

Culture Toolkit

Flexible tools to support positive safety culture in any team

June 2026



Introduction

The Culture Toolkit offers practical tools to help NHS teams build positive, psychologically safe workplace cultures.

Developed through the Maternity and Neonatal Safety Improvement Programme in the East Midlands, it supports the role of *Culture Coaches* - individuals who act as visible role models, enablers of change, and sources of peer support across multidisciplinary teams. While developed in perinatal services, these tools are **fully transferable across all health and care settings**, including acute, community, mental health, and corporate teams.

This toolkit can be used flexibly:

- To support team meetings, away days, or improvement work.
- As a guide for facilitating conversations and activities.
- For personal reflection and leadership development.

We encourage you to explore the tools, adapt them to your context, and use them in ways that best support your teams and services.

For feedback, queries or support with culture development please contact:
healthinnovation-em@nottingham.ac.uk

Improvement Delivery Team
Health Innovation East Midlands

How to use this toolkit



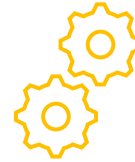
Who is it for?

- Culture Coaches.
- Clinical & non-clinical staff.
- Team leaders & facilitators.
- Anyone who supports team culture.



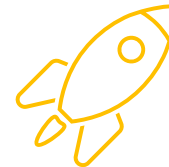
How to navigate

- Grouped by themes.
- Use tools individually or together.
- Adapt to your own setting & time.
- Link to Culture Coach Skills Sessions.



How can it be used?

- Team meetings & huddles.
- Workshops / away days.
- Improvement work.
- 1:1 conversations.



Getting started

- Start with 1 or 2 tools.
- Keep it simple.
- Encourage reflection.
- Adapt as you go.

Adapt these tools to your local context – they are designed for use across all health and care settings

Listen to our Culture Coach skills sessions



Core communication and facilitation skills

Developing the essential abilities to communicate clearly, guide group discussions effectively, and enable productive collaboration.



Understanding workplace culture and human behaviour

Exploring how people think, act, and interact at work, and how these patterns shape organisational culture.



Active listening and Empathetic communication

Strengthening the capacity to truly hear others' perspectives and respond with understanding, care, and emotional intelligence.



Visible leadership and role modelling

Demonstrating leadership through consistent, transparent actions that set the tone for desired behaviours.



Difficult conversations and compassionate challenge

Building confidence to address sensitive issues openly while balancing honesty with kindness.



Storytelling for cultural change

Using meaningful narratives to inspire people, share purpose, and shape collective understanding during change.



Psychological safety, building trust and joy at work

Creating an environment where people feel safe to speak up, take risks, and learn without fear of judgement or repercussions.



Embedding and sustaining culture change

Establishing long-term practices and systems that ensure cultural shifts take root and continue to thrive.

Sign up to access the FREE recordings



Tools and resources

The following tools in this booklet have been collated from open-source leadership resources and were originally curated for the Culture Coach skills course to accompany the recordings listed on page four.

The tools are grouped by theme as follows:

- Communication & Listening Skills
- Difficult Conversations & Feedback
- Understanding Culture & Behaviour
- Wellbeing & Joy in Work
- Leadership & Self-Awareness
- Vision & Change Leadership
- Mindset & Personal Effectiveness
- Wellbeing & Energy Management
- Building Trust & Psychological Safety
- Measuring & Understanding Culture
- Practical Conversation tools
- Facilitator Tools & Energisers
- Team Understanding & Collaboration Tools

Communication and Listening Skills

Ground rules for inclusive meetings

Use these to set the tone in meetings, workshops, or team discussions.

- One voice at a time.
- Use clear language.
- Speak from “I” statements.
- Curiosity over assumption.
- Embrace silence - it’s thinking time.
- No fixing, Just listening (in sensitive moments).
- Assume positive intent, name real impact.

Common facilitation pitfalls and fixes

Pitfall	What it sounds like	Try instead
Dominating	Talking 80% of the time	Ask open-ended questions and pause
Rescuing silence	Jumping in when no one answers immediately	Allow 8–10 seconds of quiet
Leading questions	Don’t you think that’s true?	What’s your take on that?

