



Trust and vulnerability

Facilitator guide

Activities and worksheets:

Common connections 45-60 min

Open up and find new points of connection across the team.

Help wanted 20-30 min

Ask the team for support and find ways to support others.

What are trust and vulnerability?

The components of emotional safety that enable interpersonal risk-taking in teams.

Trust is earned over time.

When teams are able to establish trust and give each other permission to be vulnerable with each other, everyone feels safer and more comfortable taking risks in service of the team.

More like:

Meeting your team members where they are to build a relationship.

Less like:

Trust falls and diving into the deep end on day one.

Vulnerability is about being open, not feeling exposed.

More like:

Sharing what you are comfortable sharing.

Less like:

Sharing every single detail of your life.

Trust and vulnerability

Activity 1 of 2

Common connections

Finding points of connection creates trust. This activity will help team members uncover things they didn't know about one another and form new bonds.



Facilitator instructions

The common connections activity has three steps:

- 01 — Set the stage
- 02 — Guide a discussion
- 03 — Keep it going

Context

When the team needs help creating space to share and open up.

Goal

Find points of connection to build trust.

Time

45-60 minutes



Worksheet

Common connections — pg. 7-8



Materials needed

Markers
Sticky notes
Whiteboard



01

Set the stage

Activate

Creating space for trust and vulnerability is key to establishing psychological safety. As a facilitator, this is a time for you to lead through example. The tone and energy you bring can impact how comfortable team members feel about this activity.

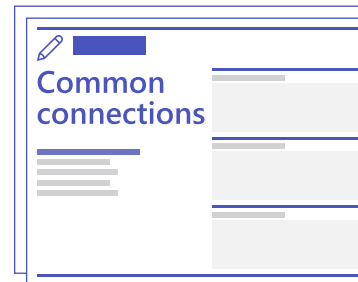
To get the team thinking, try these talking points:

- Today, we're going to participate in a two-part teambuilding activity.
- The first part will help surface commonalities within the team, and the second will help identify shared challenges where we may be able to support one another.
- Providing a time and space for us to share with each other is important, so we can grow as individuals and as a team.
- Vulnerability is not about oversharing or talking about mistakes in an attempt to gain sympathy from the group. It's about being open and approachable to your team.
- When we're honest with each other about what we're struggling with, it makes it easier to support each other.

Print worksheet

Print out the worksheet for each of the team members for this activity:

[Common connections — pg. 7-8](#)



Prepare

Get ready to facilitate the common connections activity with the team.

Here's a checklist:

- Review the common connections worksheet.
- Share the common connections worksheet with the team. It may be helpful to invite team members to complete the activities on their own.
- Invite team members to a 45- to 60-minute meeting to discuss individual reflections.
- If you have a remote team member, help them feel included by starting a Microsoft Teams meeting and sharing your whiteboard or camera.



02

Guide a discussion

Reflect

Invite everyone to participate in a group share. As the team facilitator, you might consider going first to set the stage, tone, and expectations for the group.

Start by asking everyone to share their responses on page 1 of 2 of the common connections worksheet.

Probe and allow for conversations and remarks to come forward to build connections within the team.

This activity is meant to feel more like an intimate discussion and less like a heavily facilitated conversation.

Draft

After everyone has reflected, invite the team to spend a few minutes completing page 2 of the common connections worksheet. The team will reflect on areas they would like to improve.

Similar to the first share, allow for the conversation to take on a natural cadence and flow. Avoid over-facilitation.

Synthesize

Once the team has shared responses to both pages of the common connections worksheet, you may consider asking the group to reflect on the overall experience.

Start with a few open-ended questions:

- How did this experience feel?
- Based on this activity, what do you want to do next? Team members may want to act on their shared interests with another colleague or offer to help someone who is struggling.



03

Keep it going

Revisit

Creating space for vulnerability is not a one-off thing. It takes time and space to make people feel comfortable with one another.

Consider making this a ritual. Leverage existing meeting structures to create a space for people to share aspirations.

Repeat

As teams change, so do dynamics. When new team members join, consider running through this activity again.

You may also consider adding this as something to review within onboarding systems and structures.



Worksheet

Common connections

Page 1 of 2

Open up and find new points of connection across the team.

Reflect on the following questions. Consider surfacing things about yourself that the team may not know about you. Share what feels comfortable.

I secretly nerd out on...

Dotted grid for writing.

Joys of mine are...

Dotted grid for writing.

If I could learn a new skill it would be...

Dotted grid for writing.



Worksheet

Common connections

Page 2 of 2

Now, reflect on these questions. Again, consider how the responses might help you find new partners to encourage your learning.

At work, I wish I was better at...

Dotted grid area for writing responses to the question: "At work, I wish I was better at..."

