

Secrets of Nonprofit Collaboration: More Impact, Less Headaches

Anne Desmarais

Director, Partnership & Community
Collaboration Academy



August 2024 Sunflower Foundation
Learning Collaboratives





Common themes

- Finding Partners and Getting Started
- Building and Sustaining Partnerships
- Managing Competition and Conflict
- Evaluating and Communicating Partnership Impact

Crowdsource

What questions about nonprofit partnership are top-of-mind today?

Key
Concepts

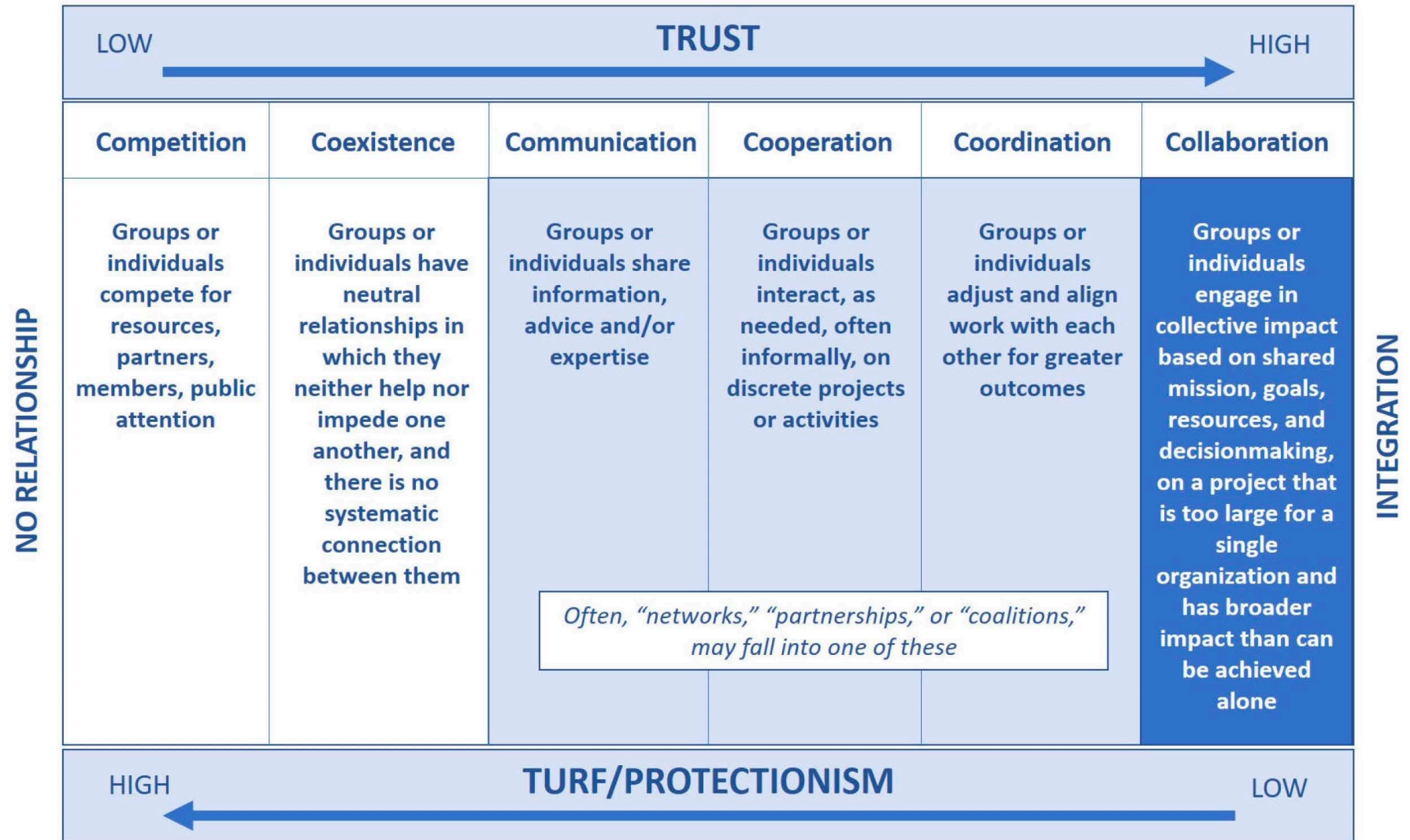


Continuum of Collaboration

Where is your partnership on the continuum?

