

# WORKING AGREEMENTS

*With the shift to remote leadership, formal and informal working agreements are being disrupted. Our working hours, meeting conduct, self-care, conflict protocols and communication principles to name a few.*

*Adjusting your formal and informal working agreements to address this shift helps get team members re-aligned, focused and sharing accountability.*

## What is a working agreement?

A working agreement is a living document that sets expectations and captures agreements about how a team will work together.

### Guiding Principles

- 1 Created and changed by mutual agreement
- 2 Enforced by mutual agreement
- 3 Outside of an organization's agreed policies and procedures
- 4 Exists for the life of that team
- 5 "Living" document
- 6 Made between peers.

### What are the benefits?

- Develop a sense of shared responsibility
- Increase awareness of their behaviour
- Minimizes friction between team members by formalizing what is expected
- Helps to keep everyone accountable and productive

## What might a working agreement include?

### Common Topics

- **Team Success Principles** - how do we act towards each other?
- **Work Hours** - when will we be available to each other? What happens if we are unavailable?
- **Meetings** - how will we conduct our meetings and what ground rules will we observe?
- **Connection** - how will we check-in with each other?
- **Communication** - how will we communicate? And with what channel?
- **Conflict** - how will we behave when there is disagreement?
- **Accountability** - how will we hold each other accountable?

## What's in it for me? (WIIFM)

If this is your first time working with formal working agreements, consider an exercise to help set the stage and gain buy-in for future sessions.

### WIIFM Facilitator Guide

1. Introduce the purpose of a working agreement.
2. Share where you already have informal working agreements and what they impact & inform.
3. Ask your team share why working agreements might be important for you as a team. Ask them consider at all their stakeholders - individually, as a team, as an organization, as a manager and leader of others. We want them to see the breadth of their leadership impact.
4. Ask them discuss how they want their leadership, as a team, to be remembered.
5. Finally, ask them to identify agreements/ways-of-working that have been the most disrupted where alignment may be required? These become the potential topics for your working agreement.
6. Summarize and ask each member to share what they have learned.

# Sample Session Design

Set the context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What is a working agreement?</li><li>• Why is this important now? Ask them to identify their own reasons.</li><li>• Describe the expected output</li></ul>
Scope + Vision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify / validate topics - invite additions</li><li>• Which will have the most impact by addressing today?</li><li>• Set an appropriate time horizon based on how far you can currently see (eg. For the next 2-weeks)</li><li>• What would success look like for this team?</li></ul>
Current State	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Review existing formal and informal working agreements on chosen topic</li><li>• Ask each team member to share their experience</li></ul>
Future state	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What agreements still apply?</li><li>• What agreements might need to change?</li><li>• What agreements might be missing?</li></ul>
Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Decide how the team will we hold each other accountable?</li><li>• What permissions are we granting?</li><li>• When and how do we check-in?</li></ul>

# THANK YOU.

For you, your team and your organization a working agreement helps accelerate your time to from forming to performing.

[Schedule your free design session today.](#)