Key inclusive phrases to try:

Situation	Sample phrase
One voice dominates	“Let’s make space for others - who haven’t we heard from yet?”
Quiet participants	“Would anyone who hasn’t spoken like to share a thought?”
Interruptions	“Let’s pause - I’d like to hear [Name] finish their point.”
Disagreement	“Can we explore both views a little more before deciding?”
Silence after a question	“Take a breath - no rush. Silence is welcome here.”
Group tension	“Let’s name the tension. How are we each feeling about this?”
Supporting inclusion	“I want to check in - does anyone feel unheard right now?”

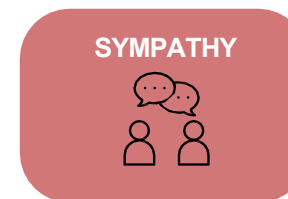
Communication and Listening Skills

5 levels of listening by Steven Covey



"I feel how you feel"

Empathy
vs
sympathy



"I know how you feel"

"Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply."

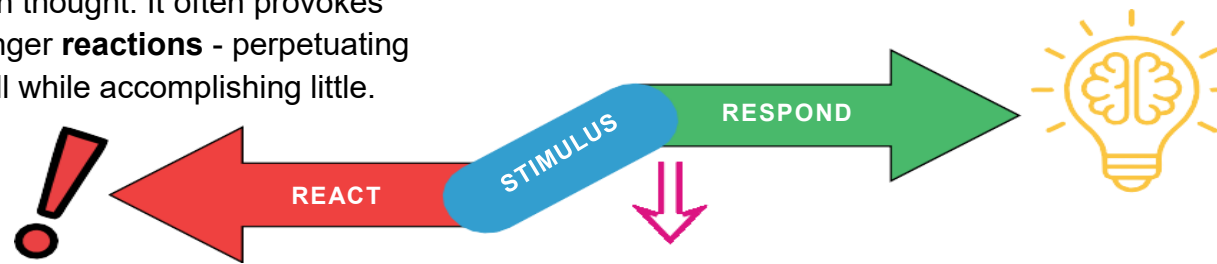
	Empathy	Sympathy
Aspect	The ability to understand and feel what another person is experiencing from their perspective.	Feeling sorry for someone's situation, often from a distance, without necessarily understanding their emotions.
Definition	Person centred - about them.	Self-centred - about your reaction to their suffering.
Focus connection	Builds closeness, trust, and emotional safety.	Can create distance or make the patient feel pitied.
Listening style	Deep, active listening - seeks to understand without fixing or minimising.	Superficial listening - quick to respond, often with clichés.
Intent	To acknowledge and validate.	To console or fix.
Example of language	<i>That sounds incredibly difficult. I can only imagine how that feels.</i>	<i>Oh no, that's terrible. I feel so bad for you.</i>

Communication and Listening Skills

React vs respond

A **reaction** is usually quick, tense and aggressive, executed without much thought. It often provokes stronger **reactions** - perpetuating ill will while accomplishing little.

A **response** is thought out, calm and non-threatening.



© 2019,
Coach2Growth

- In the moment; triggered.
- Fight or flight.
- Can feel uncontrollable.
- No regard for long-term impact.
- Often regretted.

There is a space between stimulus & response
"..In that space is our power to choose our response.
In our response lies our growth and our freedom."

Viktor Frankl

- More time for reflection.
- Intentional.
- Weighs alternatives.
- Less charged.
- Considers others and/or possible outcomes.

Listening habits - self assessment

Rating scale for listening habits [Listening Skills Test / Quiz | Psychology Today](#)

Access via QR
code



Difficult Conversations and Feedback

Difficult conversation planner

Whilst preparation won't guarantee that a difficult conversation goes perfectly, it gives you an opportunity to organise your thoughts and plan your approach.

What is your goal or objective?	
What's the reason for the conversation?	
What is the outcome from the conversation?	
What do I hope will come from it?	
What is the one message I want the other person to be able to repeat back to me at the end of the conversation?	
When to have the meeting?	
Where will I have the meeting, so I don't get disturbed?	
What time is best?	
Things to consider?	
How will I start the conversation?	
State the purpose of the meeting. What concerns do you have?	
What questions can I ask to get their perspective?	
What are some simple solutions I can suggest?	
Use 'I' statements and be specific	
What information might I be missing? What do I need to learn in this conversation?	
What do I know about how they respond to feedback or conflict?	
How can I make this feel like a dialogue, not a confrontation?	
What do I need from this conversation to move forward?	
How will I follow up or check in after the conversation?	

