The Collaborative Professional

Intensives Library · Supervision & Professional Growth

CONTENTS

- Part 1 · Overview
- Part 2 · Reading
- Part 3 · Assessment
- Part 4 · Worksheets
- Part 5 · Action Plan

© The Recovery Files

Part 1 · Overview

The Collaborative Professional

Lateral Support, Peer Consultation & Collective Intelligence

About This Intensive

This intensive develops your capacity for genuine collaborative problem-solving — the ability to build environments where diverse expertise integrates, psychological safety enables authentic inquiry, and collective intelligence produces better outcomes than any individual perspective could achieve alone.

5 Reading Sections

Deep-dive frameworks for collaborative excellence

104-Item Assessment

13 domains · Part 1 Awareness + Part 2 Application with ratio scoring

10 Worksheets

Practical exercises for skill development

Action Plan

5-section implementation commitment

7 Dimensions of Lateral Support Mastery

Peer Consultation Recognition

Receptivity to Feedback

Communication Effectiveness

Collaborative Decision-Making

Professional Judgment Balance

Resource Utilization

Mutual Support & Community Building

Sheamus Moran - Founder of The Recovery Files · Embrace, Empower & Evolve · Recovery Made Simple

© The Recovery Files

Part 2 · Reading

The Collaborative Professional

Lateral Support, Peer Consultation & Collective Intelligence

The Collaborative Problem-Solver: Collective Intelligence in SUD Treatment

Collaborative problem-solving in substance use disorder treatment transforms how organizations address complex challenges by leveraging diverse expertise, encouraging genuine inquiry, and building solutions through collective wisdom rather than hierarchical authority alone.

The complexity of SUD treatment demands coordinated expertise. No single clinician holds all the answers for the multidimensional challenges clients present — trauma histories, co-occurring disorders, family system dysfunction, housing instability, legal consequences, and more. Effective treatment requires a genuine coming-together of perspectives that only becomes possible when organizational structures, psychological safety, and skilled facilitation align.

Yet many treatment organizations continue to default to hierarchical decision-making. A senior clinician or director presents a problem, offers a solution, and others either acquiesce or remain silent. This is not collaboration — it is consultation that masquerades as inclusion. Genuine collaborative problem-solving means that diverse perspectives actively shape both the definition of the problem and the design of the solution.

The difference between hierarchical and collaborative environments is most visible in what people feel safe to say. In a hierarchical environment, people say what the authority figures want to hear. In a collaborative environment, people say what they actually see — including inconvenient truths, uncomfortable uncertainties, and creative departures from established practice.

Psychological safety is not merely a pleasant organizational feature. It is the structural prerequisite for collaborative intelligence. Without it, the collective knowledge of the team remains inaccessible — each clinician carrying expertise, concern, and perspective that never enters the room because the room itself is not safe enough to receive it.

Building genuine collaborative problem-solving environments requires work at three levels simultaneously: individual skills (facilitation, synthesis, conflict navigation), interpersonal patterns (how disagreement is handled, how input is solicited), and organizational structures (meeting design, decision-making authority, accountability systems). All three levels must be addressed for lasting transformation.

Reflection Questions

© The Recovery Files

1. Think of the last significant organizational problem-solving process you participated in. Was it genuinely collaborative or primarily hierarchical? What was the difference?

Your honest reflection...

2. What does psychological safety feel like in the room when it is present during a collaborative process? What signals tell you it is absent?

Your honest reflection...

3. Where in your current organization does genuine collective intelligence operate most effectively? What makes that possible?

Your honest reflection...

4. What is the single most common barrier to collaborative problem-solving in your professional context — and what would it take to address it?

Your honest reflection...

5. How do you personally contribute to either expanding or contracting the collaborative space in team discussions?

Your honest reflection...

One of the most important skills in developing collaborative organizations is the capacity to accurately distinguish between genuine collaboration and its imitations. Many organizations believe they are collaborative because they hold team meetings, solicit input, and emphasize shared values. But the structure of decision-making often tells a different story.

Genuine collaboration has recognizable features: diverse perspectives actively shape problem definitions before solutions are proposed; people with less organizational power feel as safe

© The Recovery Files

contributing as those with more; input that contradicts prevailing views is engaged with rather than politely noted and set aside; the people who must implement solutions have meaningful influence over their design.

