INCENTIVE

- Collaborative members must have significant motivation to actively participate in collaborative groups (Einbinder, et al., 2000).

WILLINGNESS TO COLLABORATE

- Collaborative members must be motivated to work collaboratively (Einbinder, et al., 2000).



Key Components of Collaboration

Influences on Collaboration

HISTORY OF COLLABORATION

- The influence collaborative members’ past collaborative experiences have on collaboration (Bronstein, 2003).

PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

- The influence collaborative members’ personal characteristics such as attitude, personality, respect, trust, and understanding have on collaboration (Bronstein, 2003).

PROFESSIONAL ROLE

- The influence collaborative members’ allegiance to their agency and professions values and ethics have on collaboration (Bronstein, 2003).

STRUCTURAL CHARACTERISTICS

- The influence agency and collaborative traits and practices have on collaboration (Bronstein, 2003).

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References available from author upon request.