Organising your meetings

These guidelines and resources are designed to help you organise your meetings and keep a record of decisions and action points. They may help you establish a routine where, at the end of each meeting, you have a set of minutes ready to go for the next meeting... because, who likes to write up minutes after a meeting?!

The guidelines include

- a suggested agenda structure for your meetings
- notes on each point in the structure
- a template that you can copy and adapt for your own use

Agenda structure

Title

Usually your Circle/Team name and the date

Quick links

Make it easy for team members to find the links they will need most frequently:

- Time, date and zoom/teleconference link for regular meeting
- Link to Comms Hub page -- so it's easy for everyone to find the team's mandate, role descriptions etc
- Review dates for role elections and policies
- Link to team's agenda template, so it is easy to copy for each meeting -- some teams put it at the bottom of the minutes document.
- Archived minutes -- if you keep the current minutes document under 50 pages it should still run quite quickly (longer documents are slow to load and scroll).

Some teams keep their quick links on a single linked page, using start.me or similar services.

Here's the SOS team links for example.

A. Assign facilitator & minute-taker

It's best to name the facilitator at the end of the previous meeting so the facilitator has ample time to prepare. Reviewing the context from the last meeting may inform how the new meeting runs. If

this hasn't been possible then before the new meeting starts, make sure that you have chosen a facilitator and a minute-taker.

It's better if the minute-taker is on a PC/Mac for ease of access rather than a phone or tablet.

If you are the minute-taker, please type into your team's minutes document.

First, record who took which roles at the meeting:

> Minutes:
>
> Facilitator:
>
> Present:

B. Check-ins

Everyone present checks in by saying how they are feeling, or what would make it easier for them to be present in this meeting today. This could also include any barriers/things that stop people from being fully present and therefore able to absorb everything including neurodiversity, sensory or physical impairment.

If not everyone knows each other, the facilitator may remind them to state their name and preferred pronouns.

Sometimes check-ins may include each participant mentioning one thing they're grateful for.

Check-ins helps to enrich the culture, build trust, deepen relationships and prepare the ground for richer, respectful meetings.

C. Culture Reminders

As collective preparation for the meeting ahead, we generally have a reminder of how we aspire to treat ourselves and each other in our work and relationships. We have a series of reminder texts:

- Regenerative Cultures Reminders
- Vision Reminder
- empowerment reminder.

These are included in the meeting template. Please decide within your team which you would like to use. Some teams use this space to do short guided meditations or other regenerative exercises.

The facilitator of the meeting asks someone to read out the reminder or lead the experience.

D. Name the purpose of the meeting

The facilitator checks for broad consent on the purpose of the meeting:

- to go through as many agenda items as possible?
- Or get deep into one?
- Or maybe team connection is more important today?
- Or reviewing the way the circle is working?
- Or what?

E. Actions Review of the Minutes of the last meeting

To check that all oustanding action points are in hand and identify steps to deal with any that are not.

This should not develop into a discussion. The facilitator may propose that an agenda item is added for action points that are stuck and defy a quick solution, but then move on, rather than searching for a solution.

The minute-maker may strike through action points that have been resolved -- to do this quickly, select the Action Point and then (PC) press Shift+Alt+5, or (Mac) Command+Shift+X.

F. Feedback from external coordinator on wider circle meetings

To pass on anything relevant to the group's mandate that has come up at other meetings the External Coordinator has attended.

To save meeting time, the External Coordinator may write a short update into the minutes document before the meeting starts.

The the discussion need only cover any clarifications or reactions to this update. If there are none, the update is noted and the meeting moves on.

G. Feedback from link roles

Some teams have roles with a mandate to link to other teams whose work is frequently related to this team's purpose.

As with (F), the Link Roles may write a short update into the minutes document before the meeting starts, to save meeting time.

H. Project updates and reports from subgroups

Again this is not a discussion. Nor is it an opportunity to explain what's been keeping them busy -- *unless*

- they have been stuck with an issue or tension that the team may be able to help with (this issue may be added to the agenda if it cannot be resolved on the spot) or
- the project is likely to have an impact on others in the team.

Again short written project updates in advance of the meeting can help make the most of meeting time.

I. Build and work through the Agenda

In line with the purpose of the meeting (see D above), the facilitator supports the meeting in integrating and prioritising agenda items

- left over from previous meetings,
- added by participants before the meeting, and/or
- arising from E, F, G or H above.

Items can be prioritised on a scale from 1 (most urgent) to 4 (least). Normally priority 1 & 2 items need to be resolved today; priority 3 & 4 items may be held over to a future meeting without harm.

The name of the person who proposes an item for the agenda needs to be added next to their agenda item.

It really helps if the person bringing an agenda item is clear whether they are just sharing information, looking for feedback or suggestions, or asking the group to make a decision.

The facilitator may request that each agenda item is 'time-boxed', e.g. 10 mins - to avoid one item dominating the meeting. Time-boxing gives everyone an indication of whether something is taking too long in the context of the limited time available for the meeting.

As the meeting works through the agenda, the minute-taker needs to type in a summary of the discussion under each of the Agenda points. (This can be rough at first and cleaned up afterwards).

The minute-taker can stop the discussion and ask for clarification if they need to.

J. Date and time of next meeting

Before you close the meeting, always set the date and time of the next meeting and ask for a volunteer to facilitate the next meeting. This allows for ongoing group continuity. The internal coordinator of the group will set up the next meeting and inform/remind the group via Mattermost (and if still using them - Signal/WhatsApp/Telegram group chats, Basecamp etc.), and this will also inform any absent team members when the next meeting will be held. If you have a Telegram group, you can schedule messages so the reminder can be composed right after the meeting and sent later. Just hold down the send button and the option will appear.

K. Culture reminders

As with C above, the facilitator asks someone to read one of the reminder texts, included in the meeting template, to bring the meeting to a close .

L. Closing round

Closing round sharing gratitude for something that has happened in the meeting. (This can just be 1-2 words if time is short.)

M. Preparing for the next meeting

It's helpful if the minute-taker can set up the template for the next meeting. This might include

- collating the action points from the meeting into a list
- copying the blank agenda template and writing in the next meeting date in the title area
- copying the list of action points into section E
- copying any agenda items not discussed into section I