**Checking-in with your team: Team Huddle**

Estimated time: 6 minutes

**Learning outcomes:**

*After you complete this activity, you will be able to:*

* Assess your team environment and performance using the “Stop, Start, Continue” feedback model
* Identify actions to maintain or improve team environment and performance going forward

**Checking-In With Your Team: Team Huddle (Template)**

**Introduction**

***Why team check-ins are important:***

* It’s important to gather feedback and assess your team’s performance and environment so that you can tackle obstacles early on and find ways to continue to work well together so that you can achieve your goals. Including short check-ins, like this team huddle, can help you do so.

***What you can do:***

* You can use the team huddle template provided below, in a format that works best for your team, to gather feedback from each team member about things like team performance, decisions, and overall environment.
* Using the “Stop, Start, Continue” model to guide your team huddle, your team should focus on generating action-based responses to the following questions: “What should we **stop** doing as a team?”, “what should we **start** doing as a team?” and “what should we **continue** doing?”
* This tool is intended to help generate short, productive conversations among teams and can be included regularly as part of team meetings, however, may not always be necessary.

**Table. Example of feedback provided using the stop, start, continue model**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Stop** | **Start** | **Continue** |
| Stop relying on one person to be the facilitator for each meeting | Rotate the facilitator/chair for each meeting | Sending out the agenda early |
| Stop being on social media during our meeting time | Give time for everyone to speak during meetings | Including a team huddle bi-weekly |
|  | Proofread each other’s work |  |

**Tip:** It may be helpful for you and your team to review what [high-performing teams](https://ecampusontario.pressbooks.pub/paths/chapter/building-high-performing-teams/) look like and what [healthy team climates and processes](https://uwaterloo.ca/centre-for-teaching-excellence/teaching-resources/teaching-tips/tips-students/being-part-team/teamwork-skills-being-effective-group-member) include, to help with your assessment and to generate discussion on what you should stop, start, and continue.

**How and when to use this tool**

***Instructions:***

This tool is intended to be used as a general framework for teams to follow. It can be customized and adjusted based on your teams' circumstances and needs. Below are general instructions on how to use the “stop, start, continue” framework.

**Tip:** It can be helpful to include team huddles after important milestones, for example, after your team submits a draft report or after your first presentation.

1. Individually take time to reflect on your teams' environment and performance so far. Make note of your responses for each category (Stop, Start, Continue).

*Below are some prompts that may be helpful to you as you think of your response:*

* 1. *What’s not working very well?*
  2. *What should your team would stop doing? Why?*
  3. *What would you prefer your team to try to do instead?*
  4. *What is a problem you want to discuss and what is a possible solution?*
  5. *What is working well that your team should continue to do?*
  6. *What is something your team should start doing that would be beneficial?*

1. Once you are done, regroup and have the meeting facilitator/Chair lead the group through the responses. You can use white/black board, sticky notes, a virtual space, or word document to track responses below each category.
2. Together with your group, begin with listing responses for the “stop” category. Once everyone provides their answer, privately or out loud, take time to pause and discuss the feedback you have gathered for this section. Combine responses that are the same.
   1. *Is there anything that is surprising to you?*
   2. *What requires an immediate solution or action?*
   3. *How can this information help you make decisions around what your team should also start doing?*

***Note:*** *You may find that the “stop” responses your team came up with also naturally lead into the responses provided in the “start” category or require your team to come up with one.*

1. Once you are done going through the “stop” category, move on to the “start” category, taking time to pause and discuss as needed. Do the same for the “continue category”.
   1. *What will change going forward?*
   2. *What actions will you take to start/ change?*
   3. *What is working well that you want to continue to do/ prioritize as a team?*

**Note:** It is not necessary to list the same items every time you complete a team huddle and you may find that there may not always be something to “stop” or “start” doing. Once your team determines that they will continue to do something, for example, send out the agenda early, you can leave this a permanent item. If your team says they will stop doing something, however, they do not, it will be necessary to bring it up again.

**Tip:** Explore using online platforms for your team huddles

You may want to consider using an online platform that will allow your team to provide feedback anonymously while working together in one space, at the same time. Below are some examples and recommendations.

1. Submit your answers using Zoom built-in features like [polls and surveys](https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/4404969060621-Post-meeting-survey-and-reporting)
2. Use [Mentimeter](https://www.mentimeter.com/) to submit anonymous responses to the facilitator/ Chair
3. Use templates from [Mural](https://www.mural.co/) or [Miro](https://miro.com/templates/start-stop-continue-retrospective/) to create a virtual whiteboard where team members can work anonymously in “Private Mode” and post their answers

**Sources:**

Boston University Teaching & Learning Centre. <https://www.bu.edu/ctl/teaching-resources/start-stop-continue/>

Miro. “Start, Stop. Continue Retrospective Template”. <https://tinyurl.com/2p95fc6w>



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