



Trauma-Informed/ Healthier Team Meetings (Therapeutic/frontline context)

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This crib sheet contains some questions & reflection points to consider & to hold in mind when planning/reviewing/improving team meetings within a trauma-informed lens. These are not exhaustive or prescriptive, & there is an acknowledgement that each team meeting will significantly differ & will be unique; & that they will be influenced by an array of factors, such as, the aim/task/relationship/ people/ context/ system they are positioned within/ location/timing etc. Team meetings, also like people, & like organisations, will change, evolve, go through different stages/ emotions etc; & therefore, they need to be reviewed, monitored, nurtured, & developed. It is also acknowledged that many of these ingredients & principles are not exclusive to “trauma-informed” practice. It is also important to remember that trauma-informed meetings are just one aspect of trauma-informed practice, & therefore should be integrated & supported by other trauma-informed organisational & practice aspects (See Worksheet on Weaving & Infusing Trauma-Informed & Trauma-Responsive Values & Principles Throughout the Whole System).



- It is also worth considering & reflecting on which ones of the below are possible/relevant/ realistic to your specific team meeting. And if they are not (e.g. Having a positive physical environment when you work within a restricted building setting etc.)- then that this is at least named, validated, & acknowledged. It might also be that there could be some collaborative problem-solving around this (e.g. Are there ways to optimize the space? Are there alternative options? etc.).
- There also needs to be an acknowledgement & a shared understanding of both the value & importance of team meetings; including this being a space to connect, develop, & support.
- Trauma-informed team meetings should respect & respond to the prevalence of trauma; as well as to the multi-layered impact that trauma, adversity, & stress can have on individuals, on the work, & on the organization, & vice averse. This includes an awareness around the parallel processes & the mirroring which can occur within teams/ groups/ organizations.

- The team meeting should be a space to model the model; & to practice, & embody the model, values, & principles which we wish to be reflected in the work itself; & in the overall organizational culture.
- It is also important to hold in mind that most of us have attended numerous team meetings in our career, so therefore, come into the space with different models, expectations, apprehensions, rules, memories, associations etc. of a team meeting. As well as coming into the room with our own relationship, role, & experiences of being in a group/ a team (including our primary group- our family). So, within this, it is helpful to acknowledge & reflect on these. It can also be beneficial to mutually agree the ground rules for the team meeting; as well as to orient people to these (Visually, verbally, & modelled) when they start, or when a refresher is needed. Having a shared & agreed vision & mission for the meeting is a crucial part of the process.
- It can be useful for people to reflect on previous experiences of team meetings, & to draw & reflect on what their best/most helpful team meetings/mutual learning spaces were, & why? And what their least helpful/ worst team meetings/mutual spaces were, & why? This also involves reflecting on people's wishes, hopes, fears, & apprehensions about the space. A helpful activity to support this, is to use reverse "brain-storming". For example, what would the worst team meeting ever be & look like? What could we do to make a team meeting super unhelpful/ a waste of time/ stressful/ trauma-inducing? Other ways might be by using the solution-focused miracle question/ Making a team vision board/ Writing ideas down creatively like on a puzzle piece, a leaf, or on a paper chain- & then connecting these together.

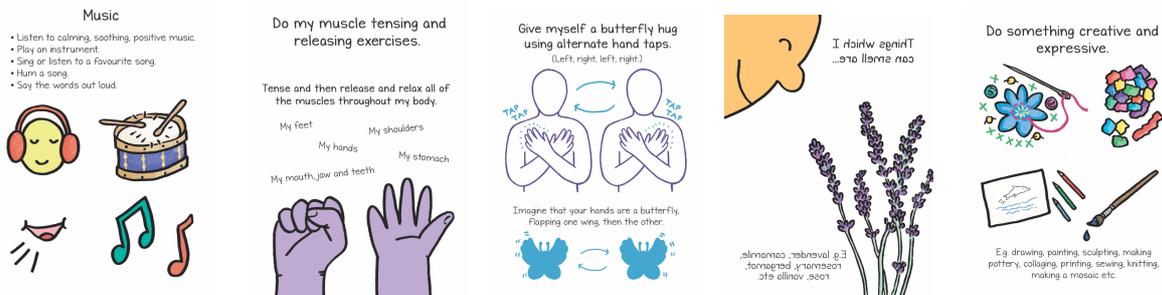


Before the Meeting:

- Are there clear expectations that people attend & prioritise the team meeting?
- Are there attempts to schedule the team meeting at as convenient time/day as possible?
- Who is going to book the room? Can it be the same room each time?
- Is there enough space so that it is not overcrowded? Are there enough chairs available for everyone? (See crib sheet on physical environment).
- Is the room as welcoming, & comfortable as possible?
- Does the room have natural light, & is it at a comfortable temperature?
- Is the room quiet & as free from distractions & noise as possible?
- Can there be any snacks/ drinks provided or bought in?