Where do you want or need to be?

Being clear helps manage expectations.



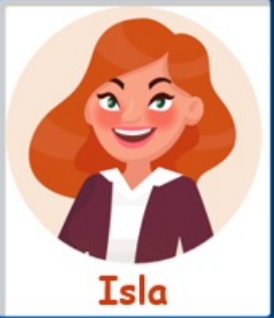
Finding Partners that Fit



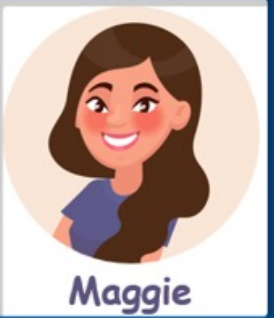
Clarify your purpose and needs



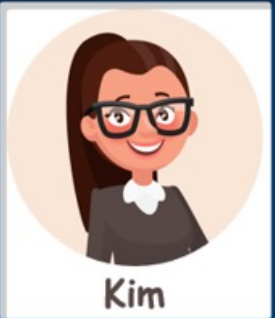
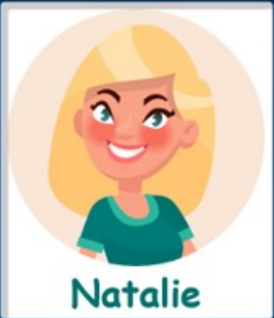
Know your own worth



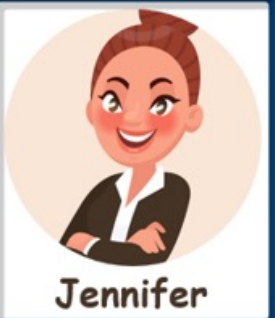
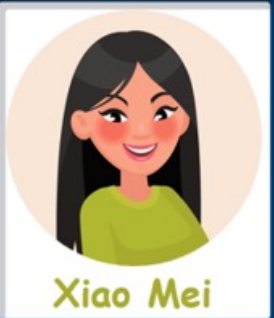
Learn about your partner



Go where they gather



Explore common ground



Create a shared vision



Communicate!



Keep asking "Who...?"



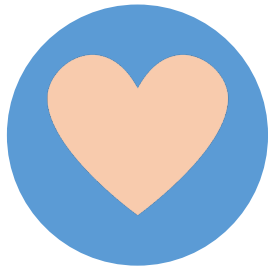
What is your experience?



Collaborative Leadership

How are you creating space for others to lead?

How are you building authentic relationships, collaborative culture, and trust?



Heart

Empathy –
Engage the
Whole Person



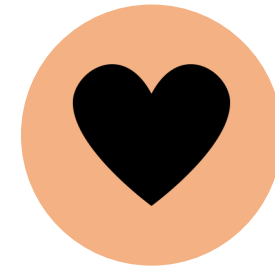
Hand

Invite
Participation,
Work Peer to
Peer



Head

Foster
Cooperation and
Communication



Heart

Share Resources
and Recognition

Partner Up: Think, Pair, Share

*Quickly mark where you fall on these spectrums. Briefly share with a partner.
Discuss: How might this inform your work together? In partnerships?*