In contrast, the more common pattern is what might be called "collaborative theater" — meetings that go through the motions of participation while solutions are largely predetermined. Input is collected and then filtered through existing hierarchical preferences. Disagreement is absorbed rather than integrated. The result is solutions that lack the legitimacy and buy-in that genuine collaboration would have generated.

Cross-functional collaboration represents a particularly valuable form of collective problem-solving in treatment settings. When a complex case is brought to a team that includes a clinician, a case manager, a peer support specialist, and a nurse — and all perspectives are genuinely weighted — the resulting treatment plan reflects a richness of understanding that no single discipline could achieve.

Power dynamics are the most important lens for reading collaborative health. Notice who speaks first, who speaks most, who is interrupted, whose contributions are acknowledged versus ignored, and — perhaps most tellingly — who says nothing at all. These patterns reveal the actual collaborative architecture of an organization far more accurately than its stated values.

Developing collaborative awareness means being willing to see these patterns honestly, including one's own role in maintaining or challenging them. This is not comfortable work. It requires acknowledging when authority is used to foreclose rather than facilitate, and when silence reflects not agreement but a calculation that speaking up is too costly.

Reflection Questions

1. Describe a specific meeting you have attended where the collaborative structure was present but genuine collaboration was absent. What were the tell-tale signs?

Your honest reflection...

2. Who in your current organization seems to have insight that rarely gets into decision-making conversations? What prevents it?

Your honest reflection...

© The Recovery Files

3. How do you personally navigate the tension between your organizational authority (whatever level it is) and creating space for perspectives different from your own?

Your honest reflection...

4. What would you notice differently about your organization's problem-solving processes if you applied the 'power dynamics lens' described above?

Your honest reflection...

5. Think of a time when genuine cross-functional collaboration produced a significantly better solution than any single perspective would have. What made that collaboration work?

Your honest reflection...

One of the persistent paradoxes of collaborative work is that genuine openness and creativity often require structure. Without structure, meetings default to the loudest voices, most recent information, or most comfortable conclusions. Structure, designed well, creates the conditions for genuine participation, systematic inquiry, and creative solutions.

The key distinction is between structures that normalize inquiry and those that normalize expertise display. A meeting structure that begins with open-ended questions about what is not yet understood creates a fundamentally different dynamic than one that begins with a presentation of what is already known. The first invites contribution; the second positions certain people as having the answers others need to absorb.

Structured problem-solving frameworks — from simple approaches like "What do we know? What do we need to know? What are we going to do?" to more elaborate methodologies — share the common feature of making problem-solving stages explicit. When participants can see where they are in the process, they can orient their contribution appropriately. Ambiguity about process is a significant barrier to inclusive participation.

Inquiry normalization is perhaps the most important structural feature of effective collaborative environments. This means deliberately creating spaces where not knowing is acceptable, where questions are welcomed, where admitting uncertainty is a mark of clinical honesty rather than professional inadequacy. This is particularly critical in SUD treatment settings, where the culture can strongly reward expertise display and penalize visible uncertainty.

© The Recovery Files

The structure of physical and virtual meeting spaces also matters more than is often recognized. Who sits where, who speaks to whom, how information is presented on screens or walls, whether there is a designated facilitator versus a rotating chair — all of these structural features shape who participates and how. Redesigning meeting structures with collaborative intent can unlock participation patterns that no amount of exhortation about "speaking up" could produce.

Building one's own capacity as a collaborative facilitator requires practice with multiple methodologies — not as a repertoire of techniques to deploy mechanically, but as a flexible toolkit that can be adapted to the specific group, problem, and organizational context at hand.

Reflection Questions

1. What meeting or problem-solving structure have you experienced that most effectively drew out the full range of participant perspectives? What made it work?

Your honest reflection...

2. How does your organization handle visible uncertainty or admitted not-knowing? Is it safe to say 'I don't know' in team meetings?

Your honest reflection...

3. Design a brief meeting structure for addressing a recurring organizational problem in your setting. What stages would you include, and why?

Your honest reflection...

4. What is one structural change to how your team currently meets that might significantly improve collaborative participation?

Your honest reflection...

© The Recovery Files

5. How do you personally respond when a meeting structure feels too rigid or too loose? What does your response reveal about your collaborative preferences?