- Are there any fire alarms planned, & if so have these been communicated?
- For people who are unfamiliar with the space, are they made aware of where the toilets are/ the purpose of the meeting/ who people are/ how to get there etc.?
- Is the seating positioned so that people face each other & in a way that promotes connection? If possible, are there different chair options e.g. Spinning/rocking/ bean bag/ gym ball etc.
- Are there ways to enhance relaxation & comfort as people enter the room? (These should be agreed/suggested by the team). For example, having relaxing music playing whilst people are arriving; having a relaxing scent such as lavender present etc.).
- Has the agenda been collated in a timely manner? How does it reflect multiple voices & that the space is shared? Is the agenda collaborative? Have there been opportunities to feed into/adapt the agenda?
- Has the agenda been shared before the meeting in a timely manner?
- Has any additional material that is due to be discussed been shared clearly before the meeting in a timely manner?
- Have the dates, times, & length of the meeting been confirmed & clearly communicated?
- Have any guests or new starters be announced & introduced before people arrive at the meeting?
- Are there any personal or professional celebrations/new starters/ people leaving happening that should be acknowledged & prepared for?

During the Team Meeting:



- How are the key values of trauma-informed practice infused/ acknowledged/ valued/ referred to/ & worked towards in the team-meeting? (E.g. Safety/ collaboration/ choice/ trust/ cultural humility/ curiosity/ acknowledgment of the impact of the work & the parallel plays at play etc.).
- How is the team meeting modelling the model?
- How is the team meeting aiming towards being a supportive, connecting, & developing space?
- How is the team meeting avoiding being re-traumatizing/ trauma-inducing?
- How is the usefulness, purpose, & healthiness of the team meeting discussed, reflected on, & evaluated?

For example, how safe do people feel in the meeting/ with their colleagues/ within the work? How welcomed/connected/ valued do people feel? How much do people feel listened to, & safe to express their thoughts? Whose voices are missing or feeling silenced? How is conflict addressed & responded to within the meeting? Are people shamed & blamed; or responded to with curiosity & understanding? Etc. It can be very helpful to have the trauma-informed values & principles clearly displayed on the table, on the agenda, on people's diaries, or on a poster; so that they can be easily referred to, & kept in mind. (See the values & principles crib sheet).

- What words, labels, phrases, tone etc. are used about the people who are being served, & about & towards each other? Are these in line with trauma-informed principles & values? How, if any, would you speak differently if someone else, such as a family member, was in the room; or how would you want to be spoken about if you were using the service?
- Is there an emphasis on arriving & ending on time? Does everyone know the timings & prioritise the space?
- Is there an emphasis on being emotionally present & engaged? Is this also modelled by leaders (e.g. Making eye contact, responding to what is happening in the room, open body language, phones not being used unless urgent etc.)?
- How does the team meeting start? Is there a way to connect with each other? To open up the space? To relieve tension? To set the tone? Whilst being mindful that some people may wish to pass; & do this in different ways at different times. (E.g. A mindful moment, a meaningful check-in, a relaxation activity, a regulating activity, a soothing activity, a 2-minute team-building activity, a creative activity etc.).
- If appropriate & possible can there be snacks/ fidget toys/ regulating items available?
- Are there brain breaks incorporated into the meeting? Do people feel free to get up, & move around?
- Who will minute & facilitate the team meeting? Will this stay the same or change?
- Are there ways that promote & foster shared responsibility & ownership?
- Are there multiple modes of communicating & processing information? (Verbal, auditory, visual, kinesthetic etc.).

- If acronyms are used, are these known by everyone in the room, & if not, are they explained?
- Is there a way for the “small wins”, strengths, progress, & developments of the members/team to be named & celebrated? It can be great to have a visual way of recording these so that people can visually see them (See “A Therapeutic Treasure Box for Developmental Trauma” for numerous creative ways of doing this).
- Are there opportunities made to share best practice & shared learning?
- How is the meeting summarized, & ended? Is the ending clear & named? Can a regulating/ grounding/ soothing/ reflective activity be incorporated in again to close the meeting & to connect?

After the Team Meeting:

- Are people thanked for attending?
- Is there opportunities & forums to feedback/ disagree/ question?
- Are actions followed through & clearly communicated in a timely manner?
- If things came up in the meeting, are people checked-in on, connected with, supported outside the meeting?
- Is there a clear plan made for the next team meeting?
- Is the progress of the meeting & of the actions tracked & monitored?
- Are minutes sent out to everyone who attended, with an opportunity to add/change them?