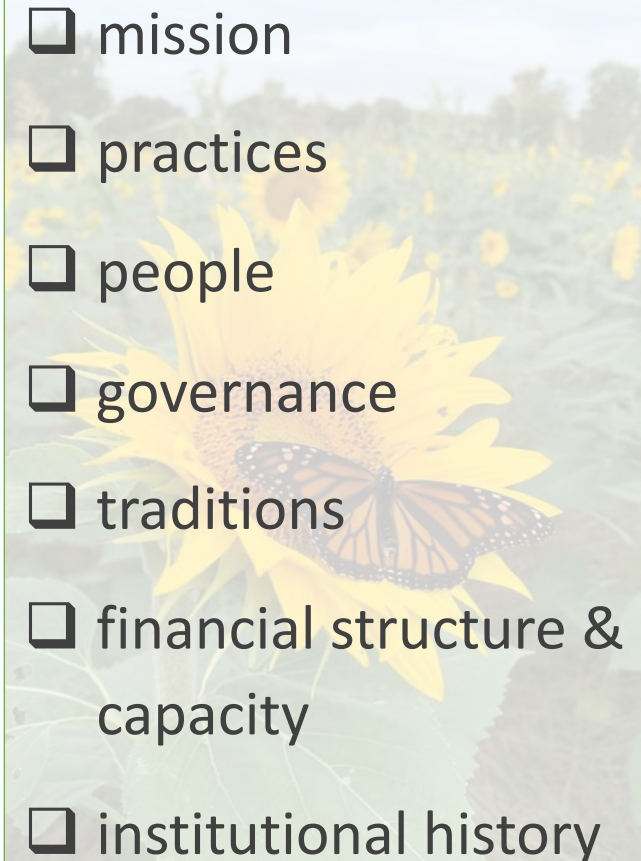
Partner Culture Awareness

How are you learning about your partner's organizational culture? Sharing yours?

Acknowledges, understands, respects and communicates partners' *organizational* cultures.

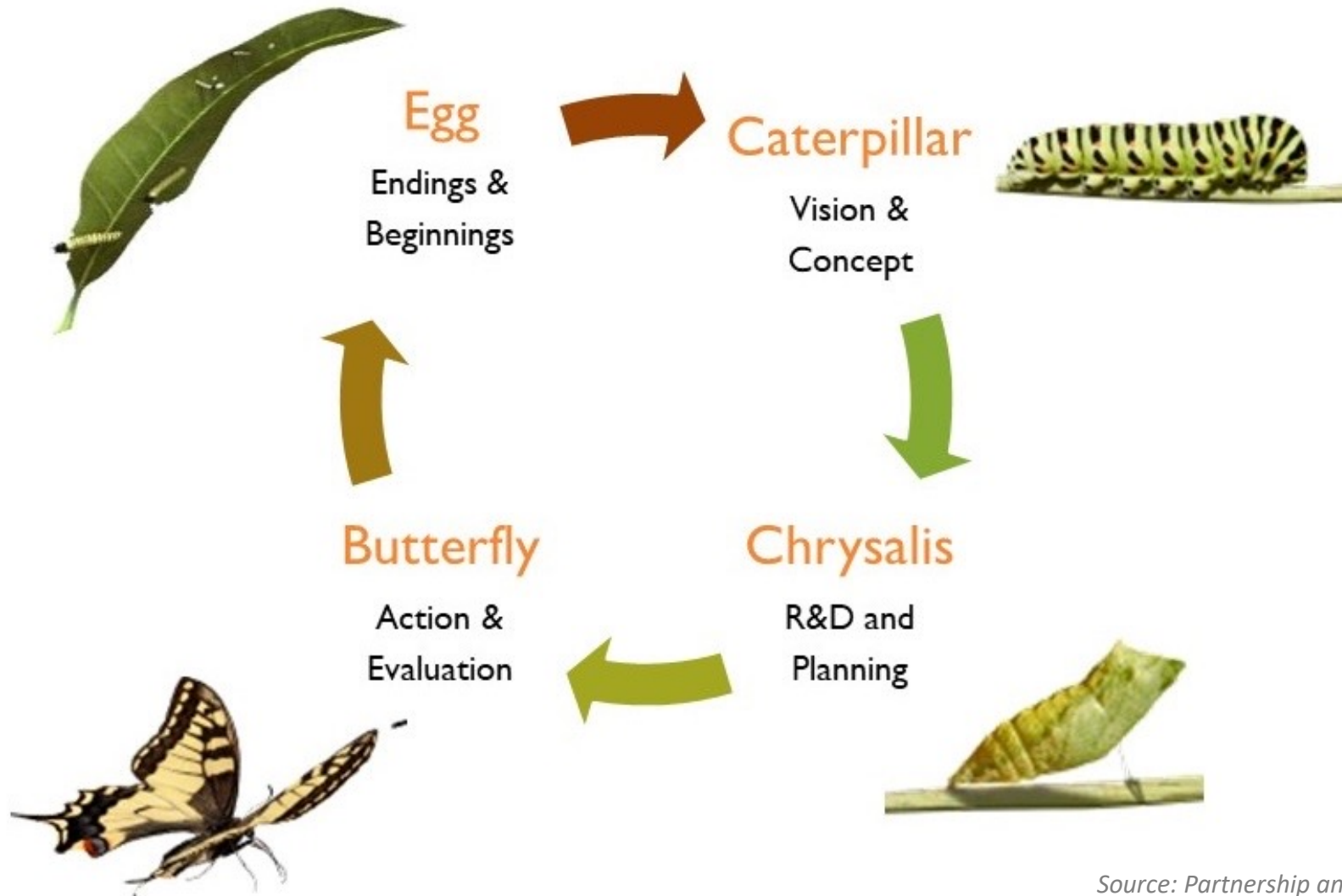
Regularly communicates with partners to share your organization's culture and practices.

