# Trust building activities for teams: a 45-minute seated conversation session

The most useful trust building activities for teams turn a vague word into ordinary moments at work: saying a deadline will slip, questioning a plan, asking for help. This kit gives you 12 written scenario cards that tables place on a scale, a pair exercise on working preferences that needs no personal disclosure, and a 45-minute plan that ends with one agreement for your team charter. It has no trust falls or blindfolds, and it does not claim to build trust: it opens a conversation about working together.

45 minutes | 4–12 participants | Online and adaptable in person

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## The outcome

By the end of 45 minutes each table has placed 12 work scenarios on a scale, the team has chosen one card by vote, each person has written one thing they will do with a colleague’s working preferences, and the team has one agreement in the charter format with a steward and a review date.

## Before the session

- For team leads, trainers and facilitators working with an existing team of 4–12 adults. Not for a team in an open dispute or after a complaint: speak to the manager or HR first.
- Per table of three to five: one cut set of cards, five sheets numbered 1 to 5 and a table record. Per person: a placement sheet and a pair sheet. One handover sheet for the team.
- Book the team charter session, or find its next review date, so that the agreement has somewhere to go.
- Everything is seated, on paper or in text, and coded by letter, not colour. Send the cards as plain text a day early on request, read each card aloud, keep cameras optional and let anyone pass or write instead.

### Included in this kit

A facilitator run of show, participant worksheets with real tables, reference tables, debrief questions, adaptation notes and a follow-up plan. Use the editable Word copy to tailor examples and prompts before delivery.

Original material by Superglue. Timings are suggestions; adjust them to your participants. This resource has not been independently evaluated.

### What is inside

- Scenario cards
- Placement sheet
- Table record
- Pair sheet: working preferences
- Agreement handover to the team charter
- Filled example: line-up across three tables
- Filled example: pair sheet
- Filled example: agreement handover
- Facilitator section: run of show, reference tables, debrief and adaptations

# Scenario cards

Print one set per table and cut along the lines. All twelve situations are fictional and describe ordinary moments at work. The letter shows the area: F follow-through, R raising problems, H asking for help, S sharing information and credit.

| Card | Area | Scenario |
|---|---|---|
| **F1** | Follow-through | On Tuesday, a team member sees that their part will not be ready for Thursday. They tell the person who is waiting for it that day, with a new date. |
| **F2** | Follow-through | In a meeting, someone agreed to send the notes. Two days later nothing has arrived. A colleague asks them about it directly and in a friendly way, and nobody else needs to chase. |
| **F3** | Follow-through | A team member is asked to pick up an extra task this week. They say “I can’t take that on this week” instead of saying yes and delivering it late. |
| **R1** | Raising problems | A team member spots a mistake in a document that their manager wrote and is about to send. They point it out before it goes. |
| **R2** | Raising problems | In a planning meeting, one person thinks the agreed date is not realistic. They say so in the meeting, with the reason, not afterwards in private. |
| **R3** | Raising problems | A team member tells a colleague that the way a task was handed over caused them an hour of extra work. The colleague asks what would have helped. |
| **H1** | Asking for help | Someone who joined two months ago does not understand a system that everyone else uses. They ask in the team channel. |
| **H2** | Asking for help | A team member has been stuck on a task for half a day. They ask a colleague for 15 minutes of help. |
| **H3** | Asking for help | A colleague with long experience in an area is asked a question about it in front of the team. They say “I don’t know. I’ll find out by Friday.” |
| **S1** | Sharing information and credit | A team member hears about a change from another department that affects two colleagues. They pass it on to both of them the same day. |
| **S2** | Sharing information and credit | In a review with senior staff, the person presenting a piece of work names the colleagues who did it. |
| **S3** | Sharing information and credit | Two team members disagree about how to do a task. They talk to each other first, before either of them takes it to the manager. |

