

MY GROUP LENS

Understand your team. Improve how you work together.

The Teamwork Playbook

32 practical activities for better collaboration



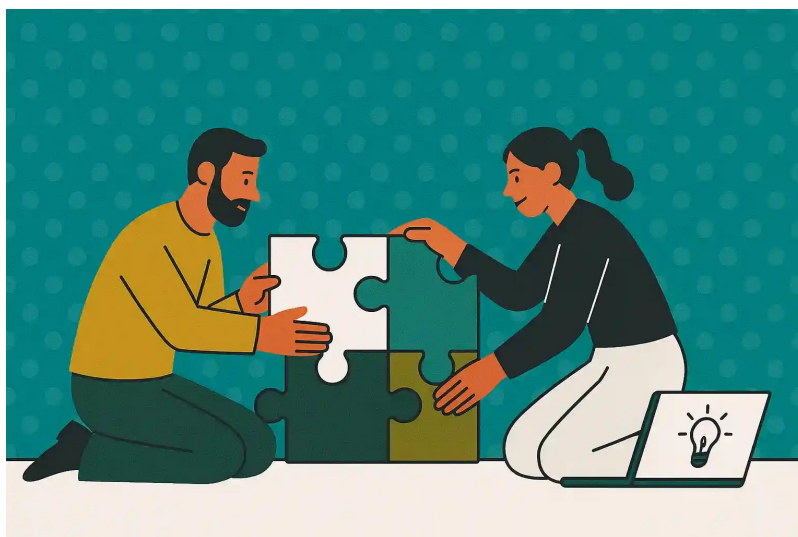
Group balance • Conflict resolution
Communication • Decision making

A practical companion to My Group Lens
mygrouplens.com | September 2026

From awareness to action

A shared picture is a useful start. Better teamwork grows through the conversations and habits that follow.

My Group Lens helps teams explore how they think, communicate and work together. This playbook helps you turn those observations into practical changes: clearer responsibilities, more useful discussions and better follow-through.



Use it with your team

Choose one challenge you recognise, try one activity and agree one change to test. Review what happened before choosing your next step. The activities work in project teams, established teams, workshops and learning groups.

A toolbox you can return to

You will find 20 short group-balance activities, 12 guided activities for common team challenges, four scenario cards and a RACI guide. Most short activities take 5-15 minutes. Longer exercises provide a structure when you need more time to listen, explore or agree.

Explore My Group Lens: mygrouplens.com

Contents

Click an activity title or use the PDF bookmarks to jump to it.

From awareness to action	2
Contents	3
Read your team, then choose an activity	5
Choose the behaviour your team needs	6
Make the activity count	7
01 Group balance	8
01 Mini-RACI	9
02 Timeline	9
03 Decision Filter	10
04 Risk Check	10
05 Reality Check	11
06 Weekly Driver	12
07 Stand-Up	12
08 Decide-by Deadlines	13
09 Dot Vote	13
10 Action List	14
11 Check-In	15
12 Team Agreements	15
13 Appreciation	16
14 Moderator	16
15 Feedback Grid	17
16 Brainwriting	18
17 What If?	18

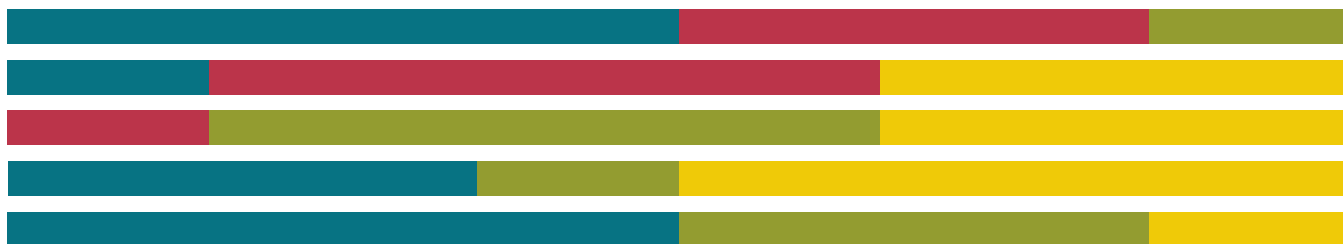
18 Mind Map	19
19 Worst Idea	19
20 Inspo Drop	20
02 Conflict resolution	21
21 Pause & Personal Reflection	22
22 Guided Team Dialogue	24
23 Designing a Shared Solution	27
24 Agreement & Follow-Up	30
03 Communication and listening	32
25 We Keep Talking Past Each Other	33
26 Not Everyone Gets a Chance to Speak	36
27 We Need to Talk About What's Not Working	38
28 We Keep Misreading Each Other's Messages	40
04 Decision making	42
29 We Are Going in Circles	43
30 No One Wants to Make the Final Call	45
31 We Need Input From Everyone	47
32 We Cannot Agree	49
Action and review sheet	51
Scenario cards and RACI guide	52

Read your team, then choose an activity

Start with the behavioural strips

In My Group Lens, each horizontal strip represents one person's colour distribution. Looking across the stack helps the team discuss recurring patterns and differences. The group summary offers prompts for exploring strengths, challenges and possible blind spots.

Illustrative strips



Example only. These strips are not assessment results.

Ask before you interpret

- What do we recognise in our actual meetings, decisions and working habits?
- Which useful behaviours do we rely on, and which do we need more of for the task ahead?
- What changes when we are under pressure? Check the observations with each person.

Use the colours to choose a practice

The colour labels in the group-balance section show the behaviour an activity helps you practise. Every team member can take part. A lower share of a colour does not automatically mean a problem, and balanced teamwork does not require equal colour percentages.

Discuss patterns as possibilities

Use profiles and summaries as starting points for reflection, not fixed labels or measures of ability. Choose an activity because it addresses something your team has observed. You can use the playbook even before completing an assessment.

Choose the behaviour your team needs

Four behavioural types, four practical routes

ANALYTICAL | Planning and structure

More clarity, evidence and follow-through.

Mini-RACI, Timeline, Decision Filter, Risk Check, Reality Check

ASSERTIVE | Decisions and progress

More direction, ownership and momentum.

Weekly Driver, Stand-Up, Decide-by Deadlines, Dot Vote, Action List

SUPPORTIVE | Trust and participation

More listening, connection and inclusion.

Check-In, Team Agreements, Appreciation, Moderator, Feedback Grid

CREATIVE | Ideas and exploration

More possibilities, curiosity and flexibility.

Brainwriting, What If?, Mind Map, Worst Idea, Inspo Drop

The other three sections work across all four behavioural types. Choose them when a specific issue needs attention: tension, communication or decisions.

Make the activity count

Before you begin

- Choose one real situation. Describe what is happening without blaming a person or colour.
- Read the activity. Gather a timer, a shared document or whiteboard, and any scenario cards you need.
- Choose a facilitator and someone to record the outcome. Rotate these roles.
- Agree to listen, focus on observable behaviour and allow people to pass on personal questions.

During the activity

Follow the steps and keep the purpose visible. Invite different perspectives. When a profile seems to explain a behaviour, ask the person whether that interpretation fits before relying on it.

After the activity

- Record one change you will try, with an owner and a deadline.
- Choose a review date and something observable to look for.
- At the review, ask what happened, what you learned and what to keep or adjust.

A simple example

Observation: our meetings end without clear next steps. Activity: Action List. Experiment: close each meeting by reading out actions, owners and deadlines. Review after two meetings: were the actions clearer, and did more of them get completed?

Keep the commitment manageable

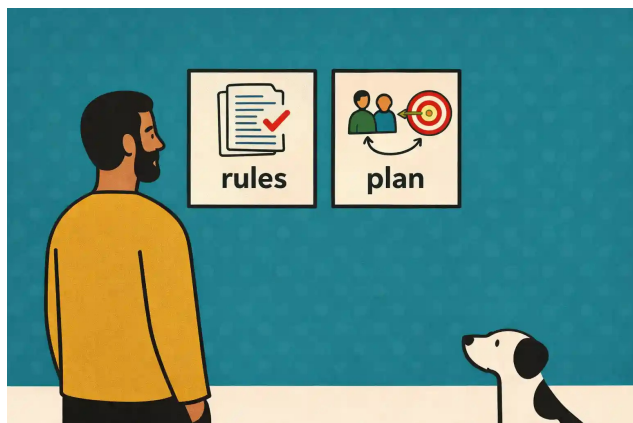
One useful change is enough to begin. Timings are guides; larger groups may need longer. Conflict-resolution activities can be spread across several meetings.

Use the action-and-review sheet near the end to capture your learning.

01 Group balance

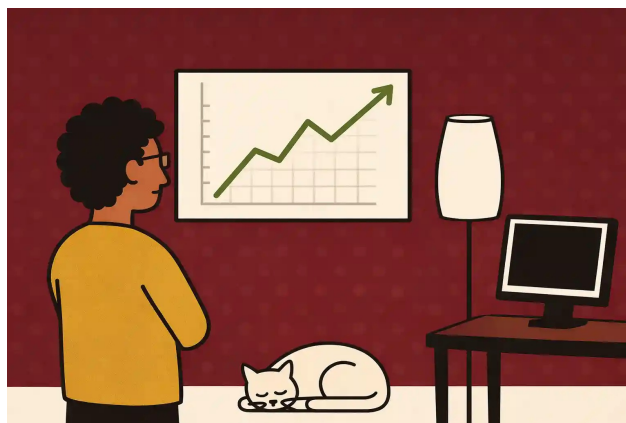
Practise the behaviours your team needs

Start with what the task requires and what the team has noticed. These short activities help you add structure, build momentum, strengthen trust or open up new ideas.