Finds ways that partners' organizational cultures can contribute to strengthen the mutual endeavors, and create an overall operating culture for the partnership.

- 
- mission
 - practices
 - people
 - governance
 - traditions
 - financial structure & capacity
 - institutional history

Partnership Network Life Cycle

Where are you in the partnership life cycle? Laying the foundation for flight.





Where is your partnership
in the life cycle?
(Egg, Caterpillar, Chrysalis, Butterfly)

What's one challenge
or opportunity you
see at this stage?

What do you need to
move forward?

Six Steps of Partnership Formation

While there is no one-size-fits-all partnership model, research demonstrates that the most productive partnerships are intentionally and systematically constructed.

- 1 Define the Need for the Partnership
- 2 Assess Partnership Readiness
- 3 Create a Common Vision
- 4 Engage Stakeholders
- 5 Agree to Goals
- 6 Formalize Relationship and Establish Systems



Agreements Foster Accountability and Impact

- Partnership charters or agreements are often used when partners intend to plan projects together, or exchange resources or funding.
- Examples include MOUs or LOIs, or more formal partnership agreements.
- These guiding documents define the way organizations will work together.
- They ensure that all parties have a mutual understanding of their respective roles, responsibilities, rights, expectations, and requirements within the partnership.

One Tam Case Study

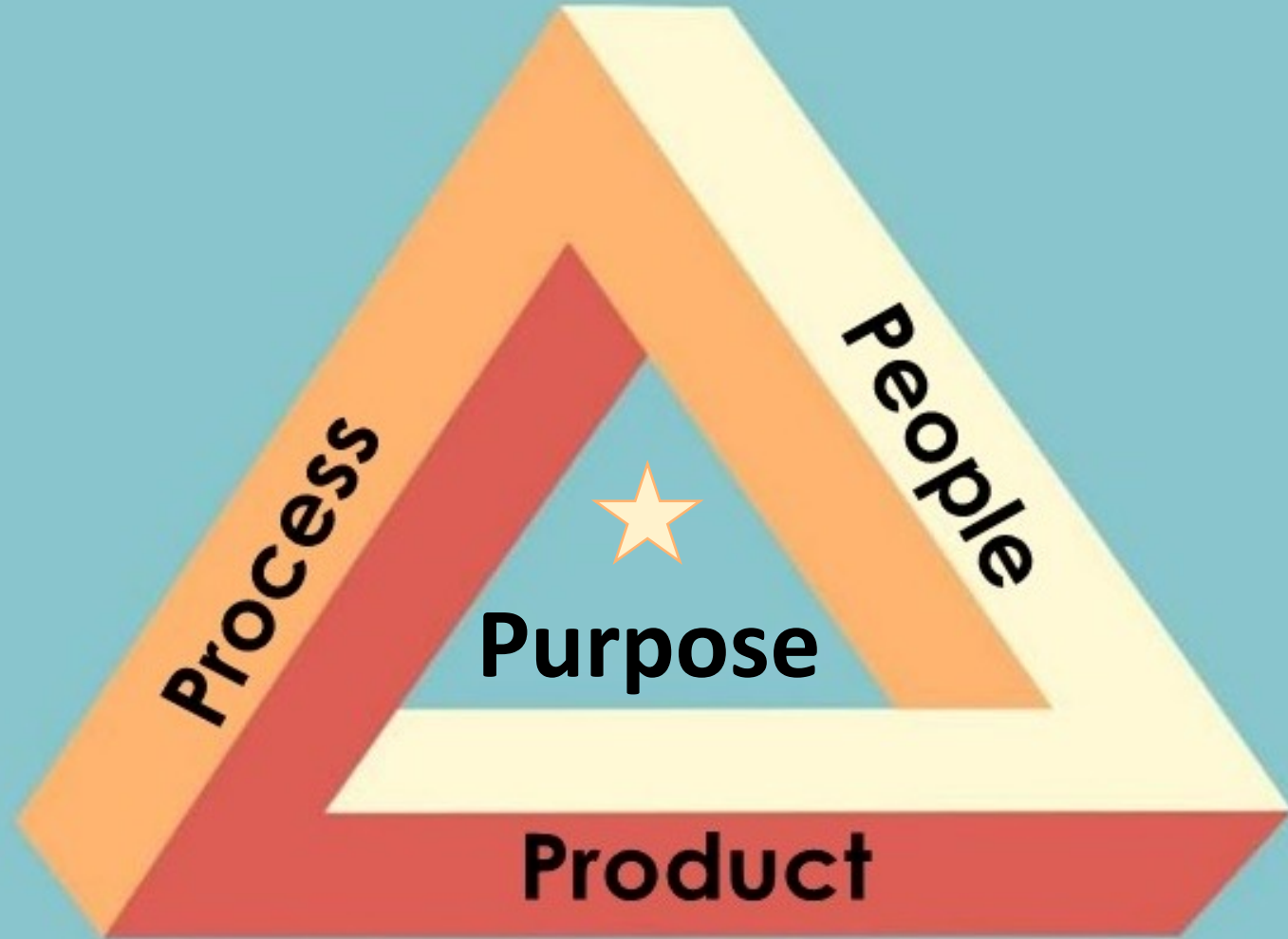
After signing a partner MOU:



- **Trust** between partners increased by 80%
- **Resource sharing** increased by 100-400%
- Partners achieved **greater efficiency** through a formal governance structure, shared values, effective communication, and guiding documents.

4Ps - Triangle of Satisfaction

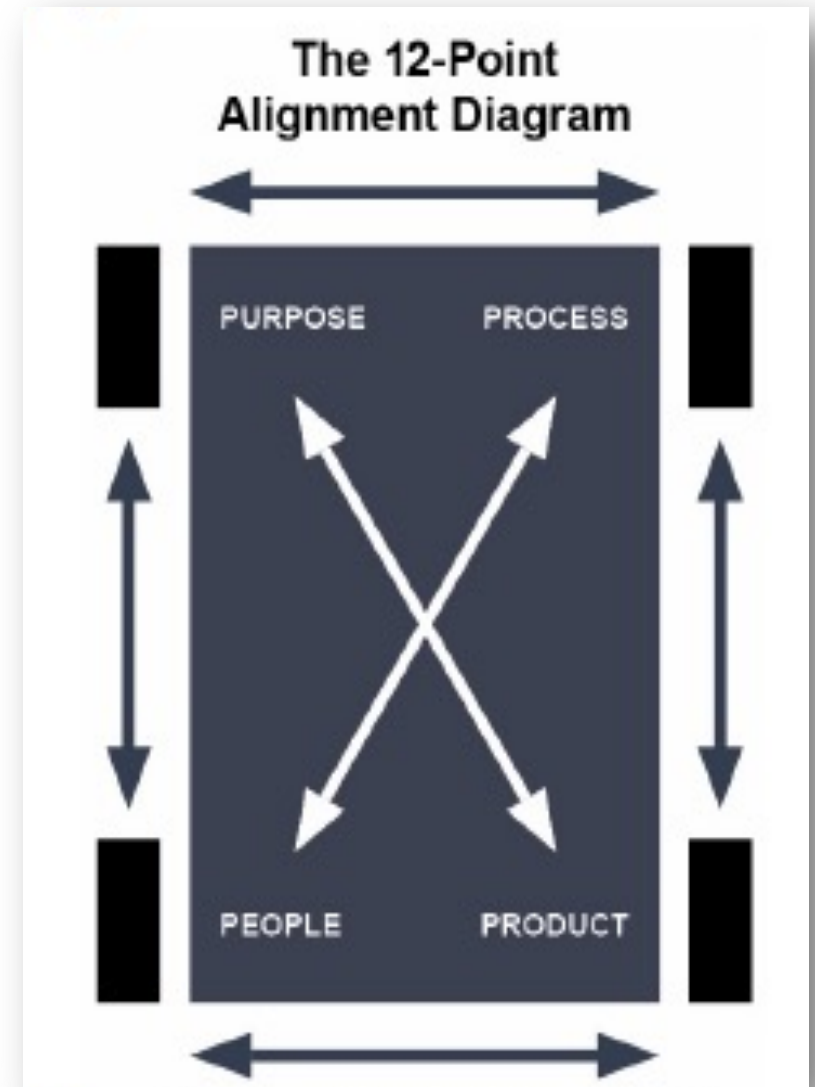
How do you re-gain balance and alignment when things go off track?