# Placement sheet

One per person. Tick one box per card: how easy is this in our team today? 1 is hard here and 5 is easy here. Tick ? if you are not sure or it does not apply. This sheet is yours. Nobody collects it.

| Card | Scenario in short | 1 Hard | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 Easy | ? |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **F1** | Saying a deadline will slip | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| **F2** | Asking about a promised task | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| **F3** | Saying no to extra work | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| **R1** | Pointing out a manager’s mistake | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| **R2** | Questioning a plan in the meeting | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| **R3** | Saying a handover caused extra work | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| **H1** | A newcomer asks a basic question | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| **H2** | Asking for help after half a day | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| **H3** | An expert says “I don’t know” | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| **S1** | Passing on news the same day | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| **S2** | Naming who did the work | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |
| **S3** | Talking first, before going up | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ | ☐ |

# Table record

One per table. Lay five numbered sheets along the table and place the cards on them. Then write the card numbers under each position here. A card the table could not agree on goes under ?.

| 1 Hard here | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 Easy here | ? |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | |

**Two cards to talk about first, and one thing that would make each easier here**

_____

_____

**Cards where our private sheets differed most from the table**

_____

_____

# Pair sheet: working preferences

Choose three of the eight prompts and write a short answer to each. Answer about work only. You do not need to explain why, and you can leave any prompt blank.

| Prompt | My answer |
|---|---|
| **1. When you need me to take on extra work, the most useful way to ask me is…** | |
| **2. If my work has a problem, I would like to hear it… (when, where, how)** | |
| **3. When I say "I'll look into it", it means…** | |
| **4. When I am stuck, the help I find most useful is…** | |
| **5. The best way to tell me about a change of plan is…** | |
| **6. When I need time to focus, the best way to reach me is…** | |
| **7. In a meeting, I find it easier to disagree when…** | |
| **8. When you hand work over to me, what I need to know is…** | |

**What I heard from my partner**

_____

_____

**One thing I will do with my partner's preferences**

_____

_____

# Agreement handover to the team charter

One per team. Write the agreement in the same format as the team charter, so that the steward can copy it in. One agreement is enough. Park the other cards for the charter session.

| Part | What we agreed |
|---|---|
| **The card it comes from** | |
| **When: the moment it applies** | |
| **We: what we do** | |
| **Using: the channel or record** | |
| **By: the time** | |
| **What we would see if it works** | |
| **Exceptions we already know** | |
| **Steward who takes it to the team charter** | |
| **Review date** | |
| **Cards parked for the charter session** | |

# Filled example: line-up across three tables

A fictional scheduling team of nine, in three tables of three, on Tuesday 3 November 2026. Positions run from 1, hard here, to 5, easy here. “Talk about first” marks an average of 2.5 or less. “Views differ” marks a spread of two or more between tables. Votes are the nine slips for the agreement card.

| Card | Table 1 | Table 2 | Table 3 | Average | Spread | Votes | Note |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **F1** | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2.33 | 1 | 1 | Talk about first |
| **F2** | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3.67 | 1 | 0 | |
| **F3** | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1.67 | 1 | 3 | Talk about first |
| **R1** | 3 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 0 | Views differ |
| **R2** | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1.67 | 1 | 5 | Talk about first |
| **R3** | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2.67 | 1 | 0 | |
| **H1** | 5 | 4 | 5 | 4.67 | 1 | 0 | |
| **H2** | 4 | 5 | 4 | 4.33 | 1 | 0 | |
| **H3** | 3 | 1 | 4 | 2.67 | 3 | 0 | Views differ |
| **S1** | 4 | 3 | 4 | 3.67 | 1 | 0 | |
| **S2** | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4.67 | 1 | 0 | |
| **S3** | 2 | 4 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 0 | Views differ |

# Filled example: pair sheet

One person’s sheet from the same fictional session. They chose prompts 2, 3 and 7.