Your honest reflection…

The most common failure mode in collaborative problem-solving is not the absence of diverse perspectives — it is the failure to genuinely integrate them. Organizations often become skilled at collecting diverse input without developing the capacity to synthesize it into something more than the original preference of the most powerful voice.

Genuine perspective integration is intellectually demanding work. It requires holding multiple views simultaneously, identifying the valid concerns embedded in apparently conflicting positions, and designing solutions that honor — rather than merely acknowledge — the full range of relevant insight. This is different from compromise, which typically satisfies no one fully. It is synthesis, which creates something new from the combination.

Conflict within collaborative processes is not a sign of dysfunction. It is a sign that genuine perspectives are present and being expressed. The critical variable is not whether conflict emerges, but how it is held. Conflict that is met with defensiveness, dismissal, or authority-based closure becomes destructive. Conflict that is met with curiosity, explicit acknowledgment, and skillful facilitation becomes generative.

Consensus-building is a specific skill set that collaborative professionals must develop. True consensus is not unanimity — it is the state in which all participants can say "I can live with this decision and support its implementation." Building consensus requires creating conditions in which minority perspectives feel genuinely heard, even when the final decision does not reflect them completely.

Implementation collaboration is where the quality of the preceding collaborative process becomes visible. Solutions developed through genuine collaboration are more likely to be successfully implemented because the people responsible for implementation were involved in the design. Their concerns were addressed, their contextual knowledge was incorporated, and their ownership of the outcome is authentic rather than performed.

Building a culture of genuine collaboration is ultimately a leadership responsibility, but it is not limited to positional leaders. Every participant in every meeting makes choices about whether to expand or contract the collaborative space — whether to speak or stay silent, whether to engage a divergent view or dismiss it, whether to facilitate or dominate.

Reflection Questions

© The Recovery Files

1. Think of a collaborative process where real conflict emerged. How was it handled? What was the outcome for the solution quality and the team relationships?

Your honest reflection...

2. What is the difference between a perspective being heard and a perspective being integrated? Describe an example of each from your experience.

Your honest reflection...

3. How do you personally manage the tension between moving to a decision efficiently and ensuring all relevant perspectives have genuinely shaped it?

Your honest reflection...

4. What skills would you most like to develop in the area of perspective synthesis? What would practicing those skills look like?

Your honest reflection...

5. Think of a solution that was developed collaboratively and one that was imposed hierarchically. How did implementation quality differ, and why?

Your honest reflection...

Building and Sustaining a Collaborative Problem-Solving Culture

A collaborative problem-solving culture is not a static achievement — it is a continuously cultivated practice. Organizations that develop genuine collaboration create visible, repeatable structures that make it normative, reinforce it when it happens, address it when it breaks down, and continue developing it through training, coaching, and reflection.

© The Recovery Files

The most durable collaborative cultures are ones where the value of diverse perspectives has been demonstrated repeatedly through visible outcomes. When teams can point to specific decisions made better by collaborative processes, and specific failures that resulted from hierarchical short-circuits, the case for ongoing investment in collaboration becomes self-reinforcing.

Technology plays an increasingly important role in both enabling and complicating collaborative work. Digital platforms can dramatically expand who can contribute to problem-solving, removing barriers of geography, schedule, and organizational hierarchy. At the same time, digital communication tends to suppress the nonverbal richness — tone, expression, energy — that makes in-person collaboration most effective. The most skilled collaborative professionals develop the capacity to integrate virtual and in-person approaches deliberately.

Developing others' collaborative skills is as important as developing one's own. Training in facilitation, active listening, perspective synthesis, and constructive conflict navigation builds collaborative capacity across the organization rather than concentrating it in designated facilitators. When collaborative skills are widely distributed, the organization becomes more resilient to the loss of any particular individual.

The link between collaborative problem-solving and staff wellbeing is frequently underappreciated. Clinicians who work in genuinely collaborative environments report higher job satisfaction, lower burnout rates, and greater sense of professional efficacy. This is not a coincidence — it reflects the fundamental human need for meaningful participation in decisions that affect one's work. Collaborative cultures are retention strategies and wellness investments as much as they are quality improvement mechanisms.

Sustaining collaborative culture through organizational transitions — leadership changes, funding shifts, regulatory pressures — requires intentional attention. These are precisely the moments when the pressure toward hierarchical decision-making intensifies, and when the investment in collaborative capacity pays its greatest dividends.