Checking for Alignment with the 4-Ps

When things go off track:

- Do we have the right *People* for our *Purpose* and *Products*?
- Do the *People* support the *Process*? Is it *FIT* – Fair, Inclusive, and Transparent?
- Will the *Process* achieve the *Products*?
- Are the *Products* aligned with our *Purpose*?



Partnership Assessment & Impact Tools

Are we ready to partner?

Nonprofit Readiness for Health Partnership

Nonprofit Finance Fund

How do we build a partnership?

Creating and Maintaining Partnerships

Community Tool Box
University of Kansas

How healthy is our partnership?

Partnership Assessment Tool for Health and Addendum

Center for Health Care Strategies & NFF

Collaboration Factors Inventory

Wilder Foundation

What is our partnership impact?

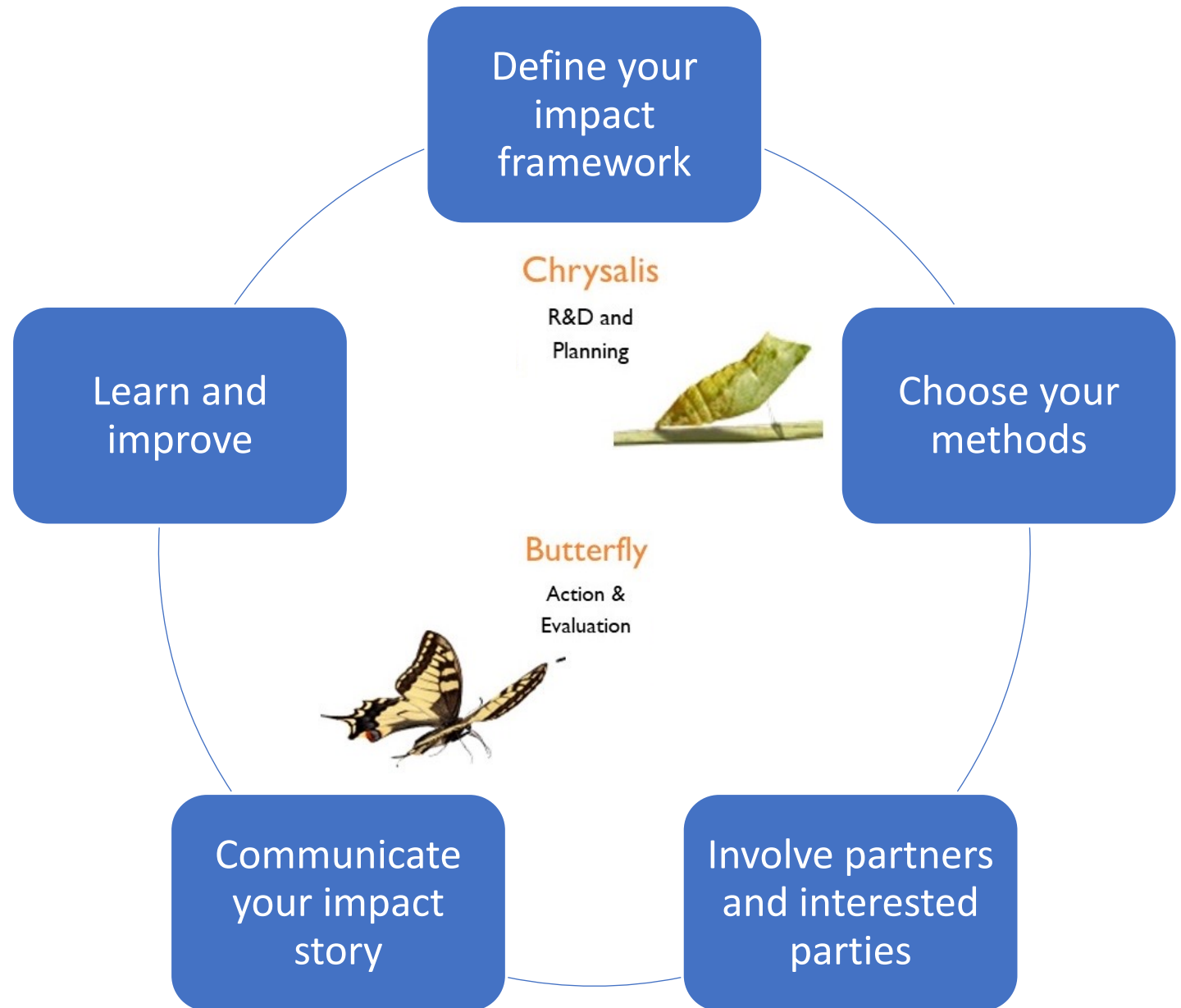
Logic Models - Theory of Change

Wichita State Univ.