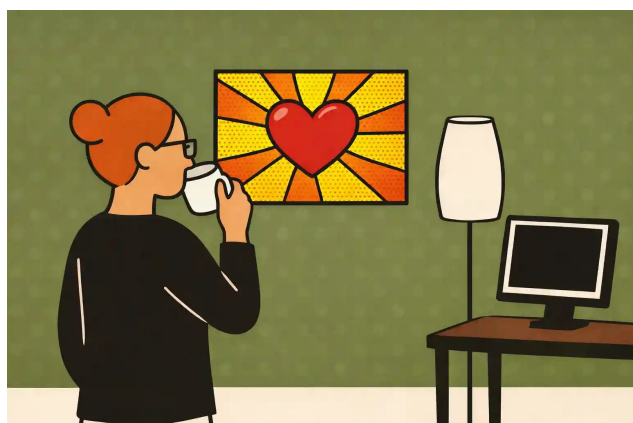
Analytical

Planning and structure



Assertive

Decisions and progress



Supportive

Trust and participation



Creative

Ideas and exploration

ANALYTICAL | Planning and structure

01 Mini-RACI

10 min**Best when:** Before starting a shared activity or when roles are unclear**Outcome:** A shared overview of who will do the work, who owns the final outcome, who should be asked for input, and who simply needs updates.

1. List 3-5 key tasks or decisions coming up
2. For each one, assign: R = Responsible (does the work), A = Accountable (owns the final outcome), C = Consulted (gives input), I = Informed (kept updated)
3. Write it down where everyone can see it (whiteboard, shared doc, or sticky notes)
4. Check together: Does this feel fair and clear? Adjust if needed

The appendix includes a RACI guide and worked example.

02 Timeline

15 min**Best when:** At the start of a shared activity or when deadlines feel vague**Outcome:** A simple, shared timeline that shows what needs to happen and when, with a few key milestones everyone can refer back to.

1. Draw a horizontal line on a whiteboard or shared doc
2. Mark today's date on the left, final deadline on the right
3. Add 3-5 major milestones in between (for example: first draft done, feedback collected, final version ready)
4. Add rough dates to each milestone
5. Review together: Is this realistic? What might slow us down or push dates back?

ANALYTICAL | Planning and structure

03 Decision Filter

10 min

Best when: Before making a big decision or when the team disagrees

Outcome: A short set of decision criteria that everyone agrees to use, so discussions stay focused and choices feel fair.

1. Ask: What matters most in this decision? (for example: speed, cost, quality, fairness)
2. List 3-5 criteria as a group
3. Rank them in order of importance
4. When discussing options, keep referring back to the criteria
5. If someone disagrees, check: Which criteria are we prioritising, and does this option meet the most important ones?

04 Risk Check

10 min

Best when: Before committing to a plan or when things feel too uncertain

Outcome: A short list of realistic risks and a clear agreement on what you will prevent, prepare for, or accept.

1. Ask: What could go wrong with this plan?
2. List 3-5 realistic risks (for example: missing information, key person unavailable, dependencies outside the team)
3. For each risk, ask: How likely is it? How serious would it be?
4. Focus on the top 2-3 risks
5. Agree a response for each: prevent it, prepare for it, or accept it

ANALYTICAL | Planning and structure

05 Reality Check

5 min

Best when: When the team is being too optimistic or vague about a plan

Outcome: A more grounded view of whether the plan is doable, plus one or two specific adjustments that make success more likely.

1. Say the goal or plan clearly in one sentence
2. Ask each person: On a scale of 1-10, how realistic is this?
3. If anyone says 6 or lower, ask: What makes this feel risky or unclear for you?
4. Discuss: What would need to change to make it an 8+?
5. Agree on 1-2 changes that improve the plan right away

Connect this to your Lens

Where would more structure help your team? Check whether the challenge is unclear roles, uncertain timing or assumptions that need testing.

Our next step: _____

Review date: _____

ASSERTIVE | Decisions and progress

06 Weekly Driver

5 min

Best when: At the start of each week or when the team needs extra focus

Outcome: One person keeps the group moving by checking progress, reminding the team of priorities, and making sure support is found quickly when something slows work down.

1. Choose one person to be the “driver” for the week
2. Their role: check progress, give gentle reminders, and flag anything slowing you down or preventing progress (for example missing information, waiting on a decision, or needing support)
3. If needed, they call a quick check-in to remove the issue and agree the next step
4. Rotate weekly so everyone gets a turn
5. At the end of the week, ask: What helped us stay on track? What should we do differently next week?
6. Pass the role to the next person

07 Stand-Up

5-10 min

Best when: Daily or a few times a week, especially during busy phases

Outcome: A quick shared update so everyone knows what matters today, what each person is focusing on, and whether anything is slowing you down or preventing progress (for example missing information, waiting on a decision, or needing support).

1. Gather the team (in person or online)
2. Each person answers: What did I do since last time? What will I do next? Is anything slowing me down or preventing progress (for example missing information, waiting on a decision, or needing support)?
3. Keep it short, around 2 minutes max per person
4. If something is slowing someone down, agree immediately: Who will help, and by when?
5. End with: Is there anything urgent we should address right now?

ASSERTIVE | Decisions and progress

08 Decide-by Deadlines

5 min

Best when: When a decision keeps getting delayed or discussed endlessly

Outcome: A clear decision deadline and a named decision owner, so the team can stop looping and move forward with a workable choice.

1. Name the decision that needs to be made
2. Set a hard deadline (for example: end of this meeting, Friday 3 PM)
3. Agree: If we do not have perfect information by then, we will still decide based on what we know
4. Choose who makes the final call (one person or a small group)
5. When the deadline arrives, make the decision and capture the next step in writing

09 Dot Vote

5 min

Best when: When you have multiple options and need to pick quickly

Outcome: A fast, transparent way to see the team's preference and choose a direction without a long debate.

1. List all options on a board or shared doc
2. Give each person 2-3 votes (dots, ticks, or numbers)
3. Everyone votes at the same time with no discussion first
4. Count the votes
5. Choose the option with the most votes. If it is close, discuss briefly and vote again, or let the decision owner make the final call

ASSERTIVE | Decisions and progress

10 Action List

10 min**Best when:** At the end of a meeting or work session**Outcome:** A clear, shared list of next steps that names the owner and deadline for each action, so follow-through is simple and visible.

1. Ask: What needs to happen next?
2. Write each action as one clear sentence (for example: "Draft the proposal")
3. For each action, add: Who will do it, and by when?
4. Write it somewhere visible to everyone (doc, board, or chat)
5. Before you end, read the list aloud to confirm everyone agrees

Connect this to your Lens

Where would a clear decision or next step help? Invite input, then agree who will act and when.

Our next step: _____

Review date: _____

SUPPORTIVE | Trust and participation

11 Check-In

5-10 min

Best when: At the start of a meeting or when the team's energy feels off

Outcome: A calmer start where people feel acknowledged, making it easier to focus and work well together.

1. Go around the circle (or video call)
2. Each person shares: How are you feeling right now? (one word or a short phrase)
3. No fixing and no problem-solving. Just listen
4. The leader can share first to model the tone, if helpful
5. After everyone has shared, move into the agenda

12 Team Agreements

15 min

Best when: When forming a new team or when ways of working feel unclear

Outcome: A short set of shared agreements that guide everyday behaviour, making it easier to collaborate, handle tension, and keep things respectful.

1. Ask: How do we want to treat each other? How will we handle disagreement or conflict?
2. Brainstorm ideas (for example: "One person speaks at a time," "It's okay to disagree," "We ask questions before judging")
3. Narrow it down to 3-5 agreements you can actually follow
4. Write them somewhere visible (doc, poster, or chat)
5. Revisit every few weeks: Are we following these? What needs updating?

SUPPORTIVE | Trust and participation

13 Appreciation

5 min

Best when: At the end of a meeting or after a tough week

Outcome: People feel valued and noticed, which strengthens trust and makes it easier to support each other during busy or stressful periods.

1. Go around the circle
2. Each person shares one thing they appreciate about someone on the team (say the person's name)
3. Keep it specific (for example: "I appreciated how you helped me think through that problem")
4. Keep it natural. It does not need to sound formal to be meaningful
5. End the meeting on that positive note

14 Moderator

Ongoing

Best when: During meetings where some voices dominate or others stay quiet

Outcome: More balanced participation, fewer interruptions, and a safer space where quieter people are invited in without being put on the spot.

1. Assign one person as the moderator for the meeting (rotate this role)
2. Their job is to notice who is speaking and who is not
3. If one person dominates, they gently step in: "Let's pause and hear from someone else"
4. If someone is quiet, they invite them in: "What's your view, [name], if you want to share?"
5. After the meeting, ask: Did this feel more balanced for everyone?

SUPPORTIVE | Trust and participation

15 Feedback Grid

10 min

Best when: When giving feedback to the team or a specific person

Outcome: Balanced, practical feedback that is easier to hear and easier to act on, because it includes what to keep, what to change, and one clear commitment.