Reflection Questions

1. What are the most visible markers of a genuinely collaborative culture in an organization you know well? What would you point to as evidence?

Your honest reflection…

© The Recovery Files

2. How has technology affected collaborative problem-solving in your professional context — has it expanded or contracted genuine participation?

Your honest reflection...

3. What would a meaningful investment in collaborative skills development look like in your current organization?

Your honest reflection...

4. How do you personally experience the relationship between collaborative work environments and your own professional wellbeing?

Your honest reflection...

5. What specific commitment are you willing to make to the cultivation of collaborative problem-solving culture in your professional sphere?

Your honest reflection...

Sheamus Moran - Founder of The Recovery Files · Embrace, Empower & Evolve · Recovery Made Simple

© The Recovery Files

Part 3 · Assessment

The Collaborative Professional

Lateral Support, Peer Consultation & Collective Intelligence

Collaborative Professional Self-Assessment

Rate each item 1 (Never) → 5 (Always) · 104 items across 13 domains · Part 1 Awareness / Part 2 Application

Part 1 — Awareness

1. I recognize when clinical situations could benefit from peer consultation or collaborative input.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

2. I notice patterns in when I default to independent decision-making versus seeking collaborative input.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

3. I understand the difference between appropriate independent clinical judgment and situations requiring peer input.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

4. I acknowledge both successful peer consultations and missed opportunities for collaborative problem-solving.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

Part 2 — Application

5. I actively seek peer consultation when clinical complexity exceeds my individual expertise.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

6. I create structured opportunities for collaborative case review within my professional context.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

7. I build relationships with colleagues that make peer consultation natural and accessible.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

8. I practice collaborative consultation approaches that produce better outcomes than independent decision-making.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

Part 1 — Awareness

1. I recognize my own emotional responses when receiving feedback that challenges my perspective.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

© The Recovery Files

2. I notice patterns in when I am genuinely open versus defensively closed to peer input.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

3. I understand how my receptivity to feedback affects the quality of collaborative processes I participate in.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

4. I acknowledge the difference between feedback that I genuinely integrate versus feedback I superficially acknowledge.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

Part 2 — Application

5. I actively create conditions that make giving me honest feedback safe and worthwhile for colleagues.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

6. I develop skills for receiving challenging feedback with genuine curiosity rather than defensiveness.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

7. I build capacity for distinguishing between feedback that requires action and feedback that requires reflection.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

8. I practice receptive feedback processes that model the openness I expect from others.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

Part 1 — Awareness

1. I recognize how my communication style affects others' willingness to contribute to collaborative discussions.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

2. I notice when I am dominating collaborative conversations versus creating space for others to contribute.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

3. I understand the difference between communicating for clarity versus communicating to establish authority.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

4. I see patterns in how my verbal and nonverbal communication either expands or contracts collaborative space.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

Part 2 — Application

© The Recovery Files

5. I actively adjust my communication approach based on what the collaborative process needs in each moment.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

6. I develop skills for articulating complex ideas in ways that invite rather than foreclose further exploration.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

7. I build capacity for listening at the depth required for genuine perspective integration.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

8. I practice communication approaches that serve collective intelligence rather than individual recognition.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

Part 1 — Awareness

1. I recognize when decision-making processes genuinely include diverse stakeholders versus performing inclusion.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

2. I notice how authority dynamics affect whose input actually shapes decisions versus whose is politely noted.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

3. I understand the difference between consensus, compromise, and genuine synthesis in collaborative decisions.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

4. I see patterns in what enables versus prevents high-quality collaborative decision-making in my context.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

Part 2 — Application

5. I actively design decision-making processes that give appropriate weight to all relevant perspectives.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

6. I develop skills for facilitating decisions that maintain both quality and collective ownership.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

7. I build capacity for navigating the tension between efficient decision-making and inclusive process.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

© The Recovery Files

8. I practice decision approaches that produce both better outcomes and stronger implementation commitment.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

Part 1 — Awareness

1. I recognize when situations call for professional independent judgment versus collaborative input.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

2. I notice how I manage the tension between clinical autonomy and collaborative accountability.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

3. I understand the ethical dimensions of collaborative versus independent professional decision-making.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

