

TIPS: AVOIDING TEAM ZONE OUT ON ZOOM

Before meetings – prepare:

1. Ask people to come to the meeting and describe: **a.** their week in 3 adjectives **b.** one thing they learned about themselves/the team in the last few weeks.
2. Have an agenda that is sent out at least 24 hours in advance of a team meeting. This allows everyone to bring their ideas and to think them through first.

In the meeting – at the beginning:

1. Start each team meeting on time and end on time. This is a great way to establish trust!
2. Kick-off the team meeting with an icebreaker: gift of gratitude or a shout out or a favourite photo. Allow the team to get to disclose something non-task related.
3. Encourage curiosity – no one is an expert in these uncertain timesall questions are good questions.
4. Establish quick team ground rules. Reinforce them at the beginning and critique how you did at the end of the meeting - These create safety to speak up and set expectations
5. Reinforce the team mission at each meeting – this can be something that takes us forward through the fears that people may have.
6. Find different ways to ask how your team is. Asking “How are you?” will typically get an “I’m fine” response. Perhaps consider asking “How has this week been for you?” Or “Share your experience of home working this week?”

In the meeting – use your energy to build energy in others:

1. Go for a scheduled “walk” with the team. Plan to “walk and talk” rather than all sit down on the call – it encourages listening.
2. Provide balance if the agenda becomes too rational or critical. E.g. Ask each person to bring some positive reinforcement to the session or “thank you to “x” for “y” this week – leave time for saying what you appreciate in people.
3. Remind teams what is staying the same as well as what is changing.....stability can be important at this time.
4. Make sure you remember those who are not in the main room – either post a picture of them by the conference line/phone or, literally give them a chair at the table. Inclusion is important.
5. When you notice active listening – appreciate it and recognise it. Demonstrate it!
6. Don’t let the group manufacture drama. When someone talks about someone who is not in the room, go get that person and talk about it in front of that person. Be careful of projecting all the anxiety and frustration on the absent members!

At the end:

1. Poll the team about a decision. Make sure you hear from every single person before you action.
2. Confirm your team’s action plan (who is going to be doing what by when) at the end of the meeting - Make sure the agenda and action plan do NOT have the same names for each topic/action. Variety is the spice of life and can provide important energy.
3. Not everything has to be a team decision, but when it IS, make sure the process to achieve a decision involves everyone on the team

After the meetings:

1. Encourage people to write down their thoughts and feelings after meetings – reflection is key for resilience
2. Keeping things in our head can make change feel overwhelming – keep a journal of your feelings and feedback you receive.
3. Establish a (small) petty cash fund to help people create some fun together.