Creating Intentional Cultures

Group agreements

These allow us to understand our shared values as a team and how we would like to work together. They set expectations for how we choose to interact and are key to building a healthy and resilient team culture.

By creating some group agreements we are explicitly saying “this is how we choose to work.” They can be around how meetings are held, how decisions are made, how we choose to interact etc. Here are some example Group Agreements:

- This is a safe sober space
- We consider W.A.I.T – Why Am I Talking – before we speak
- We speak from our roles
- We use hand signals to help facilitate conversations

Having clear and explicit group agreements is a great tool for inclusivity. It allows anyone to look at those agreements and ask themselves “Is this a psychologically safe space for me to step into?” The explicit nature of these agreements can help neurodivergent people better understand the social norms of the space. And often the group agreements we put into place are there so we can use them to better mitigate issues around power in groups.

Creating a group agreement

Suggested steps to creating and getting consent for a group agreements:

- **Solo** - Ask everyone present to reflect for 3 mins on what would make the space safer and easier to engage with. Remember meetings should be fun and productive.
- **Pairs** - Ask participants to pair up and compare what they came up with, combining any similar suggestions.
- **Group** - Go around the group and ask people to read out one of their suggestions and why it is important to them. Continue around the group aiming to not repeat ones already stated until everyone has come to the bottom of their list. Note these somewhere everyone can see.
- **Clarify** - Give space for anyone to ask any questions so that everyone full understands the suggestions as written.
- **Reaction** - Create space for everyone to react to the suggestions. Take down any controversial ones to be reworded or reworked for next time. It’s okay if some people have no reaction.
- **Consent** - For each suggestion hold it up to the group and ask if everyone consents to have this as a Group Agreement. If there are objections, based on a tangible issue it will

cause, either try to reword the suggestion or put it down for another time. The suggestions that get consent from everyone present become your group agreements.