1. Draw a 2x2 grid with these labels: “Keep Doing” (top left), “Start Doing” (top right), “Stop Doing” (bottom left), “Try Differently” (bottom right)
2. As a group, fill each box with specific examples
3. Keep it focused on observable behaviour, not personal traits
4. End with: What is one change we will commit to from today?
5. Revisit the grid in a few weeks to see what has improved

Connect this to your Lens

Whose perspective might you be missing? Ask what would help people feel heard and able to contribute.

Our next step: _____

Review date: _____

CREATIVE | Ideas and exploration

16 Brainwriting

10 min

Best when: When you need lots of ideas fast, especially from quieter team members

Outcome: A strong list of ideas from everyone, gathered without interruptions so a few voices do not take over the conversation.

1. Give everyone a blank sheet or shared doc
2. Set a timer for 5 minutes
3. Everyone writes down as many ideas as possible with no talking
4. When time is up, pass your sheet to the person next to you
5. Add new ideas or build on what is there (another 3 minutes)
6. Collect everything and review together

17 What If?

10 min

Best when: When the team is trapped in “how we usually do it” thinking

Outcome: A set of bold ideas that loosen up thinking and often reveal a realistic option you would not have considered otherwise.

1. Ask a “What if?” question (for example: “What if we had unlimited budget?” or “What if we only had one week?”)
2. Brainstorm answers for 5 minutes. Anything goes and no judgement
3. Pick the most interesting or extreme idea
4. Ask: What part of this could actually work in our real situation?
5. Turn that into one practical next step

CREATIVE | Ideas and exploration

18 Mind Map

15 min

Best when: When exploring a complex topic or trying to see connections

Outcome: A visual map that helps the team see themes, connections, and gaps, making the topic feel clearer and easier to work with.

1. Write the main topic in the centre of a page or board
2. Draw branches for major themes or questions
3. Add smaller branches with specific ideas, examples, or details
4. Make it visual with colours, simple icons, or quick sketches
5. Step back and ask: What patterns do we see? What stands out or surprises us?

19 Worst Idea

10 min

Best when: When the team is being too cautious or holding back ideas

Outcome: A safer, more playful way to think out loud, which often unlocks one or two genuinely useful ideas that the team was too careful to say earlier.

1. Ask: What is the worst possible solution to this problem?
2. Brainstorm terrible, ridiculous, or obviously unhelpful ideas for 5 minutes
3. Laugh about them and keep it light
4. Flip each one: What is the opposite of this bad idea?
5. Capture any good ideas that appear when you flip them

CREATIVE | Ideas and exploration

20 Inspo Drop

10 min**Best when:** When the team feels uninspired or needs a creative boost**Outcome:** A shared pool of inspiration that helps the team see the situation differently and generates new angles for your next discussion.

1. Everyone takes 3 minutes to find one piece of inspiration (image, quote, short article, song, or object)
2. Share it with the group (around 1 minute each)
3. Keep it simple. Show it and say what it made you think of
4. As a group, ask: What do these have in common? What new ideas do they trigger?
5. Use the themes to guide your next brainstorm or decision

Connect this to your Lens

Where could your team explore another possibility before choosing? Make room for ideas before evaluating them.

Our next step: _____

Review date: _____

02 Conflict resolution

Navigate disagreements constructively with these practical tools. Learn to address conflicts early, find common ground, and turn tension into productive problem-solving.



Use with every behavioural type

Work from reflection towards a shared agreement. Start with the stage that fits your situation: pause, listen, design a solution, then follow up.

Pause & Personal Reflection

Guided Team Dialogue

Designing a Shared Solution

Agreement & Follow-Up

21 Pause & Personal Reflection

Use this when you leave a meeting or chat feeling annoyed, hurt, or stuck with someone in your group. The goal is to slow things down, understand your own reaction, and see the situation more clearly before you talk to your teammates.

Suggested time: 13-16 minutes; individual reflection

1. Name the Situation

2 minutes

Briefly describe what happened in clear, factual terms - like a camera recording, not a judgment.

- Choose one specific event or interaction
- Write what you saw and heard, not what you think it 'meant'
- Avoid judgment words like 'rude' or 'lazy' - stay neutral and objective

Example

"We were planning the presentation and Alex rejected my suggestion without discussion."

Personal reflection

- What happened, where did it happen, and who was involved?

2. Check Your Emotional Temperature

3-4 minutes

Identify and name your emotions so they become clear and manageable rather than just a swirl in your head.

- Name the specific emotions you're feeling (for example: frustrated, hurt, ignored, pressured)
- Rate the intensity of each emotion on a scale of 1-10
- Notice what you're worried might happen if nothing changes

Example

Frustrated (8/10), hurt (6/10), ignored (7/10)

Personal reflection

- What am I feeling right now?
- How strong is this feeling? (1-10)
- What am I afraid might happen if nothing changes?

3. Recognise Your Working Preferences

3-4 minutes

Connect your reaction to what matters to you when working with others. Look for a pattern in the situation and in your response.

- Ask yourself what you needed in this situation: clarity, time to think, progress, flexibility, support or a chance to contribute.
- Identify which of these needs felt overlooked or under pressure.
- Notice if this reaction is a typical stress pattern for you (for example: withdrawing, pushing harder, over-analysing)

Example

I wanted to move forward, but felt that my contribution was being ignored. I noticed myself pushing harder to be heard.

Personal reflection

- Which of my working preferences or needs felt most challenged?
- Is this a typical pattern for me when I am stressed?

4. From Their Perspective

3-4 minutes

Imagine the situation from the other person's point of view to move away from 'they're just difficult' thinking.

- Step into their shoes for a moment and imagine how the situation looks from their side
- Consider what they might be trying to achieve or protect
- Think about any pressures, deadlines, or concerns they might be dealing with

Example

Alex may be worried about the deadline and trying to keep the project on track and within scope.

Personal reflection

- What might they be trying to achieve in this situation?
- What might they be worried about or trying to avoid?
- How could my behaviour look from their perspective?

5. Set an Intention

2 minutes

Prepare for a constructive conversation by clarifying what you want for the project and the relationship before you speak.

- Define what outcome you want for the relationship with this person or group
- Clarify what you want for the project itself (for example: quality, fairness, calm progress)
- Write one calm, constructive opening sentence you could use when you are ready to talk

Example

"I want us to get back to working as a team and find a way to use both your structure and my ideas in the presentation."

Personal reflection

- What outcome do I want for the relationship?
- What outcome do I want for the project?
- What is one calm and constructive sentence I can use to start the conversation?

22 Guided Team Dialogue

Use this when there's tension, misunderstanding, or disagreement in your team that isn't getting better on its own. This exercise provides a structured, safe format for talking through conflicts without attacking or defending.

Suggested time: 65 minutes; all involved members, with a neutral facilitator if possible

1. Set Up for Safety

5 minutes

Create the conditions for honest, respectful dialogue before you start talking about the conflict.

- Choose a neutral facilitator (someone not directly involved in the conflict) if possible
- Agree on ground rules: no interruptions, no personal attacks, stay focused on the issue at hand
- Acknowledge that the goal is understanding and problem-solving, not winning or proving someone wrong
- Remind everyone that different priorities and working preferences can create tension. Check what each person meant before drawing conclusions.

2. Each Person Shares Their View (Uninterrupted)

15 minutes total (3-5 minutes per person)

Everyone involved takes turns explaining their experience of the situation - no debates, no responses yet, just listening.

- Each person describes what happened from their point of view, using "I" statements ("I felt...", "I thought...", "I needed...")
- Focus on specific behaviors and events, not judgments ("You never listen" becomes "When I tried to share my idea, the conversation moved on")
- The facilitator enforces the "no interruptions" rule firmly - everyone will get their turn
- Observers or other team members simply listen; this is about creating space for everyone to be fully heard

Reflect together

- Did you notice anything that surprised you about the other person's experience?
- What emotions did you pick up on?

3. Reflect Back What You Heard

10 minutes

Before responding or problem-solving, everyone paraphrases what they heard from the others. This confirms understanding and helps people feel truly heard.

- Each person takes turns summarizing what they heard from the other(s): "What I heard you say is..."
- Stick to paraphrasing, not agreeing or disagreeing yet
- The original speaker confirms: "Yes, that's right" or gently corrects: "Almost - what I meant was..."
- This step slows things down and often reduces defensiveness because people realize they've been heard

Reflect together

- Did hearing your perspective reflected back change anything for you?
- Did you realize you misunderstood something the other person said?

4. Identify Common Ground & Differences

10 minutes

Map where you agree and where you differ, without trying to fix anything yet.

- The facilitator (or the group together) lists what everyone agrees on - even small things ("We all care about this project", "We all felt frustrated")
- Then, name the key differences: in priorities, communication styles, or what felt fair or productive
- Explore differences in working preferences where relevant: "I wanted more information before deciding, while you wanted us to make progress. How can we allow for both?"
- This step helps everyone see that conflict often comes from different strengths, not bad intentions

5. Ask What Each Person Needs Going Forward

10 minutes

Shift from what went wrong to what each person needs to feel respected, included, and able to do their best work.

- Each person shares 1-2 specific needs: "I need to be consulted before big decisions", "I need time to think before responding", "I need us to stick to agreed timelines"
- Focus on needs that are about behavior and process, not about changing someone's personality
- Write these needs down visibly (whiteboard, shared doc) so everyone can see them

Reflect together

- Are there any needs that directly conflict?
- Are there needs that are easy to meet?