| Prompt | Answer |
|---|---|
| **2. If my work has a problem, I would like to hear it… (when, where, how)** | In private, the same day, with the example in front of us. Not in the team channel. |
| **3. When I say “I’ll look into it”, it means…** | I will look at it by the end of tomorrow and tell you whether I can do it. It is not yet a yes. |
| **7. In a meeting, I find it easier to disagree when…** | The chair asks for concerns before the decision, and I have seen the plan the day before. |
| **What I heard from my partner** | My partner wants a request with the date it is needed by and what it replaces. They prefer a message to a call when they are on the rota. |
| **One thing I will do with my partner’s preferences** | When I ask them for extra work, I will write the date and what can wait, in one message. |

# Filled example: agreement handover

Nine people voted: R2 had five votes, F3 three and F1 one. The team wrote one agreement from R2 and parked F3 and F1 for the charter session.

| Part | What we agreed |
|---|---|
| **The card it comes from** | R2, “Questioning a plan in the meeting”. Five of nine votes. Tables placed it at 1, 2 and 2. |
| **When: the moment it applies** | When one of us thinks a date or a plan agreed in a meeting is not realistic, |
| **We: what we do** | we say so in that meeting, with the reason, and the chair asks for any other concerns before the decision, |
| **Using: the channel or record** | using the meeting notes, which record the concern and what was decided about it, |
| **By: the time** | before the meeting ends. Anyone who thinks of it later posts it in the team channel within one working day. |
| **What we would see if it works** | Concerns appear in the notes of the planning meeting. Fewer dates are changed in the week after a meeting. |
| **Exceptions we already know** | A concern about a person’s conduct goes to the team lead in private, not into the meeting notes. |
| **Steward who takes it to the team charter** | The scheduling coordinator. A steward keeps the agreement visible; they do not police colleagues. |
| **Review date** | Tuesday 17 November 2026, at the start of the planning meeting: five minutes. |
| **Cards parked for the charter session** | F3, “Saying no to extra work” (three votes) and F1, “Saying a deadline will slip” (one vote). |

# Facilitator run of show

## 1 Open, and say what this session is not | 5 minutes

Two minutes: say: “Trust is not something we can build in 45 minutes. What we can do is talk about ordinary moments at work where it is easy or hard to rely on each other, and agree one thing to try.” One minute: say: “There are no trust falls or blindfolds today. They carry a risk of injury, leave some people out, and test nerve rather than how we work together on an ordinary Tuesday.” Two minutes: agree the rules. We talk about the card, not about people. No names and no past incidents. Anyone can pass or write instead of speaking. Explain the scale: 1 means the card is hard to do in this team today, 5 means easy, and ? means not sure or does not apply.

## 2 Silent placement | 4 minutes

One minute: hand out the placement sheet and say: “Read each card and tick where you would put it in this team today. This sheet is yours. You keep it and nobody collects it.” Three minutes of silence while people tick one box per card. Read the cards aloud for anyone who prefers to listen.

### 3 Line-up at the tables | 10 minutes

Tables of three to five, each with one set of cut cards and five sheets of paper numbered 1 to 5 laid along the table. Four minutes: people take turns to read a card aloud and lay it on a number. Anyone may move a card after saying why; a card that the table cannot agree on goes beside the line with a ?. Four minutes: say: “Look at your own sheet. Which card did you place far from where it is now?” Ask at the table: “Where would you have put it, and what would make it easier here?” The reference table “Questions to ask at the table” has one question per card. Two minutes: write the card numbers on the table record and circle two cards to talk about first.

### 4 Compare the tables and choose one card | 6 minutes

Three minutes: each table reads its record aloud, number by number, while you write the positions in the line-up tally or on a flipchart grid. Two minutes: read out the cards with the lowest average and the cards where tables differ by two or more. Say: “A low card is a place to start, not a verdict on anyone.” One minute: each person writes the number of the card they would most like an agreement on, on a slip or in a private chat message to you. Count the slips during the next step.