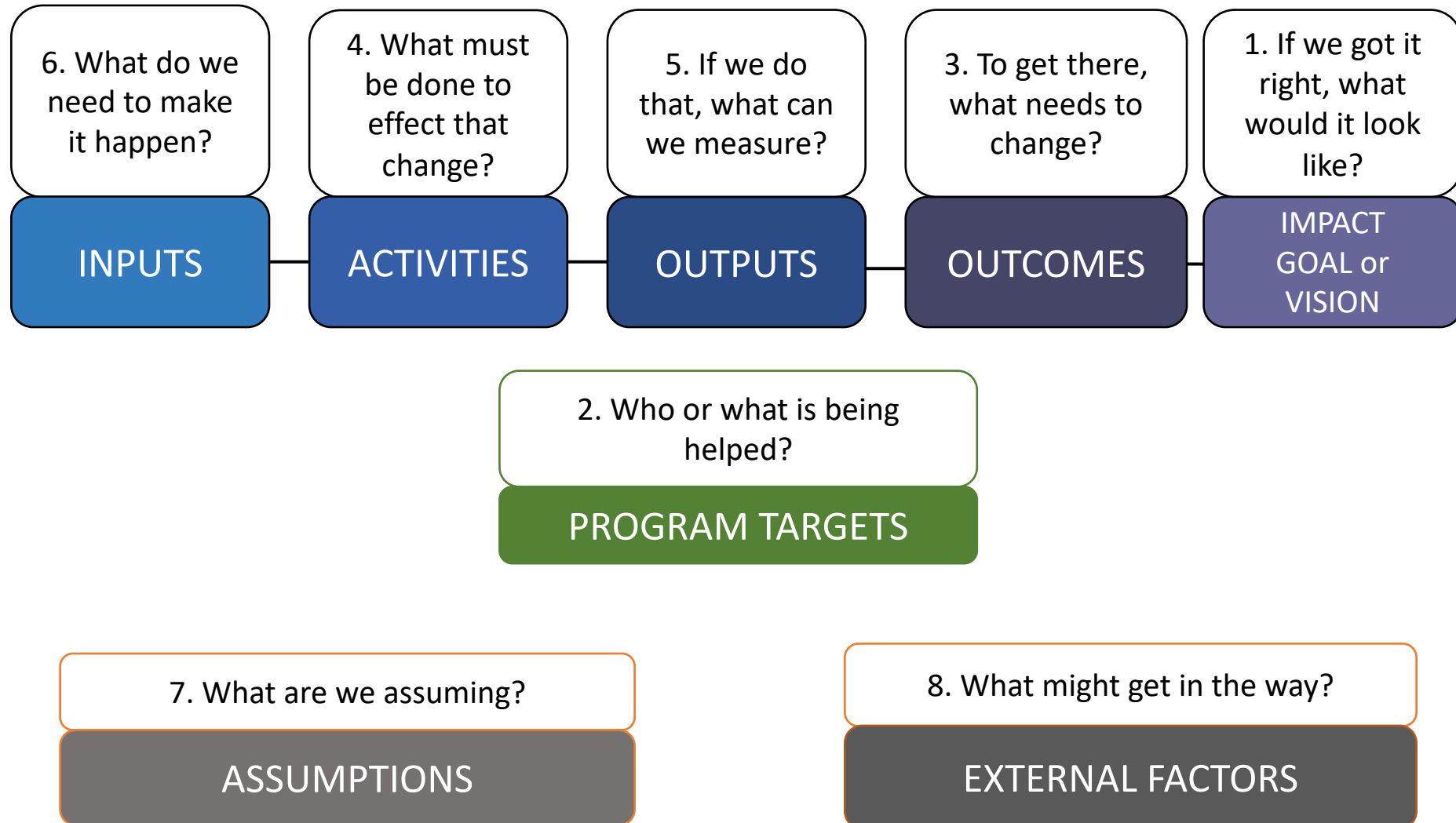
Partnership Impact Model

A. Mickel & L. Goldberg,
OneTam

Planning for Evaluating Partnership Impact



Logic Models / Theory of Change



Partnership Impact Model (PIM)

- An exciting new model for measuring and **communicating** partnership impacts.
- The model describes 11 interdependent, scalable impacts.
- Investing in *Foundational* impacts allows partners to scale up impacts over time
- Sustaining partnerships requires:
 - Clear fiscal ownership and backbone
 - Dedicated admin and fundraising capacity
 - A compelling brand
 - An inspirational vision and clear theory of change
 - **Fanatically capturing your impact**



Reflection

- What ideas caught your attention?
- Where did you experience a shift in your thinking or attitude?
- What partnership tool or concept are you excited to put into practice?
- What questions remain? What will you explore next?





Resource Round-up

Concepts
Frameworks
Websites
Worksheets

- [*Continuum of Collaboration*](#), adapted from Tamarack Institute and Government of Ontario, Canada (PDF)
 - [*Partnership Charter Template*](#), National Rural Health Resource Center
 - [*USDA Forest Service Collaboration Cadre*](#) worksheets
 - *Aligning Expectations for Effective Collaborative Work*
