

Team Norms

Employee Guide



What are team norms?

Team Norms are agreed upon behaviors and principles that shape team members' interactions. They establish how work will get done, and what team members can expect of each other.

Why are team norms important?

When expectations are unsaid or assumed, there is a higher likelihood of conflict and frustration. Clear norms help employees know what they can expect of one another, and help to create a more productive, inclusive, and enjoyable work experience!

Team norms are especially important in a blended team environment, as they guide expectations for both in-office and remote work. With less time face-to-face, clearly communicated norms help guide healthy collaboration.



How are team norms established?

Team norms are co-created as a partnership between the group leader and all members of the team. Colleagues are encouraged to share ideas for team norms, discuss which norms are most important, and commit together to agreed upon expectations. Sometimes there will be disagreement on norms, and in these cases the team leader will make the final decision that is in the best interest of the group.

If your current team does not yet have documented team norms, talk to your team leader! Ask how you can help support the development of team norms for your work group.



How can I prepare for a team norms meeting?

Take time to thoughtfully consider the types of team norms that would be helpful for your group. Check out the list of questions below and write down some of your ideas. Check out the sample Team Norms document for ideas. When you're in the meeting, speak up! Share your ideas and why you think certain norms would be beneficial for team cohesion and success.



What if a colleague doesn't follow a team norm?



First, ensure that your colleague is aware of the expectation. If they are new to the group, they might not be aware of the team norms. Always go directly to your colleague first to raise your concern and try to withhold judgment or blame. If the issue persists, bring your concern to your team leader so that they can address the norm with your colleague and / or team. Depending on the situation, your team leader may determine that some norms need to be changed or updated to reflect changing circumstances.

What if I don't agree with a team norm?

Make sure that your team leader understands your perspective on the norm. If you can, try to find common ground or a compromise that works for everyone. If you believe a norm is unfair or inappropriate after talking with your leader, reach out to your HRA for guidance.

Preparing For Your Team Norms Meeting

Instructions: Read through the areas for consideration and key questions below. Capture some of your ideas for team norms, as well as any other relevant thoughts to share with your team.

Collaboration

1. Which work activities are most effective in an office / base environment versus remote work?
2. How will you be intentional about collaboration regardless of location?
3. How much notice do we give for required in person attendance?
4. What are our expectations for meetings with a blended audience?
5. How will we guard against "proximity bias" in our blended team?

Feel free to print the form or to type directly into the fillable pdf to brainstorm your thoughts about collaboration.



Communication

1. How will we communicate our in-office / remote schedules?
2. What are expected response times for email / IM / etc.?
3. What channels are preferred for various communication (email, IM, Teams call, Teams post, yammer, etc.)
4. What guidelines will make our meetings most effective?
5. How should meetings be scheduled? When can you "schedule over" a teammate's calendar conflict?
6. How can we ensure our team has enough focused (non-meeting) time?
7. How will we use existing tools (e.g. Outlook calendar) to capture vacation / out-of-office time?

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Culture

1. How do we want to build and foster psychological safety and inclusion on our team?
2. What do we do if there is conflict about whether an interaction needs to be in-person?
3. How will we cultivate and maintain a healthy environment for providing feedback?
4. What behaviors will help us build an inclusive culture?
5. How will disagreements / conflict be raised and resolved?
6. What social connections are important to us and how will we maintain them?
7. What technology should we leverage or try to maintain culture / connection?
8. How do we want to recognize / celebrate individual and team successes?

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