4. I see patterns in when collective decision-making enhances versus diffuses professional accountability.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

Part 2 — Application

5. I actively calibrate the appropriate level of collaboration for different types of professional decisions.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

6. I develop skills for maintaining clear individual accountability within collaborative processes.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

7. I build capacity for using collaborative input to enhance rather than replace professional judgment.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

8. I practice judgment approaches that integrate collective wisdom while preserving professional integrity.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

Part 1 — Awareness

1. I recognize the full range of collaborative resources available within my professional network.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

2. I notice patterns in which colleagues, communities, and systems I underutilize as collaborative resources.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

© The Recovery Files

3. I understand how organizational structures either facilitate or impede access to collaborative resources.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

4. I see patterns in what prevents me from accessing available collaborative expertise and support.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

Part 2 — Application

5. I actively map and mobilize collaborative resources across organizational and professional boundaries.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

6. I develop skills for creating resource-sharing networks that enhance collective professional capacity.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

7. I build capacity for identifying and connecting colleagues with the specific collaborative resources they need.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

8. I practice resource utilization approaches that build rather than deplete collective professional capital.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

Part 1 — Awareness

1. I recognize the difference between transactional professional relationships and genuine mutual support networks.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

2. I notice patterns in how I contribute to versus draw from collaborative professional communities.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

3. I understand how professional isolation affects both individual and organizational effectiveness.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

4. I see patterns in what either builds or erodes genuine professional community in my context.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

Part 2 — Application

5. I actively invest in building genuine mutual support relationships within my professional community.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

© The Recovery Files

6. I develop skills for creating psychological safety that enables authentic peer support.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

7. I build capacity for sustaining collaborative communities through organizational transitions and pressures.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

8. I practice community-building approaches that expand rather than contract collaborative professional culture.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

Part 1 — Awareness

1. I recognize how power differentials shape who contributes meaningfully to collaborative processes.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

2. I notice when my positional authority — whatever level it is — expands or contracts collaborative space.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

3. I understand how intersectional factors (role, credential, tenure, identity) affect collaborative participation.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

4. I see patterns in whose voices are systematically over- or under-weighted in collaborative processes I observe.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

Part 2 — Application

5. I actively create conditions where people with less organizational power contribute as freely as those with more.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

6. I develop skills for naming and addressing power dynamics when they impede collaborative quality.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

7. I build capacity for using my organizational position to expand rather than concentrate collaborative space.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

8. I practice inclusive facilitation approaches that counteract rather than amplify existing power differentials.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

© The Recovery Files

Part 1 — Awareness

1. I recognize how structured versus unstructured problem-solving processes affect participation quality.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

2. I notice when meeting structures invite genuine inquiry versus when they showcase existing expertise.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

3. I understand how explicit process stages help participants orient their contributions appropriately.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

4. I see patterns in what structural features either enable or impede inclusive problem-solving participation.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

Part 2 — Application

5. I actively design problem-solving structures that normalize uncertainty and value inquiry.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

6. I develop skills in multiple facilitation methodologies adaptable to different group contexts.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

7. I build capacity for diagnosing what structure a particular collaborative challenge requires.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

8. I practice structured facilitation that serves the group's collective intelligence rather than my own comfort.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

Part 1 — Awareness

1. I recognize when perspective collection is genuine versus performative in collaborative processes.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

2. I notice how my own perspective-taking capacity either expands or limits collaborative solution quality.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

3. I understand the difference between compromise (partial satisfaction) and synthesis (new creation) in conflict.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

© The Recovery Files

4. I see patterns in what enables versus prevents genuine integration of diverse views in my context.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

Part 2 — Application

5. I actively develop skills for holding multiple conflicting perspectives simultaneously without premature closure.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

6. I practice synthesis approaches that honor the valid concern in apparently opposing positions.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

7. I build capacity for facilitating others' perspective-taking in ways that produce generative conflict resolution.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

8. I cultivate comfort with the productive ambiguity that precedes genuine collaborative synthesis.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

Part 1 — Awareness

1. I recognize what each discipline represented on interdisciplinary teams brings that others cannot provide.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

2. I notice patterns in how disciplinary boundaries either enrich or impede collaborative problem-solving.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

3. I understand how professional identity and disciplinary training shape collaborative contribution.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