6. Brainstorm Small Adjustments

10 minutes

Come up with practical, realistic changes that respect everyone's needs and working preferences.

- Work together to suggest small adjustments: new communication habits, clearer roles, adjusted processes
- Make sure suggestions are specific and actionable: "We'll use a shared decision log" instead of "We'll communicate better"
- Test ideas against everyone's stated needs: "Would this help?", "Does this respect what you need?"
- Don't aim for perfection - aim for "better than before"

Example

"Before making project decisions, we'll post in the group chat and wait 24 hours for input. If it's urgent, we'll flag it and explain why."

7. Agree & Close

5 minutes

Lock in what you've agreed to and set a follow-up to check how it's going.

- Summarize the 2-3 key changes or agreements you're committing to
- Each person confirms: "I agree to..." (even if it's not perfect, it's a starting point)
- Schedule a follow-up check-in in 1-2 weeks to see if the changes are working
- End on a forward-looking note: "We're not perfect, but we're working on it together"

Reflect together

- Do you feel more understood than you did at the start?
- Do you have more clarity on what to do differently?

Facilitation Tips

- Protect the structure: Don't let people skip steps or rush to solutions before everyone has been heard.
- Manage emotions: If someone gets very upset, take a short break and come back.
- Ask about preferences rather than assigning labels: "Would more detail help you, or do you need room to explore options first?"
- Keep it small: If the conflict involves many people, start with just the key 2-3 people directly involved.

23 Designing a Shared Solution

Use this after initial dialogue when you've heard each other but still need to figure out "What do we actually do now?" This exercise helps teams co-create plans that respect everyone's needs and working preferences.

Suggested time: 55 minutes; works best after Activity 22 or when the conflict is already clear

1. Restate the Problem Together

5 minutes

Make sure everyone agrees on what problem you're solving - not whose fault it is, but what's not working.

- As a group, write down the problem in neutral, factual language
- Avoid blame or personality judgments: "We keep missing deadlines" instead of "Some people are too slow"
- Test the statement with everyone: "Does this capture the problem we're trying to solve?"
- If needed, reframe the problem as a shared challenge: "How can we plan projects in a way that works for everyone's styles?"

Example

"We keep having disagreements about when decisions are final, which causes confusion and rework."

2. Name What Everyone Needs (Not What They Want)

10 minutes

Separate wants from needs. Wants are specific solutions you prefer; needs are the underlying things that must be met for you to feel okay.

- Each person shares their core needs related to this problem: clarity, autonomy, inclusion, speed, quality, fairness
- Use prompts: "For me to feel good about the solution, I need..." or "I can't agree to something that doesn't include..."
- Write all needs visibly (whiteboard, shared doc)
- Notice where needs overlap - those are easy wins

Example

Person A needs: "Clear deadlines and accountability." Person B needs: "Flexibility to adjust plans as we learn."

3. Connect Needs to Working Preferences

5 minutes

Discuss what helps each person work well. Understanding these preferences can make the disagreement less personal.

- Ask each person what helps them contribute: clear plans, time to consider details, freedom to explore, steady support or quick decisions.
- Describe the useful contribution behind a preference: "Your attention to detail helps us catch mistakes" instead of "You are too picky."
- Acknowledge that all these needs are valid - they're just different

Example

"I work best when we can adjust as we learn, and you work best with a clear plan. Let us agree a plan with a specific point for reviewing it."

4. Brainstorm Solutions (Quantity Over Quality)

10 minutes

Generate as many ideas as possible without judging them yet. This opens up creative possibilities instead of getting stuck in "my way vs. your way."

- Set a timer and brainstorm rapidly: any idea is fair game, even wild ones
- No criticism or debate during brainstorming - just write ideas down
- Encourage mixing ideas: "What if we combined X and Y?"
- Aim for at least 8-10 options before moving on

Example

Ideas might include: rotating decision-makers, trial periods for new approaches, hybrid models, clearer criteria for decisions, shorter feedback loops, etc.

5. Evaluate Ideas Against Everyone's Needs

10 minutes

Test each idea by asking: Does this meet everyone's core needs, or does it favor one person's style?

- Go through the list of ideas one by one
- For each idea, check: Does this address Person A's need? Person B's need? Person C's need?
- Mark ideas that meet multiple needs as strong candidates
- Set aside ideas that only solve the problem for one person

Reflect together

- Are there ideas that meet most or all needs?
- Are there small tweaks that would make a solution work for everyone?

6. Build the Plan Together

10 minutes

Take the best ideas and turn them into a concrete, shared plan that everyone can commit to.

- Choose 1-2 ideas that best meet everyone's needs (or combine ideas)
- Make the plan specific: Who does what? When? How will we know it's working?
- Include checkpoints: "We'll try this for two weeks, then review"
- Write down the agreement and have everyone confirm: "I can commit to this"

Example

"We'll use a shared decision tracker. Any decision marked 'draft' can still be discussed; once marked 'final,' it's locked unless we all agree to revisit it. We'll review this process in two weeks."

7. Assign Accountability & Set Follow-Up

5 minutes

Make sure everyone knows their role in making the solution work, and schedule a time to check in.

- Clarify who is responsible for what part of the plan
- Set a specific follow-up date: "We'll check in on [date] to see how this is going"
- Agree on what you'll assess: "Is everyone's need being met? Is the problem reduced?"
- Commit to adjusting if needed - this is a living agreement, not set in stone

Reflect together

- Does everyone feel the solution is fair?
- Do you have clarity on what happens next?

Facilitation Tips

- Keep the focus on needs, not positions: "I need clarity" vs. "I want my way."
- Watch for power imbalances: make sure quieter voices are invited to contribute.
- Combine ideas: often the best solution is a mix of multiple suggestions.
- Be okay with imperfect: the goal is "better than now," not "perfect forever."

24 Agreement & Follow-Up

Use this after you have worked through a conflict and designed a solution, for example through Activities 22 and 23. Record the agreement, commit to practical changes and check later whether they are helping.

Suggested time: 25 minutes initially, plus a 15-minute follow-up after 1-2 weeks

1. Write the Agreement Down

5 minutes

Turn the solution you designed into a clear, written commitment that everyone can reference.

- Summarize the key changes or new behaviors you agreed to (2-3 main points)
- Use specific, actionable language: "We will..." not "We should..." or "We'll try to..."
- Make it visible and shared: post it in your team's workspace, shared doc, or chat

Example

Agreement: (1) We will use the shared decision tracker and mark decisions as 'draft' or 'final.' (2) We will wait 24 hours for input before finalizing decisions unless urgent. (3) We will check in on this process in two weeks.

2. Each Person Confirms Their Commitment

5 minutes

Go around the group and have each person explicitly agree to the plan - this creates personal accountability.

- Each person says out loud: "I commit to..." and names the specific behavior they're agreeing to
- Acknowledge that it might not be perfect, but it's a step forward
- If someone hesitates, pause and clarify: "What would you need to feel comfortable committing?"

Example

"I commit to checking the decision tracker before moving forward on project choices, and I commit to flagging urgent decisions clearly."

3. Identify Potential Obstacles

5 minutes

Be realistic about what might get in the way of following through on your agreement.

- As a group, discuss: What might make it hard to stick to this agreement?
- Name realistic obstacles: time pressure, old habits, unclear situations, external stress
- Decide in advance: "If [obstacle] happens, we'll [backup plan]"

Example

Obstacle: "What if a decision really is urgent and we can't wait 24 hours?" Plan: "We'll post it immediately, mark it URGENT, and explain why it can't wait."

4. Set a Follow-Up Check-In

5 minutes

Schedule a specific time to review how the agreement is working - don't just hope it gets better.

- Pick a date 1-2 weeks out for your first check-in
- Decide who will facilitate the check-in (rotate if possible)
- Clarify what you'll assess: Is the agreement working? Is everyone's need being met? Do we need to adjust anything?

Example

Check-in scheduled: Friday, two weeks from today at 3 PM. Facilitator: Jordan. Focus: Is the decision tracker helping? Are we still having the same conflicts?

5. Celebrate the Progress

5 minutes

Acknowledge the work you've done to address the conflict and move forward together.

- Recognize that conflict resolution is hard work - you've done something meaningful
- Name what you appreciate about each other's willingness to engage in this process
- End on a positive, forward-looking note: "We're not perfect, but we're working on it together"

Reflect together

- What do you appreciate about how this conversation went?
- What are you hopeful about going forward?

6. Follow-Up Check-In (Done 1-2 Weeks Later)

15 minutes

Review how the agreement is working in practice and adjust if needed.

- Start by asking: "How's the new process going? What's working? What's not?"
- Be honest and specific: "I've noticed we're doing better with X, but Y is still tricky"
- Decide together: Do we keep the agreement as is, adjust it, or try something new?
- If it's working well, celebrate! If not, troubleshoot without blame: "What got in the way?"

Reflect together

- Is the original problem reduced or resolved?
- Are there new issues that have come up?
- Do we need to adjust our agreement, or is it working well enough?

Facilitation Tips

- Don't skip the check-in: it's easy to assume things are fine, but follow-up is where real change happens.
- Be willing to adjust: agreements are living things, not contracts set in stone.
- Celebrate small wins: even if it's not perfect, progress is worth acknowledging.
- Keep it short: check-ins don't need to be long, just consistent.