I would love tips on...

Dotted grid area for writing responses to the question: "I would love tips on..."

If I had a magic wand, I'd change this about my working style...

Dotted grid area for writing responses to the question: "If I had a magic wand, I'd change this about my working style..."

Trust and vulnerability

Activity 2 of 2

Help wanted

Not everyone is comfortable reaching out to ask for support. This activity makes asking for help easier, more accessible, and more acceptable.



Facilitator instructions

The help wanted activity has three steps:

- 01 — Set the stage
- 02 — Guide a discussion
- 03 — Keep it going

Context

When the team needs encouragement asking for help and offering support.

Goal

Create space for people to ask for and receive help.

Time

30-45 minutes



Worksheet

Help wanted — pg. 13



Materials needed

Markers
Sticky notes



Help wanted

Facilitator instructions

01

Set the stage

Activate

This activity is meant to bring a little levity and playfulness to the daunting task of asking for support.

As the facilitator, you might consider challenges the team is facing and ideas about how team members might help each other.

To get the team thinking, try these talking points:

- This activity is meant to make it easier to ask for support and invite others to chip in and help you.
- We all have things we want to be better at, but sometimes it's hard to ask for help.
- When we foster a culture of support, it gives us the opportunity to learn and grow. Those receiving support feel more confident in their jobs, and those offering support have the opportunity to be seen as mentors.

Print worksheet

Print out the worksheet for each of the team members for this activity:

[Help wanted — pg. 13](#)



Prepare

Get ready to facilitate the help wanted activity with the team.

Here's a checklist:

- Review the help wanted worksheet.
- Reflect on needs across the team beforehand to facilitate conversations.
- Prime the team to come prepared to ask for support from one another.
- Invite the team to a 30- to 45-minute meeting, depending on team size.
- If you have a remote team member, help them feel included by starting a Microsoft Teams meeting and sharing your Whiteboard or camera.



Help wanted
Facilitator instructions

02

Guide a discussion

Draft

Invite everyone on the team to complete the top part of the help wanted worksheet. Provide about five minutes for people to find a need and write it up.

Here are some examples to help the team get going:

- **Expert:**
We just changed how we submit expenses, and I still don't know how to get reimbursed. Who can help?
- **Thought partner:**
We just got a lot of data from a recent launch, and I could use a second set of eyes.

- **Coach:**
I'm trying to get better at facilitating meetings; does anyone have tips to keep people engaged?
- **Sounding board:**
I'm about to send off this big email to all the VPs, and I need to read it to someone.

Make it playful by asking the team to read out their job postings theatrically, or write them in a way that would attract anyone to the task. Remind them that no ask is too big or too small.

Share

Next, structure the conversations to make it easy for everyone to quickly share their job posting.

For example, after everyone has shared their job posting, you may ask team members to "apply" to the job by presenting a 30-second pitch about why they qualify for the job.

When someone offers to help, consider making it playful by prompting the team to reply with sentence starters like "I believe I'm the best person for the job because..."

Reflect

Wrap up the activity by reflecting as a team.

Questions might include:

- What are ways we can be better about asking for help?
- When do we want to revisit this activity?



Help wanted

Facilitator instructions

03

Keep it going

Repeat

Review the team's requests to see if there are similarities that require a more coordinated approach to resolving them. For example, maybe everyone is looking for help with a new tool, and you can schedule a brown bag session.



Worksheet

Help wanted

..... is looking for a
(name)

.....
(position title, such as expert, thought partner, coach)

to help with
(area you need support)

..... •

Ask the team for support and find ways you can support others.

Think about an area you'd like to ask for support. Write a job posting for the help you're seeking.



<p>Name:</p> <p>___ I've been through this before!</p> <p>___ I know a lot about this.</p> <p>___ I can recommend someone!</p> <p>___ Other:</p> <p>My suggestion/tip:</p>	<p>Name:</p> <p>___ I've been through this before!</p> <p>___ I know a lot about this.</p> <p>___ I can recommend someone!</p> <p>___ Other:</p> <p>My suggestion/tip:</p>	<p>Name:</p> <p>___ I've been through this before!</p> <p>___ I know a lot about this.</p> <p>___ I can recommend someone!</p> <p>___ Other:</p> <p>My suggestion/tip:</p>	<p>Name:</p> <p>___ I've been through this before!</p> <p>___ I know a lot about this.</p> <p>___ I can recommend someone!</p> <p>___ Other:</p> <p>My suggestion/tip:</p>	<p>Name:</p> <p>___ I've been through this before!</p> <p>___ I know a lot about this.</p> <p>___ I can recommend someone!</p> <p>___ Other:</p> <p>My suggestion/tip:</p>
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