 - *Building a Solid Foundation for Collaborative Efforts*
 - *Maintaining the Foundation of Collaborative Groups: Aligning the 4-Ps*
 - [*One Tam Partnership resources*](#), L. Goldberg and A. Mickel
 - *Managing Public Lands for Impact and Sustainability: Executive Summary, One Tam Case Study* (PDF)
 - *Generating, Scaling Up, and Sustaining Partnership Impact: One Tam's First Four Years*
 - *Partnership Impact Evaluation Guide*
 - [*"Tearless Logic Models" A Facilitated Approach*](#), A.D. Lien et al., Wichita State University
- ### Other Partnership Assessment, Evaluation, and Planning Tools
- [*Nonprofit Readiness for Health Partnership*](#), Nonprofit Finance Fund
 - [*Creating and Maintaining Partnerships*](#), Community Tool Box, University of Kansas
 - [*Partnership Assessment Tool for Health*](#) and [*Addendum*](#), Center for Health Care Strategies & Nonprofit Finance Fund
 - [*Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory*](#), Wilder Foundation
 - [*Partnership for Healthy Outcomes program tools*](#), and [*Place-Based Partnerships Toolkit*](#) tools, Center for Health Care Strategies and Nonprofit Finance Fund
- [*Partnership videos and resources*](#), Partnership & Community Collaboration Academy

Thank You!



Anne Desmarais
anne@partnership-academy.net

Photo: Wildlands Conservancy