Team-to-team connections are most effective if the teams know what the overall objective is for the system. As such, it is helpful for teams and their leaders to consider:

- What is our team’s objectives within the system?
- How do our objectives fit with those of other groups?

It is also helpful to consider whether people identify with their team or the broader system. If people only identify with their team, then conflict is more likely.

**Forming Connections with Purpose and Clarity**

**What the Research Says...**

- Teams often function as part of broader systems (i.e., teams-of-teams) and these systems have their own goals and objectives (Zaccaro et al., 2020).

- Specific team members typically span boundaries between groups and serve as conduits of information and resources (Marrone, 2010).

- Team members can often find themselves with competing goals and priorities between their “primary” team and the broader system of teams (Carter et al., 2019).

**Building Capacity Within and Beyond the Team**

**Clarify Goals and Identities**

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**Boundary Spanning**

Ideally, teams will have individuals who form bridges and form connections with other groups.

Within your team:

- Do people know who is supposed to be spanning boundaries?
- Who is responsible for collecting information and resources and sharing it back within the team?

**Next Steps**

- Consider if any team members may be overextended in their boundary spanning responsibilities.
- Authority within team-to-team systems can be shared across teams or held by one group. Consider how this is structured in your organization.

**Additional Resources**

- CCL has created several tools and resources to support boundary spanning leadership.
- Learn more [here](#)!