

ADAPTIVE RESILIENCE

Building Teams of Trust

Team Practices are a powerful way to bring attention, spaciousness, and curiosity to team interactions. They can help us see each other more fully, stay connected to the team's purpose and values, and allow for a diversity of perspectives and voices. As you start implementing team practices, they strengthen the way the team works together and can even influence other teams, becoming a shared language across an organization's culture. Here are a few Team Practices you can experiment with:

- Minute to Arrive & Opening Check-in
- Expansive Mid-point Check-in
- 20-minute bell: A micro-moment of pausing
- Rotate Facilitation
- Practices to get to know each other: Appreciations & "If You Really Knew Me..."

Minute to Arrive & Opening Check-in

Think of how many meetings start with people hurrying in, thinking about the meeting they just left or the meeting they have next, distracted by smartphones, carrying leftover emotions from things that happened earlier in the day.

Practicing "Minute to Arrive" is giving a minute of silence at the start of a meeting for everyone to take a few breaths, and be fully present. You could say: *"I learned a very simple practice at a workshop that helps us become more focused for a meeting. Would you like to give it a try? I will set a timer for just one minute. During that meeting we will sit in silence, with our eyes lowered, and just take a few breaths. You will notice that this helps calm the mind and become more present."*

After a minute of silence, you can then do a round to check-in to create **inclusion and alignment**. By having each person share their expectations *before* you start engaging in the agenda and content of the meeting, you are including more voices and improving the chances of focusing on what's really meaningful and important for those in the room. Here's how it works:

1. One at a time, people answer for 1-2 minutes these three prompts:

<p>How are you arriving to this meeting?</p>	<p><i>This invites the whole person to the meeting. (e.g. somebody is tired because they just arrived from a long flight, so when they yawn you don't take it personally; or somebody is under a lot of pressure</i></p>
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	<i>because of a deadline, so you are more appreciative of the effort they are making to be present). We get to see more of each other, the whole person, which creates more understanding and fosters connection.</i>
What would you like to have achieved by the end of this meeting?	<i>This allows more perspectives in the room that the organizer can now integrate into the meeting and helps to align expectations for everyone.</i>
Any concerns or questions you'd like to share?	<i>This also brings in more perspectives and the opportunity to name concerns.</i>

2. While someone is checking-in, everybody listens in silence.
3. After the round is done, the meeting leader can acknowledge what came up in the round and adjust the agenda/focus for the meeting, if necessary.
4. Prompts can be changed to best serve the meeting purpose. For example, if the meeting is one of a series of strategy meetings, a prompt could be "What is a question you have been thinking about since the last time we met?"
5. This practice works best in groups from 2-10 people (mostly due to the time it can take for everyone to check-in).

Expansive Midpoint Check-in

The purpose of a midpoint check-in is to pause the content layer of the conversation and do a brief check-in round to explore what's below the surface.

Sometimes we are so immersed in the content of the conversation, we lose sight of the purpose of the meeting, we get off track, some people have been taking most of the airtime and others don't feel there's space for them to contribute, we aren't fully harnessing the wisdom of the team or the different perspectives that could enrich the meeting outcome. There can also be some underlying tensions that aren't being named, or different people are having very different experiences (positive and negative) of the meeting and others are unaware.

- When to do it:
 - If you feel: the discussion is stuck, you are going around in circles, the meeting is being monopolized by only a few voices, some people are disengaged, it seems as if there is an underlying tension, etc.
 - Do a pulse check on different views on a topic, try to think out of the box, integrate new thinking, etc.

- Similar to the opening check-in, you invite everybody to respond to a prompt:
 - Suggest a prompt (see below)
 - One at a time, people answer for 1-2 minutes.
 - Everybody else listens in silence. No interrupting.
 - Facilitator re-engages the conversation.
- The prompt is something that creates a sense of openness, curiosity, and going a little deeper. Here are a few examples:
 - What are you feeling right now?
Naming emotions can help us connect to each other, see how we each are having a different experience, and invite us all to pause and create some space.
 - What perspective is missing?
Helps us be less attached to our own view, invites us to be more expansive, and learn from others, for example, the client, community, other gender etc.
 - What is getting in the way for us to move forward?
Helps us to take a pause, and notice and name dynamics in the heat of the conversation we weren't aware of.
 - And any other prompt that can create a sense of openness: What can we learn? If you had a magic wand, what would you do next? What is a concern you have? etc.

20-min Bell: A micro-moment of pausing

This is a very simple tool: during a meeting, set a timer to ring a bell every 20 minutes. When the bell rings, everybody pauses the conversation (yes, even when in the middle of a sentence!), takes a full breath, and then continues the conversation.

Just this micro-moment of pausing enables the team to create some space from the discussion and invites a refreshed quality of attention as the conversation continues.

If the conversation feels heated, stuck or flat, this micro-moment can create freshness. It's similar to the idea of creating space between stimulus and response: pausing creates space, you might hold your idea/perspective a little looser, and you might choose a different approach when the conversation resumes.

Rotate Facilitation

This is an easy one: have a different team member facilitate your team meetings. It allows the team to experience different facilitation styles, gives others the chance to lead, and brings in different perspectives on how to think of an agenda and guide a group through conversations and decision-making.

Practices to get to know each other

The more we take the time to know each other, the more trust and empathy we build as a team. There are many team exercises you can find in books and online. Two powerful ones we like doing at SIYLI are: Appreciation Rounds and “If You Really Knew Me...”. These are best used during team building sessions (vs. practices that can be done at any meeting) where you can set context around the benefits of building the team through cultivating awareness and trust.

- Appreciation Round: One person at a time sits in the “seat of appreciation.” Everybody else in the team shares one at a time their appreciation, for about 3 to 4 minutes total. The person sits silently receiving the appreciations. At the end, they can thank everybody and share briefly what it felt to listen and receive. Then move to the next person.

Bonus - *this can also be done as a shorter practice at the beginning of any meeting.*

Set a timer for 3-4 minutes. During this time, participants are invited to express an acknowledgement or appreciation for someone else (or the whole group). This can be done popcorn-style (random order, not everyone needs to contribute) and shares should be kept brief. Examples might be, “I’d like to appreciate (name) for going above and beyond last week to help me with finishing up that project - I felt really supported, thank you.” or, “I’d like to acknowledge the team for being willing to have some of these difficult conversations about our strategic direction, it’s not easy and I see everyone keeping an open mind and keeping us honest.” The person or persons being appreciated do not need to respond beyond a simple ‘thank you.’

Note: *You might choose to do this occasionally instead of an opening check-in. Doing both in one meeting would likely take too much meeting time*

- If You Really Knew Me: Have people think of 6 to 8 statements they would write when completing the sentence “If you really knew me, you would know...”

- Make sure you begin by establishing confidentiality.
- Offer a few examples to give people a sense of what they might share.
- Give people a few minutes in silence to come up with their statements.
- You could invite people to share in dyads, or as a whole group one at a time. Ask each person to share a few of their statements, and elaborate a little about the ones they are sharing.
- Close with a round where each one shares one word of how they are feeling.

And more...

These are just a few team practices we'd like to offer. There are a lot of other great best practices you can learn and adapt to your team and needs. Our invitation is for you to stay curious and actively learn ways in which you can bring more perspectives and voices in the way you work with others!