Every one of us, regardless of role or job responsibility, works as part of a team. Teams, just like any relationship, go through stages of development and change.

In Bruce W. Tuckman’s framework, he describes how people may feel and behave in each stage. He classifies the five stages of team development as:

1) Forming
2) Storming
3) Norming
4) Performing
5) Ending

Tuckman’s framework helps us understand how we collaborate as functional teams, as well as in collaborating with system-level teams of teams.

2) Storming – stuff gets real
In this stage, team members might feel frustrated when the group is not meeting the expectations they had coming in. They may be frustrated with unachieved goals or express disagreement with assigned responsibilities.

3) Norming – getting in the groove
During this stage, team members gain a more realistic expectation of what they can achieve and adapt more to the work. As the team works together, productivity can increase dramatically.

4) Performing – we’re almost there
In this stage, teams begin to click. They feel proud of the progress they made and can work together to achieve great progress. They problem solve together and can easily step in to help others as there is a great understanding of everyone’s roles.

5) Ending – the ‘nirvana’ of collaboration
The long-term goal of any team development is to reach the less-often mentioned fifth stage: ending. In this final stage, teams no longer need group meetings or team outlines to work together. They have a culture of collaboration that leads them to easily share and problem solve individually.