4. I see patterns in when cross-functional teams produce better outcomes versus when coordination costs outweigh benefits.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

Part 2 — Application

5. I actively leverage diverse disciplinary perspectives to address complex challenges more completely.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

6. I develop skills for translating concepts across disciplinary languages to enable genuine integration.

© The Recovery Files

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

7. I build capacity for creating interdisciplinary processes that honor rather than flatten disciplinary expertise.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

8. I practice cross-functional facilitation that produces solutions richer than any single discipline could achieve.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

Part 1 — Awareness

1. I recognize how the quality of collaborative solution development affects implementation success.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

2. I notice patterns in when solutions developed collaboratively get implemented more effectively than imposed ones.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

3. I understand how shared ownership and collaborative accountability differ from individual accountability.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

4. I see patterns in what organizational structures support versus undermine collaborative implementation.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

Part 2 — Application

5. I actively involve implementation stakeholders in solution design, not just solution delivery.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

6. I develop skills for creating collaborative accountability systems that maintain both quality and relationships.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

7. I build capacity for sustaining collaborative momentum through implementation challenges and setbacks.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

8. I practice implementation approaches that preserve and strengthen collaborative relationships through execution.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

Part 1 — Awareness

© The Recovery Files

1. I recognize the visible markers that distinguish genuinely collaborative from performatively collaborative cultures.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

2. I notice how leadership behavior either cultivates or undermines collaborative culture over time.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

3. I understand how technology, physical space, and organizational structure shape collaborative culture.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

4. I see patterns in what sustains collaborative culture through leadership changes, funding shifts, and crises.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

Part 2 — Application

5. I actively contribute to building collaborative culture regardless of my positional authority.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

6. I develop skills for naming and addressing patterns that erode collaborative culture in my context.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

7. I build capacity for developing others' collaborative skills as a multiplication strategy.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

8. I practice culture-building approaches that make collaboration normative rather than exceptional.

Never ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 Always

Sheamus Moran - Founder of The Recovery Files · Embrace, Empower & Evolve · Recovery Made Simple

Scoring guide

Your Collaborative Capacity Profile

Part 4 · Worksheets

The Collaborative Professional

Lateral Support, Peer Consultation & Collective Intelligence

These ten exercises develop practical collaborative capacity. Work through them at your own pace — each builds on the reading and assessment insights.

Map your current collaboration patterns: Where do you genuinely seek and receive peer input? Where do you operate in professional isolation? Be specific about contexts, relationships, and topic areas.

1. List 3 situations in the past month where you sought peer input when you could have decided alone. What drove that choice?

2. List 3 situations where you decided alone but might have benefited from collaboration. What prevented seeking input?

3. Who are your most important collaborative relationships, and what makes each one work?

Additional notes

Any additional reflections...

© The Recovery Files

Examine the power dynamics in your key collaborative settings. Who speaks, who stays silent, who shapes decisions, whose input disappears after being offered?

1. In your most important team meeting, who speaks most? Who speaks least? What explains the pattern?

2. Think of someone whose insight rarely enters organizational decisions. Why? What would it take to change that?

3. Where in your organization does power most actively close down collaborative space? What could shift this?

Additional notes

Any additional reflections...

Assess the psychological safety levels in your key collaborative contexts. What can and cannot be safely said? What does your behavior communicate about safety?

1. In your current team, what topics or concerns feel genuinely unsafe to raise? What created that unsafety?

2. What specific behaviors on your part expand versus contract the psychological safety available to colleagues?

© The Recovery Files

3. What would you say in your team if you felt completely psychologically safe? What stops you from saying it now?

Additional notes

Any additional reflections...

Take honest stock of your facilitation capabilities. Where are you skilled? Where do you need development? What is your default style under pressure?

1. List your strongest facilitation skills with evidence from specific situations.

2. Identify your most significant facilitation gap and describe how it shows up in practice.

3. Under pressure, what is your default — becoming more directive or more passive? What drives that?

Additional notes

Any additional reflections...

© The Recovery Files

Select a current complex challenge in your work. Design a cross-functional collaborative process for addressing it — who would you involve, how, and why?

1. Define the challenge in terms that invite multiple professional perspectives rather than presupposing a disciplinary frame.

2. List the stakeholders who should be involved, with the unique perspective each would bring.

3. Design the first 45-minute collaborative session: what structure would draw out the full range of relevant insight?

Additional notes

Any additional reflections...