### 5 Pair exercise: working preferences | 10 minutes

Form pairs, with one trio if the number is odd. Say: “This is about work only. Choose three of the eight prompts, and you do not need to explain why.” Two minutes: each person writes three answers on the pair sheet. Three minutes: Person A reads their answers; Person B says back what they heard and asks one “how” question. Three minutes: swap. In a trio, each person has two minutes. Two minutes: each person writes one thing they will do with their partner’s preferences and shows it to their partner, or keeps it.

### 6 Draft one team agreement | 7 minutes

Announce the card with the most votes. One minute: ask, “If this were easy here, what would we see happen?” Four minutes: at the tables, draft one sentence in the team charter format: “When [the moment], we [what we do], using [channel or record], by [time].” Two minutes: read the drafts aloud and choose or merge one. Test it with two questions: “Could a new colleague follow it?” and “Does it need anyone to be available all the time?” Amend it if the answer to the second question is yes.

### 7 Hand over and close | 3 minutes

One minute: write the agreement on the handover sheet, name a steward who takes it to the team charter, and set a review date two weeks from today. One minute: note the next two cards by votes as parked for the charter session. One minute: each person says or writes one thing they will do from the pair exercise, or passes.

# Reference tables

## What this session does and does not do

Read the first row aloud in the opening. Use the last row to decide whether to run the session at all.

| Topic | In this session | Not in this session |
|---|---|---|
| Physical exercises | Seated work with written cards. Nobody moves, is touched or closes their eyes. | No trust falls and no blindfolds: they carry a risk of injury, leave some people out, and test nerve rather than daily work. |
| Disclosure | Answers about work preferences only, chosen by each person. Anyone may pass. | No personal stories, fears, history, health or family. |

| Topic | In this session | Not in this session |
|---|---|---|
| What a card means | How easy a moment is in this team today, as a starting point for a conversation. | A score of the team, a rating of any person, or a measure of trust. |
| Outcome | One agreement in the team charter format, with a steward and a review date. | A claim that trust has been built. Trust shows over time in what people do. |
| Conflict | Ordinary moments of working together. | An open dispute, a complaint, bullying or harassment. These go to a manager, HR or the formal process. |

## Questions to ask at the table

One question per card for the second part of the line-up. Use it when a table is stuck or when private sheets differ.

| Card | Scenario in short | Question |
|---|---|---|
| F1 | Saying a deadline will slip | What would someone here need to hear back to make this easier to do early? |
| F2 | Asking about a promised task | How do people here find out that a promised task has stalled? |
| F3 | Saying no to extra work | What happens here after someone says no to a request? |
| R1 | Pointing out a manager’s mistake | Which channel would someone use, and what reply would make them do it again? |
| R2 | Questioning a plan in the meeting | What happens here to a concern raised in a meeting? |
| R3 | Saying a handover caused extra work | When is the best moment here to say this, and to whom? |
| H1 | A newcomer asks a basic question | What reply would a newcomer here get, and how quickly? |
| H2 | Asking for help after half a day | How long do people here stay stuck before they ask, and why? |
| H3 | An expert says “I don’t know” | What would people here think if the most experienced person said this? |
| S1 | Passing on news the same day | How does news from outside the team reach the people it affects? |
| S2 | Naming who did the work | Whose work is visible here, and whose is not? |
| S3 | Talking first, before going up | What makes it easier here to talk first rather than escalate? |

## Words that keep the talk on the card

Keep these words near you during the line-up and the comparison.

| When this happens | Words you could say |
|---|---|
| Someone names a colleague | “Let’s keep it to the card. What would make this easier for anyone in the team?” |
| Someone tells a story about a past incident | “Thank you. Let’s hold the incident. What would we want to happen next time?” |

| When this happens | Words you could say |
|---|---|
| A table places every card at 5 | “Which card would be hardest for someone who joined last month?” |
| A table places every card at 1 | “Which one card would make the most difference if it moved by one step?” |
| Someone stays quiet | “You can pass, or write your view on a note and I will read it out without a name.” |
| The talk turns to blame | “A low card is a place to start, not a verdict on anyone. What would we see if it were easy?” |

# Debrief and next steps

## Questions for reflection

- Which card did you place far from where your table placed it, and what did you learn from the others’ reasons?
- Which low card would make the most difference to our work if it moved up by one step?
- Which of your partner’s working preferences surprised you, and what will you do differently because of it?
- What will we look at on the review date to see whether the agreement is being used?