03 Communication and listening

Enhance team communication with these practical tools. Learn active listening, reduce misunderstandings, and ensure everyone feels heard and valued.



Use with every behavioural type

Choose the practice that fits the friction: active listening, balanced participation, constructive feedback or clearer messages.

We Keep Talking Past Each Other

Not Everyone Gets a Chance to Speak

We Need to Talk About What's Not Working

We Keep Misreading Each Other's Messages

25 We Keep Talking Past Each Other

This exercise helps your team practice active listening, reduce misunderstandings, and ensure everyone feels heard. You will use a set of printable workplace scenarios that highlight common misunderstandings caused by different priorities and communication styles.

Suggested time: 55-60 minutes

Use the four scenario cards in the appendix for Steps 2-6.

1. Introduction & Setup

5 minutes

Explain the purpose and set expectations for psychological safety.

- Share the goal: reduce frustration and misunderstanding by practicing active listening (listening to understand, not to reply).
- Explain the format: you will role play the same scenario twice, first as it naturally happens, then using active listening tools.
- The scenario cards are included in the appendix. Ask the group to turn to them before you begin.
- Agree a safety principle: focus on behaviours and impact, not blame or personal attacks.
- Set one clear rule for Round 2: before disagreeing, you must paraphrase what the other person meant and get a clear “yes, that’s right”.

2. Choose a Scenario Card

5 minutes

Open the scenario cards in the appendix and choose one that fits your group right now.

- Make sure everyone can see the scenario cards in the appendix, either on screen or in print.
- Read through the scenarios together (2 minutes).
- Choose the one that matches a real friction point in your team right now.
- If time allows, repeat the exercise with a second scenario.

Example

If your team often clashes between planning and flexibility, choose Scenario A. If you struggle with speed versus quality, choose Scenario B.

3. Role Assignment

5 minutes

Assign roles and prepare for the role play.

- Pick two role players. Everyone else are observers focusing on listening behaviours, not who is “right”.
- Assign roles randomly or choose roles that help people practice a different style than their default.
- Give role players 2 minutes to read the chosen scenario card and privately decide: What do I want? What am I worried about?
- Observers choose 2 things to track: interruptions, assumptions, missing clarifying questions, tone escalation, and whether feelings or needs were acknowledged.

4. First Round: Conversation Without Active Listening

10 minutes

Role play the scenario as it might naturally unfold where people talk past each other.

- Role players start from the trigger line on the scenario card and continue the conversation naturally.
- Allow common breakdowns: interrupting, defending, assuming intent, pushing solutions too early.
- Observers note the moment the conversation “forked” (misunderstanding began) and what each person did next.

Reflect together

- Where exactly did the misunderstanding begin (which sentence)?
- What assumption did each person make about the other?
- What did each person seem to be protecting (time, quality, respect, control, safety)?

5. Teach Active Listening Tools

10 minutes

Introduce simple, practical active listening techniques. Active listening is reflecting back meaning and, when relevant, emotion to confirm understanding before responding.

- Paraphrasing (reflect meaning): Restate the message in your own words. “So what you mean is...”
- Reflecting feelings (when relevant): Name the emotion or pressure you hear. “It sounds like you’re worried about...”
- Clarifying questions: Ask before assuming. “When you say X, do you mean...?”
- Summarise and confirm: End with “Did I get that right?” and wait for a clear “yes” or correction.
- Pause before responding: Take one breath so you respond to meaning, not to tone.

Example

If someone says “We’re wasting time,” do not argue. Try: “You’re worried we’ll miss the deadline and you want a concrete next step. Is that right?”

6. Second Round: Conversation With Active Listening

10 minutes

Replay the same scenario using active listening tools. Rule: no disagreement until the other person confirms your paraphrase is accurate.

- Replay from the same trigger line on the scenario card.
- Role players must paraphrase and confirm understanding before making their own point.
- Observers note specific moments where paraphrasing or reflecting feelings reduced tension or improved clarity.
- Facilitator can pause the conversation to reinforce a good listening moment or reset if they slip into debating.

Reflect together

- What changed when paraphrasing and confirmation were used?
- Did the emotional tone change? When and why?
- What agreement or next step became possible in Round 2 that was not possible in Round 1?

7. Group Debrief & Application

10 - 15 minutes

Reflect and convert the learning into one team behaviour you will actually use.

- Compare Round 1 versus Round 2. Identify the key difference in listening behaviour.
- Pick 1 to 2 listening tools to adopt as a team norm (keep it small).
- Each person states one behaviour they will practice in the next meeting (for example: paraphrase before disagreeing).
- Optional: set a simple team agreement: “Before we disagree, we paraphrase and get a yes.”

Reflect together

- Where do we most often talk past each other (planning, priorities, feedback, chat)?
- Which one listening habit would prevent most misunderstandings for us?
- How will we remind each other in the moment without creating defensiveness?

Facilitation Tips

- Normalize imperfection: active listening feels unnatural at first because it slows the impulse to respond.
- Focus on behaviours, not labels: the aim is better habits, not categorising people.
- Make it observable: observers should cite exact sentences and moments, not general impressions.
- Protect safety: if tone escalates, pause and reset to paraphrase and confirm before continuing.

26 Not Everyone Gets a Chance to Speak

This exercise helps teams create space for all voices by practicing structured turn-taking, checking in with quieter members, and balancing participation.

Suggested time: 50 minutes

1. Introduction & Setup

5 minutes

Explain the purpose and agree on participation norms.

- Share the goal: make sure everyone has equal opportunity to contribute, especially in teams where a few voices tend to dominate.
- Acknowledge that this is not about blaming people who speak a lot - it's about creating structures that support everyone.
- Emphasize that different people need different amounts of space to feel comfortable speaking, and this exercise helps balance that.

2. Awareness Check: Who Speaks Most?

10 minutes

Reflect on your team's current participation patterns.

- Ask the group: "In a typical meeting, who tends to speak the most? Who tends to speak the least?"
- Use silent individual reflection first (2 minutes), then share observations as a group.
- Be honest but respectful. The goal is awareness, not blame.

Reflect together

- Do roles, confidence, familiarity with the topic or time needed to think affect who contributes?
- Do quieter members feel heard when they do speak?
- What happens when someone tries to contribute but gets interrupted or talked over?

3. Teach Structured Turn-Taking Tools

10 minutes

Introduce practical techniques to balance participation.

- Round Robin: Go around the group in order. Everyone gets one uninterrupted turn to share. You can pass if you want.
- Hand Signals: Raise a hand or use a visual cue (like a reaction emoji in virtual meetings) to signal you want to speak. The facilitator tracks the queue.
- Talking Token: Use a physical or virtual token. Only the person holding the token can speak. Pass it intentionally.
- Check-Ins: Periodically ask, "We've heard from A, B, and C. Let's hear from D and E before we move on."
- Time Limits: Set a 1-2 minute speaking limit per person to prevent one voice from dominating the entire discussion.

4. Practice: Structured Discussion

15 minutes

Run a short discussion using one or more of the structured techniques.

- Choose a neutral topic relevant to your team (e.g., "What's one thing we could improve in our workflow?" or "What's one thing that went well this week?").
- Use Round Robin or Hand Signals to structure the conversation.
- The facilitator actively ensures everyone gets a turn, explicitly inviting quieter members to share.
- Observers (or the whole group) note what happens: Did quieter members participate more? Did the conversation feel different?

Reflect together

- How did the structured format change participation?
- Did you notice different perspectives that might have been missed otherwise?
- Did anyone feel uncomfortable with the structure? Why?

5. Group Debrief & Commitment

10 minutes

Reflect and decide how to apply this in real meetings.

- Discuss: Which technique worked best for your team?
- Identify one or two real team situations where you will use structured turn-taking (e.g., weekly planning meetings, brainstorming sessions, retrospectives).
- Agree on a facilitation rotation: different people take turns ensuring balanced participation.
- Commit to checking in after a few meetings: "Is everyone getting a chance to speak now?"

Reflect together

- What's one small change we can make to balance participation in our next meeting?
- How can we make it safe for people to remind each other, "Let's hear from someone who hasn't spoken yet"?
- What will we do if someone dominates the conversation despite the structure?

Facilitation Tips

- Model the behavior: If you're facilitating, actively invite quieter members to share.
- Normalize passing: Let people know it's okay to say "I'll pass this round" without pressure.
- Address interruptions gently: "Let's let them finish, then we'll hear from you."
- Celebrate progress: Acknowledge when the team successfully balances participation.

27 We Need to Talk About What's Not Working

This exercise helps teams practice giving and receiving constructive feedback in a safe, respectful way. Learn to address problems early without blame, using structured feedback techniques.

Suggested time: 60 minutes

1. Introduction & Setup

5 minutes

Set the context and create psychological safety.

- Explain the purpose: help each other improve by giving feedback that is specific, kind, and actionable.
- Emphasize that feedback is about behavior and outcomes, not about attacking the person.
- Agree on a core principle: feedback is a gift meant to help, not to blame or shame.

2. Teach the Feedback Formula

10 minutes

Introduce a simple, structured feedback framework.