Examine your relationship with collaborative conflict. How do you handle it when perspectives genuinely clash? What is your strongest and weakest moment in collaborative disagreement?

1. Describe your most constructive experience navigating conflicting perspectives in a collaborative process. What made it work?

2. Describe your most difficult experience. What happened? What would you do differently?

© The Recovery Files

3. What is your default when conflict emerges — engage, smooth over, defer, or escalate? When does this serve the collaboration and when does it harm it?

Additional notes

Any additional reflections...

Practice the skill of perspective synthesis. Take two genuinely conflicting views you have encountered and work toward a synthesis that honors the valid concern in each.

1. State View A and the legitimate concern it represents as clearly as possible — even if you disagree with it.

2. State View B with the same quality of charitable representation.

3. What would a synthesis look like that genuinely addresses the core concern of each? Where would you need to give something up?

Additional notes

Any additional reflections...

© The Recovery Files

Track your journey in collaborative professional practice using the from-to framework from your development map.

1. From isolated to collaboratively connected: Where were you, where are you now, where are you heading?

2. From defensive to receptively learning: Trace your evolution in openness to peer input and feedback.

3. From self-focused to community-building: How has your contribution to collaborative culture evolved over your career?

Additional notes

Any additional reflections...

Assess how technology currently shapes collaborative work in your professional context — what it enables, what it hinders, and what opportunities remain unexplored.

1. What digital tools are currently used for collaborative problem-solving in your organization? How well do they serve genuine collaboration?

2. What is lost in virtual versus in-person collaborative work? What is gained?

© The Recovery Files

3. Design one technology-enabled collaborative process that could expand participation in a current organizational challenge.

Additional notes

Any additional reflections...

Write a personal commitment statement for your contribution to collaborative problem-solving culture in your organization, including specific behaviors, timelines, and accountability structures.

1. What three specific behaviors will you begin, stop, or change to contribute more effectively to collaborative culture?

2. Who will hold you accountable to these commitments, and how?

3. What is the 90-day milestone you will use to assess whether your collaborative contribution has meaningfully changed?

Additional notes

Any additional reflections...

Sheamus Moran - Founder of The Recovery Files · Embrace, Empower & Evolve · Recovery Made Simple

© The Recovery Files

Part 5 · Action Plan

The Collaborative Professional

Lateral Support, Peer Consultation & Collective Intelligence

Collaborative Professional Action Plan

Translate your insights into a concrete 90-day development commitment

Where am I starting? Be honest about current collaborative strengths and gaps.

1. Rate your current collaborative effectiveness (1-10) and describe the evidence that supports that rating.

Your response...

2. What is the single most significant collaborative gap in your current professional practice?

Your response...

3. What organizational factors most limit your ability to practice collaborative problem-solving effectively?

Your response...

What is the one most important collaborative capability to develop in the next 30 days?

1. Name the specific capability. What would it look like if you had developed it?

Your response...

© The Recovery Files

2. What specific practice will you engage in to develop this capability? How often, in what context?

Your response...

3. What is one meeting or problem-solving situation in the next two weeks where you will deliberately practice this capability?

Your response...

What will I do differently to contribute to collaborative culture in my organization?

1. What is one structural change to your team's problem-solving processes that you have the authority or influence to initiate?

Your response...

2. Name one colleague whose collaborative participation you will actively work to expand. How will you do it?

Your response...

3. What is one conversation you have been avoiding about collaborative culture that needs to happen?

Your response...

Who will hold me to these commitments and how?

© The Recovery Files

1. Name your accountability partner for this development plan. Why this person?

Your response...

2. What specific check-in structure will you establish — when, how often, what questions will you address?

Your response...

3. What will you do if you are not following through at the 30-day mark?

Your response...

Articulate your commitment to collaborative problem-solving as a professional value.

1. Write a one-paragraph statement of your commitment to collaborative problem-solving culture — in your own authentic voice.

Your response...

2. What is the most important insight from this intensive that will stay with you?

Your response...

3. How does investing in collaborative excellence connect to the reason you entered this field?

Your response...

© The Recovery Files

Sheamus Moran - Founder of The Recovery Files · Embrace, Empower & Evolve · Recovery Made Simple

© The Recovery Files