## Adapt the session

- For four or five people, use one table and skip the comparison: spend those six minutes on the two lowest cards and the vote. Pairs work as usual, with one trio for five.
- For a 30-minute version, use six cards (one or two per area), shorten the line-up to 6 minutes and the comparison to 3, and run the pair exercise with two prompts each in 7 minutes. Keep the opening and the agreement.
- Online, share a whiteboard or a document with five columns numbered 1 to 5 and the cards as text boxes, or a table where each breakout room types card numbers under each position. Votes go to you by private chat. Cameras are optional, and pairs can work in breakout rooms or by chat.
- For quiet participants and people who use a screen reader, send the cards and prompts as plain text a day early and read every card aloud. Anyone may pass, write instead of speaking, or hand you a note that you read without a name. Nothing needs movement, touch or colour.
- For a new team, or a team that prefers not to talk about itself yet, change the scale question to “How easy would this be in a typical team?” and draft the agreement as a provisional rule for the first month.

## After the session

Send the agreement, the parked cards and the line-up tally within one working day. The steward copies the agreement into the team charter in the same words and keeps it visible, without policing colleagues. At the review two weeks later, spend five minutes on two questions: when did we use the agreement, and when did it not fit? Amend it rather than assign blame. At the charter session, start with the parked cards. Run the line-up again after three to six months if the team wants to see whether cards have moved, without treating the result as a score.

# Questions people ask

## What are good trust building activities for teams at work?

Activities that make trust specific and ordinary: a moment when someone says a deadline will slip, questions a plan, or asks for help. This kit uses 12 written scenario cards that tables place on a scale from hard to easy in their own team, a pair exercise on working preferences, and a short agreement. It is seated and needs only paper or a shared document.

## Why are there no trust falls or blindfold exercises?

They carry a risk of injury, exclude people with some disabilities or past experiences, and test nerve rather than how people work together day to day. A conversation about real working moments is safer and closer to the work.

## Will this session build trust in my team?

It makes no such claim. It opens a conversation about working together and ends with one agreement that the team can check at a review. Whether people rely on each other more shows over time in what they do. The kit has not been independently evaluated.

## How is this different from the team charter template?

The team charter template is a 60-minute workshop that writes the whole working agreement: purpose, decisions, handovers and review. This 45-minute session comes first or alongside it. It finds which everyday moments are hard in the team, produces one agreement in the charter's own format, and parks the next cards for the charter session. The in-person team building activities kit is different again: three cooperative paper exercises rather than a conversation.

## Do people have to share personal information?

No. The placement sheet is private and nobody collects it. The table talks about cards, not people. In the pair exercise each person chooses three of eight prompts about work, such as how they like to hear about a change of plan, and does not explain why. Anyone may pass at any point.

## What is included in the free and editable files?

The open PDF has the 12 scenario cards, the placement sheet, the table record, the pair sheet, the agreement handover sheet, three filled examples and the 45-minute facilitator plan. Subscribers also receive the editable Word file, an Excel workbook with the session plan, a table and pair planner, the cards, a line-up tally that averages and ranks the cards across tables, and an agreement tracker that counts the days to each review, and a CSV of the session plan.

## Use and sharing

Free to use and adapt in your own training sessions, including paid client work. Do not resell or redistribute the unmodified download as a standalone product. Share the resource page instead.