- Use the SBI model: Situation - Behavior - Impact
- Situation: When did this happen? Be specific. "In yesterday's meeting..."
- Behavior: What exactly did you observe? Stick to facts, not interpretations. "You interrupted me three times..."
- Impact: How did it affect you or the work? "...which made it hard for me to finish my point, and I felt unheard."
- End with a request or question: "Could you let me finish next time?" or "How can we handle this differently?"

Example

Instead of: "You're always so negative." Try: "In this morning's planning session, when you said 'This will never work' before we discussed options, it made me feel discouraged and less willing to share ideas. Could we try hearing all ideas first before evaluating them?"

3. Practice: Giving Feedback

15 minutes

Practice delivering constructive feedback using real or realistic scenarios.

- Work in pairs or small groups.
- Each person thinks of a real (but safe to share) example where they wanted to give feedback but didn't, or gave it poorly.
- Practice rephrasing that feedback using the SBI model.
- The receiver listens without defending, then paraphrases what they heard to confirm understanding.

Reflect together

- How did the SBI structure change the way the feedback felt?
- Was it easier to hear feedback when it was specific and behavioral?
- What made you feel defensive, if anything?

4. Teach How to Receive Feedback

10 minutes

Receiving feedback well is just as important as giving it.

- Listen fully: Don't interrupt or defend. Just listen.
- Paraphrase: "What I'm hearing is..." to confirm you understood.
- Ask clarifying questions: "Can you give me an example?" or "What would you like me to do differently?"
- Say thank you: Even if you disagree, acknowledge the effort it took to share.
- Reflect before responding: You don't have to agree or fix it immediately. It's okay to say, "I need time to think about this."

5. Practice: Receiving Feedback

10 minutes

Practice receiving feedback without defensiveness.

- Return to pairs or small groups.
- Role-play: One person gives feedback using SBI. The other practices listening, paraphrasing, asking questions, and thanking.
- Switch roles.
- Observers (if present) note moments of defensiveness or good reception.

Reflect together

- What was hard about receiving feedback without defending?
- What helped you stay open to hearing it?
- How did it feel when the receiver paraphrased your feedback back to you?

6. Group Debrief & Commitment

10 minutes

Reflect as a team and commit to a feedback culture.

- Discuss: What would make it easier to give and receive feedback regularly in our team?
- Agree on one feedback norm, such as: "We give feedback within 48 hours when something bothers us" or "We use SBI in all feedback conversations."
- Decide on a feedback check-in: revisit in 2 weeks to see how it's going.
- Encourage ongoing practice: feedback gets easier the more you do it.

Reflect together

- What's one piece of feedback you've been avoiding that you could now give using SBI?
- How can we make feedback feel less scary and more normal?
- What will we do if feedback is given poorly or received defensively?

Facilitation Tips

- Start small: Practice with low-stakes feedback first before tackling bigger issues.
- Model vulnerability: Share an example of feedback you received and how it helped you grow.
- Create accountability: Check in regularly to see if people are actually giving feedback, not just learning about it.
- Celebrate courage: Acknowledge both the giver and receiver when feedback is shared constructively.

28 We Keep Misreading Each Other's Messages

This exercise helps teams practice clear written communication and develop good habits for asynchronous collaboration. Learn to write messages that reduce misunderstandings and ensure everyone interprets them as intended.

Suggested time: 50 minutes

1. Introduction & Setup

5 minutes

Set the context and identify common written communication challenges.

- Explain the goal: improve written communication so messages are clear, complete, and interpreted correctly.
- Acknowledge that written messages lack tone, body language, and immediate clarification, which makes misunderstandings common.
- Share that this exercise will focus on practical techniques to write clearer messages and check for understanding.

2. Identify Common Misunderstandings

10 minutes

Reflect on real examples of written communication breakdowns.

- Ask the team: "What's a recent time when a written message (email, chat, doc comment) was misunderstood?"
- Share examples anonymously or generally. Focus on patterns, not blame.
- Common issues: vague requests, missing context, unclear tone, assumed knowledge, no clear next steps.

Reflect together

- What information was missing that would have prevented the misunderstanding?
- How did you realize there was a misunderstanding?
- What was the impact: wasted time, frustration, duplicated work, hurt feelings?

3. Teach Clear Writing Techniques

10 minutes

Introduce practical strategies for clearer written communication.

- Be specific: Replace vague language. Instead of "soon" say "by end of day Thursday."
- Add context: Don't assume everyone has the same background information. Briefly explain why something matters.
- State your request clearly: Use "Could you...?" or "Please..." instead of hints.
- Include next steps: End with "What I need from you" or "Next steps are..."
- Acknowledge tone risks: If a message might sound harsh, add a clarifying note: "I'm asking out of curiosity, not criticism."

Example

Vague: "Can someone look into this?" Clear: "@Sarah, could you review the login bug reported in #support by Friday 3pm? Let me know if you need more details."

4. Practice: Rewrite Unclear Messages

15 minutes

Practice rewriting real or realistic unclear messages.

- Work in pairs or small groups.
- Each person shares an unclear message they've sent or received (or use provided examples).
- Rewrite it together using the clear writing techniques.
- Compare before and after: what changed? What's clearer now?

Reflect together

- What was the biggest improvement in the rewritten message?
- Would the rewritten version have prevented the original misunderstanding?
- What felt hardest about writing more clearly?

5. Group Debrief & Commit to Habits

10 minutes

Reflect and commit to better written communication habits.

- Discuss: What's one thing we can all do to make our written messages clearer?
- Agree on team norms, such as: "Always include a clear request or next step" or "If a message is longer than 3 lines, add bullet points."
- Decide on a review habit: before sending important messages, pause and ask "Is this specific, clear, and complete?"
- Encourage asking for clarification: make it normal to reply "Can you clarify what you mean by X?"

Reflect together

- What's one written communication habit you'll start using today?
- How can we make it safe to ask "I don't understand, can you clarify?" without feeling dumb?
- What will we do if someone's message is consistently unclear?

Facilitation Tips

- Normalize rewriting: Emphasize that clear writing takes effort and editing - it's not about being perfect on the first try.
- Focus on patterns: Help the team identify their most common communication pitfalls so they can target improvements.
- Encourage async check-ins: Suggest using quick clarifying questions instead of assuming understanding.
- Celebrate clarity: Acknowledge when someone writes a particularly clear, helpful message.

04 Decision making

Make better group decisions with less conflict and clearer follow-through. These practical tools help teams choose options confidently.



Use with every behavioural type

Choose the practice that fits the obstacle: repeated discussion, unclear ownership, missing input or disagreement over options.

We Are Going in Circles

No One Wants to Make the Final Call

We Need Input From Everyone

We Cannot Agree

29 We Are Going in Circles

Use this when:

- You keep repeating the same points without moving forward.
- You end meetings with "let's talk about it later," and nothing gets decided.
- The group gets stuck between wanting more analysis and wanting more ideas, and no one closes the conversation with a decision or next step.

Move out of repeated discussion and reach a clear decision, or a clear next step, without wasting time and energy.

Suggested time: 10 to 15 minutes

1. Name the Pattern

30 seconds

Calmly point out that the conversation is repeating. This builds awareness without blame.

- Anyone can say: "I think we are going in circles."
- Keep your tone neutral and respectful.
- Name what is happening without blaming anyone.

Example phrases

- "I think we are going in circles."
- "We are repeating the same points. Can we try a different approach?"

2. Write the Decision Question

1 to 2 minutes

Get clear on what you need to decide. Write it as one specific question.

- Write the decision question in one sentence.
- Make it specific and practical.
- Confirm that everyone agrees on the question before you continue.

Example phrases

- "Which approach will we use for the plan structure?"
- "Should we split the work by topic or by task type?"
- "Which deadline will we commit to: Friday or Monday?"

3. Set a Time Limit and Decision Method

1 minute

Agree on how long you will talk and how you will decide. This keeps the discussion from dragging on.

- Set a timer for 5 to 10 minutes of final discussion.
- Choose a decision method before continuing: a vote, "no strong objections," or one named decision maker.
- Write down the method you chose so everyone is clear.

Example phrases

- "We have 8 minutes left. After that, we vote."
- "Let's talk for 5 more minutes, then decide if anyone has a strong objection."
- "One person will make the final call after 10 minutes of input from the team."

4. List Options Quickly

3 to 5 minutes

List the main options, up to 3. For each option, write one key benefit and one key risk. Keep it short and focused.

- Identify up to 3 options.
- For each option, write one key benefit.
- For each option, write one key risk.
- Keep descriptions short and factual.

Example phrases

- "Option A: Split by topic. Benefit: clearer ownership. Risk: more coordination needed."
- "Option B: Split by task type. Benefit: consistent output. Risk: duplicated work."

5. Decide and Write It Down

2 to 3 minutes

Use your chosen method to decide. Then write down what you decided, why, who owns the next step, and the deadline.

- Use the decision method you agreed on (vote, no strong objections, or a named decision maker).
- Write the decision in clear words.
- Note the main reason for the decision.
- Assign who will do the next step and when it is due.

Example phrases

- "Decision: We will use option A. Reason: reduces duplicated work. Next step owner: Sam. Deadline: Friday."
- "Let's write this down so we do not reopen it tomorrow."

Reflect together

- What helped us move from discussion to a decision?
- Did anyone feel rushed, or feel that their input was not heard? What would help next time?
- Did we clearly record the decision and the next step?

30 No One Wants to Make the Final Call

Use this when:

- Everyone waits for someone else to choose, so decisions take too long.
- People say "I am fine with anything," but feel disappointed later.
- The team avoids choosing because people worry about blame or conflict.

Make it clear who will decide, so the team can move forward in a fair and respectful way.

Suggested time: 10 to 15 minutes

1. Name What Is Blocking the Decision

30 seconds

Say the issue clearly: it is not clear who will make the decision, so work is not moving forward.

- Point out that it is unclear who will make the decision.
- Keep it factual and respectful.
- Describe it as a team issue, not personal blame.

Example phrases

- "We are not deciding because it is unclear who will make the final call."
- "This decision keeps getting delayed. We need one person to make the final call."

2. Choose a Decision Owner

1 to 2 minutes

Choose one person to make this specific decision. This applies to this decision only.

- Choose the person coordinating the work, or
- Choose the person doing the work, or
- Choose the person with the most relevant knowledge.
- Make it clear that this is for one decision, not permanent authority.

Example phrases

- "Who will make the final call on this? If no one does, we will stay stuck."
- "Let's choose one decision owner for this decision only."
- "Since you are leading this task, you will make the final call."

3. Agree What the Decision Owner Will Do

1 minute

Agree on what the decision owner will do: listen to input, decide by a deadline, and share the decision clearly.

- The decision owner listens to input from everyone.
- The decision owner makes the final call by an agreed deadline.
- The decision owner shares the decision in writing.
- Write down these responsibilities so everyone is clear.

4. Take Quick Input

3 to 5 minutes

Give everyone a short, structured chance to share a recommendation and a concern.

- Give each person 1 minute.
- Share one recommendation.
- Share one concern.
- Do not debate yet. Collect input first.

Example phrases

- "I recommend option _____. My main concern is _____."
- "My suggestion is _____. The risk I see is _____."

5. Make the Decision

2 to 3 minutes

The decision owner considers the input and makes the decision, either during the meeting or by the agreed time.

- The decision owner states the decision clearly.
- Share the main reason in one or two sentences.
- Write the decision in the shared document or group chat.
- If the decision will be made after the meeting, write down the exact deadline.

Example phrases

- "Decision by ____ (date/time). We will write it down and move forward."
- "After hearing everyone, I've decided we will go with option B because _____."

6. Confirm Support

1 to 2 minutes

Check that everyone can support the decision and move forward, even if it was not their first choice.

- Ask: "Can everyone support this decision and move forward?"
- If someone cannot, ask what would make it workable.
- Make one practical adjustment if needed.
- Confirm commitment from the team.

Example phrases

- "I can support this, even if it was not my first choice."
- "I am okay moving forward with this decision."
- "I have a concern about X. Could we add Y to make it workable?"

Reflect together

- Did having one decision owner reduce stress, or increase it? Why?
- Did everyone share at least one useful point, including quieter team members?
- What simple rule about decision ownership would help your team going forward?

31 We Need Input From Everyone

Use this when:

- One or two people speak most of the time, and others share very little.
- You are about to decide, but you do not have enough input about risks, limits, or alternatives.
- Some teammates may have concerns they have not said out loud yet.

Gather decision-critical input from everyone. Each person shares a recommendation, a reason, and a concern so the final choice is better informed.

Suggested time: 15 to 20 minutes

1. Write the Decision Question

1 minute

Write the decision as one clear question. Make sure everyone understands exactly what needs to be decided.

- Write the decision question in one sentence.
- Keep it specific and practical.
- Confirm that everyone agrees on the question.

Example phrases

- "Which approach will we deliver first?"
- "Should we meet weekly or every two weeks for the rest of the work?"
- "Which format will we use for the final session?"

2. Silent Written Input

3 to 5 minutes

Everyone writes their input quietly on their own. This helps make space for people who prefer time to think before speaking.

- Set a timer for 3 to 5 minutes.
- Everyone writes three short lines:
- My recommendation: Option ____.
- My main reason: ____.
- My main concern: ____.
- Do not discuss during this time.

3. One-by-One Read-Out

3 to 5 minutes

Each person reads their three lines out loud. Do not debate yet. The aim is to hear everyone's view first.

- Go around the group one person at a time.
- Each person reads: recommendation, reason, and concern.
- Aim for about 60 seconds per person.
- No interruptions, questions, or debate.
- Listen and take notes if helpful.

Example phrases

- "Before we discuss, everyone writes: recommendation, reason, and concern."
- "Let's go one by one and read our three lines. We will discuss after everyone has shared."

4. Create a Short Options List

2 to 3 minutes

Group similar recommendations and create a short list of clear options, ideally 2 or 3. Fewer options makes the decision easier.

- Identify the recommendations that match or overlap.
- Group similar suggestions together.
- End with a maximum of 2 or 3 distinct options.
- Write each option in plain, specific wording.

Example phrases

- "Let's group these into 2 or 3 options, then decide."
- "I see three different approaches. Let's name them clearly."

5. Clarify Facts Only

2 to 3 minutes

Ask short factual questions to understand risks and constraints. This is not the time to persuade or argue. It is only to clarify.

- Ask only factual questions.
- Focus on understanding risks and constraints.
- Keep questions short and specific.
- Avoid persuading or debating.

Example phrases

- "Can you explain your main concern in one sentence?"
- "Which specific constraint are you worried about?"
- "When you say "time risk," do you mean we might miss the deadline?"

6. Decide and Write It Down

2 to 3 minutes

Choose how you will decide, make the decision, and record it clearly. Include the reason, the next step owner, and the deadline.

- Choose a decision method: vote, agreement without major concerns, or one named decision maker.
- Make the decision.
- Write down what you decided.
- Write down the main reason.
- Write down who owns the next step.
- Write down the deadline.

Example phrases

- "Decision method: vote, agreement without major concerns, or one decision maker. Then we commit and write it down."
- "Decision: Option B. Reason: lowest risk. Next step owner: Jordan. Deadline: Wednesday."

Reflect together

- Did writing first improve the quality of the input compared to open discussion?
- Who benefited most from writing first in this group?
- Did the group stay focused on decision input, rather than general discussion?

32 We Cannot Agree

Use this when:

- The team is split between options, and the conversation becomes repetitive or tense.
- People argue for their preferred option without clear criteria or trade-offs.
- You want to disagree respectfully and still reach a decision.

Handle disagreement in a constructive way and reach a decision using clear criteria, trade-offs, and a decision method.

Suggested time: 12 to 18 minutes

1. Set a Respectful Tone

30 seconds

Remind the team that you are evaluating options, not criticising people. Keep the focus on the work and the outcome.

- Say clearly that you are discussing options, not people.
- Agree to stay respectful and constructive.
- Focus on understanding different viewpoints.

Example phrases

- "Let's stay respectful. We are comparing options, not judging people."
- "We have different views, and that is normal. Let's focus on finding the best way forward."

2. Confirm the Decision Question and Options

1 to 2 minutes

Make sure everyone agrees on what you are deciding and which options are on the table. Keep it to a maximum of 3 options.

- Write the decision question clearly.
- List the main options, maximum 3.
- Do a quick check that everyone understands the question and the options.
- Clear up any major misunderstandings.

Example phrases

- "So your main concern is _____. Is that correct?"
- "Just to confirm, we are choosing between options A, B, and C. Is that right?"

3. Agree on Decision Criteria

2 to 3 minutes

Agree what a good decision looks like for this situation. Use clear must-haves such as time, workload, quality, and risk.

- List 3 or 4 must-have criteria.
- Keep criteria specific and easy to check.
- Get agreement from the team on the criteria.
- Examples include: ability to finish on time, fair workload, quality standard, and acceptable risk.

Example phrases

- "What must be true for this to be a good decision?"
- "Let's consider: can we finish on time, is the workload fair, and does it meet our quality standard?"

4. Quick Pros and Risks Review

3 to 5 minutes

For each option, list 1 or 2 benefits and 1 or 2 risks. Keep it factual and short. Avoid long debate at this stage.

- For each option, write 1 or 2 benefits.
- For each option, write 1 or 2 risks.
- Keep descriptions brief and factual.
- Do not try to persuade at this stage.

Example phrases

- "For option A, share one benefit and one risk. Keep it short."
- "Option B benefit: faster delivery. Option B risk: higher complexity."

5. Check for a Combined Option or a Trial Run

2 to 3 minutes

See if you can combine the best parts of different options, or try one approach for a short period before fully committing.

- Ask if you can combine the strongest parts of different options.
- Ask if you can try one option for a short period first.
- Look for low-risk ways to include more than one viewpoint.

Example phrases

- "Is there a combined option that reduces risk?"
- "Can we combine the speed of option A with the quality checks from option B?"
- "Could we try option A for one week, then review and adjust?"

6. Decide and Check Support

2 to 3 minutes

Use your agreed decision method to choose, then confirm that everyone can support the decision and move forward.

- Use the decision method you agreed on: a vote, agreement without major concerns, or a named decision maker.
- State the decision clearly.
- Ask: "Can everyone support this and move forward?"
- If someone cannot support it, ask what would make it workable.
- Record the decision and the next steps.

Example phrases

- "Decision method: vote, agreement without major concerns, or a named decision maker. After that, we commit."
- "I can support this decision and help make it work."
- "Decision: Option B with change X. Next step owner: Sam. Deadline: Friday."

Reflect together

- Did the criteria reduce personal tension? Why or why not?
- Did any group members dominate the discussion, or hold back? What would help next time?
- Did you reach a decision you can support, even if it was not your first choice?
- What will you do if someone wants to reopen this decision later?

Action and review sheet

Turn a useful conversation into a small experiment.

Activity and date

What did we notice? Describe one concrete example.

What change will we test?

Who will take the next step, and by when?

When will we review it? What evidence will show whether it helped?

After the review: what happened, and what will we keep or adjust?

Scenario cards and RACI guide

A. Active listening scenario cards

Use with Activity 25. Choose one of the four scenarios and run the conversation twice.

- Round 1: act out how the conversation might unfold under pressure.
- Round 2: use active listening to understand each other and reach a practical agreement.

Before disagreeing, paraphrase what you heard and ask, "Did I get that right?" Wait for confirmation or a correction.

Four situations to explore

- Planning versus flexibility
- Speed versus quality
- Direct feedback versus psychological safety
- Chat message misinterpretation

B. RACI guide

Use with Activity 01. The guide explains who does the work, who owns the outcome, who gives input and who needs updates. It includes setup steps and a worked example.

About this edition

Prepared from the My Group Lens Activity Hub and the accompanying teamwork materials. Wording and examples are adapted for use across teams. Timings are planning guides.

Find the activities online: mygrouplens.com/en/hub

My Group Lens is an independent framework for team reflection. This playbook is not an official Insights Discovery or DiSC publication.

Scenario A: Planning vs Flexibility

It is the first planning meeting, and everyone wants a strong start. One person is looking for certainty: clear steps, who is responsible for what, and when key parts should be done. Another person is still exploring, asking “What if we do it this way?” and trying to keep options open. Both people care about doing good work. The tension shows up when urgency meets curiosity, and each side starts to feel unheard.

At a glance

- **People:** One wants clarity and a plan. One wants exploration before committing.
- **Trigger line:** “Can we please stop brainstorming and decide the plan?”
- **Common misread:** Exploration sounds like wasting time. Planning sounds like shutting ideas down.
- **Win condition:** Agree a short exploration timebox and a clear next step with an owner and deadline.

Round 1 - Act out the situation as it might be in a pressured situation.

Round 2 - Paraphrase first: “So you want ____ because you’re worried about ____ .Did I get that right?”

Tip: Keep it simple. Reflect meaning first, then ask “Did I get that right?” before you respond.

Active Listening Rule

Before responding, paraphrase what you heard and ask: “**Did I get that right?**” Only continue once the other person confirms or corrects you.

Scenario B: Speed vs Quality

A deadline is approaching and the pressure can be felt. One person wants to keep moving and finish what is outstanding. Another person wants to pause for a quick check, proof-read, or review before anything is shared. The conversation gets tense because each person thinks the other is putting the outcome at risk, just in a different way.

At a glance

- **People:** One wants fast progress. One wants confidence through checks and review.
- **Trigger line:** “We’re overthinking this. Let’s just get it finished.”
- **Common misread:** Review sounds like an obstacle. Moving fast sounds like carelessness.
- **Win condition:** Agree a minimum quality checklist and a simple plan for what gets reviewed, by whom, and by when.

Round 1 - Act out the situation as it might be in a pressured situation.

Round 2 - Reflect the underlying concern: “It sounds like you’re worried about ____ . Is that the main issue?”

Tip: Keep it simple. Reflect meaning first, then ask “Did I get that right?” before you respond.

Active Listening Rule

Before responding, paraphrase what you heard and ask: “**Did I get that right?**” Only continue once the other person confirms or corrects you.

Scenario C: Direct Feedback vs Psychological Safety

You are in a meeting, ideas are on the table, and someone speaks with blunt certainty. They believe they are helping the team avoid a weak decision. Someone else feels the environment becoming intense and stops contributing, because the tone feels dismissive. The conflict is not only about the idea. It is also about respect, trust, and whether it feels safe to speak up.

At a glance

- **People:** One prioritises standards and quick decisions. One prioritises respect and inclusion.
- **Trigger line:** “That idea doesn’t make sense. We tried it before.”
- **Common misread:** Bluntness is heard as disrespect. Requests for respect are heard as being too sensitive.
- **Win condition:** Keep clarity, add respect and curiosity, and name impact without blaming.

Round 1 - Act out the situation as it might be in a pressured situation.

Round 2 - **Try:** “I hear your concern is ____ . Can I check what led you to that conclusion?”

Tip: Keep it simple. Reflect meaning first, then ask “Did I get that right?” before you respond.

Active Listening Rule

Before responding, paraphrase what you heard and ask: “**Did I get that right?**” Only continue once the other person confirms or corrects you.

Scenario D: Chat Message Misinterpretation

It is a busy day and messages are being sent in a group chat. A short request is sent with no context, only because the sender is trying to be efficient. The receiver reads the tone as being disrespectful, and the message thread gets colder with every reply. Nothing is wrong with the words on their own. The problem is the story each person attaches to them.

At a glance

- **People:** Ones' messages are short and task-focused. One needs more context and appreciates a respectful tone.
- **Trigger line:** Message: "Can you just do it today?"
- **Common misread:** Brevity is read as pressure. Frustration is read as drama.
- **Win condition:** Agree a simple norm for requests in chat (priority, deadline, and why), plus a norm for checking intent before reacting.

Round 1 - Act out the situation as it might be in a pressured situation.

Round 2 - **Assume good intent and clarify:** "Quick check, do you mean urgent, or just soon?"

Tip: Keep it simple. Reflect meaning first, then ask "Did I get that right?" before you respond.

Active Listening Rule

Before responding, paraphrase what you heard and ask: "**Did I get that right?**" Only continue once the other person confirms or corrects you.

RACI Model

RACI is a practical way to clarify who does what in a piece of work. It helps teams avoid confusion, duplicated effort, and tasks that fall through the cracks. You can use it for projects, ongoing processes, group assignments, committee work, events, and classroom teamwork.

Tip: Keep RACI lightweight. It is most useful when there is real uncertainty about ownership or decision-making.

The 4 RACI roles

Responsible (R)	The person or group that carries out the task. They produce the deliverable or complete the task. Every task should have at least one Responsible so it is clear who will make it happen.
Accountable (A)	The single person who owns the outcome and approves the result. They make sure the task is understood, scoped, and completed to the required standard and deadline. Accountable is the final decision-maker for that task.
Consulted (C)	People who provide input, advice, or expertise. They are involved before or during the task to help shape the result. Consulted roles are useful when you need specialist knowledge or when buy-in is important.
Informed (I)	People who need updates, but do not directly contribute to the task. They are kept in the loop with the right level of information at the right time.

Responsible does the work. **Accountable** approves and owns the outcome. **Consulted** gives input. **Informed** receives updates.

Rules of thumb that make RACI work

- Always assign Responsible and Accountable for each task. Consulted and Informed are optional and should be used only when they add value.
- Use one, and only one, Accountable person per task. This is the most important RACI rule because it removes decision confusion.
- It is fine to have more than one Responsible if the task genuinely needs multiple people. If you see too many Responsible roles, split the task into smaller tasks.
- Keep the model current. If roles, ownership, or scope changes, update the chart and tell the people affected.
- Avoid “everyone is consulted”. If too many people are Consulted, decisions slow down. Be deliberate about who truly needs to shape the task.
- Make the communication expectation explicit. Informed does not mean involved. Decide what updates look like (for example weekly summary, meeting notes, or a single sign-off message).

When to use a RACI

- When tasks cross teams, or departments and ownership is unclear.
- When decisions are getting stuck because nobody knows who can approve.
- When tasks are duplicated or missed because responsibilities are assumed.
- When you are onboarding new team members and need a quick clarity map.
- When you are planning an event, a shared assignment, or a multi-step process.

When a RACI is not the best tool

- When the work is very small and obvious (a quick chat is faster).
- When tasks change daily and the model would need constant editing.
- When the team is using RACI to control people instead of clarifying work.

***Responsible** does the work. **Accountable** approves and owns the outcome. **Consulted** gives input. **Informed** receives updates.*

How to build a RACI in 10 minutes

1. List the key tasks or deliverables down the left side. Keep it to the essentials.
2. List people (or roles) across the top. Use roles if the team changes often.
3. For each task, assign one Accountable person and at least one Responsible person.
4. Add Consulted and Informed only where it is helpful.
5. Review as a team. Check for missing Accountable roles, unclear ownership, and overloaded people.
6. Agree how updates and approvals will happen, then use the model during the work.

Example

Task / Deliverable	Person/Role 1	Person/Role 2	Person/Role 3	Notes (optional)
Define goal and success criteria	A/R	C	I	Agree what “done” looks like
Draft the first version	C	R/A	I	Create initial draft
Review and improve	A	R	C	Apply feedback
Final approval and share	A	R	I	Send, publish, or present

Legend: R = Responsible, A = Accountable, C = Consulted, I = Informed.

Responsible does the work. **Accountable** approves and owns the outcome. **Consulted** gives input. **Informed** receives updates.

What will your team try first?



Choose one activity. Agree one change. Review what happens.
Explore your team with My Group Lens and use this playbook
to turn the discussion into practical action.

Explore My Group Lens → mygrouplens.com

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for more practical teamwork ideas, and share what your team tried.