Plan your conversation

Template
available via
QR code



Difficult Conversations and Feedback

SBI Feedback Framework

The SBI (Situation-Behaviour-Impact) framework is a highly effective communication model used to deliver clear, actionable, and objective feedback. It prevents misunderstandings by anchoring your observations to specific moments and tangible outcomes.

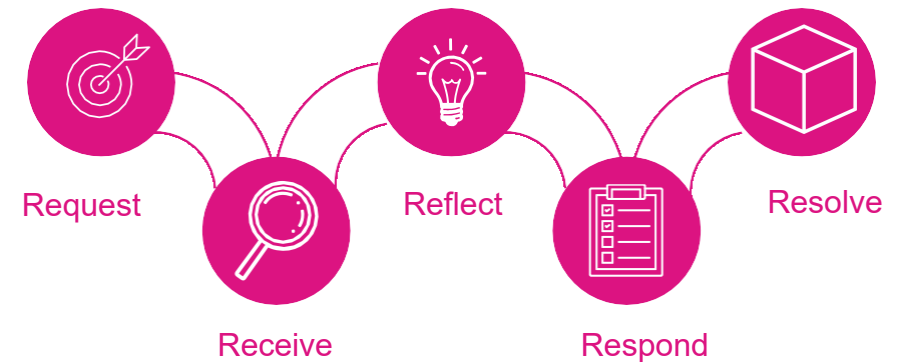
- **Situation (S)** – Describe the context.
- **Behaviour (B)** – Describe the specific behaviour.
- **Impact (I)** – Share how it affected you or others.

Example:

“In yesterday’s meeting (S), when you interrupted me (B), I felt dismissed and unheard (I).”

Can be used as a reference before feedback conversations.

The 5 r's of feedback



The five steps are:

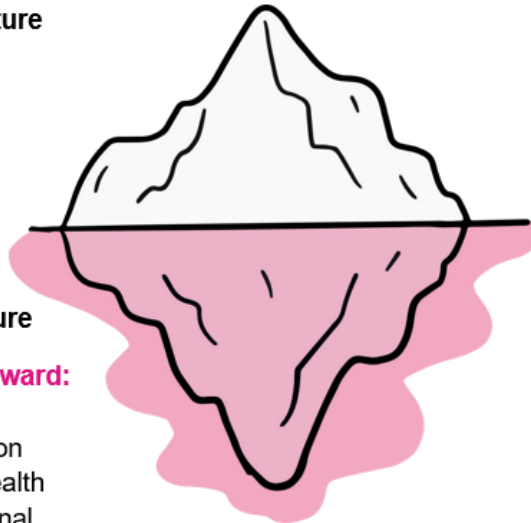
- **Request:** Take ownership by actively asking for feedback.
- **Receive:** Listen actively without interrupting or becoming defensive.
- **Reflect:** Process what you heard.
- **Respond:** Acknowledge the giver, ask clarifying questions if needed, and thank them for taking the time to share their thoughts.
- **Resolve:** Determine your next steps. Decide which pieces of feedback you will implement and create a concrete action plan for improvement.

Source:
www.fearlessculture.design

Understanding Culture and Behaviour

Iceberg model activity

Surface culture



Surface Culture:

- Logo/symbols
- Sayings/slogans
- Dress/appearance
- Building façade
- Office layout
- Language/tone/volume
- Spelling/grammar
- Phone greeting
- First impressions
- Communication style

Deeper culture

Attitudes toward:

- Authority
- Competition
- Money/wealth
- Generational differences
- Decision-making
- Problem-solving
- School/learning
- Work
- Health/wellbeing
- Medical interventions

Shared values about:

- Religion/politics
- Family
- Modesty
- The environment
- Work-life balance
- Humour

Concepts of:

- Friendship
- Time
- Justice
- Value
- Roles
- Cleanliness
- Personal space
- Beauty ideals

Source: Stuart Sinclair

Source: Stuart Sinclair

An **Iceberg Model activity** is a visual and analytical framework used to explore what happens "below the surface" of a situation.

Depending on your goals, this activity is most commonly used for **Systems Thinking** (uncovering the root causes of a problem) or **Social-Emotional Learning** (understanding hidden emotions or behaviours).

How to use the model in an exercise

The primary purpose of the exercise is to shift perspective so that you don't take surface-level actions at face value. To apply it to your team or organisation:

Define the Event: Identify a surface-level behaviour or a specific company ritual/event.

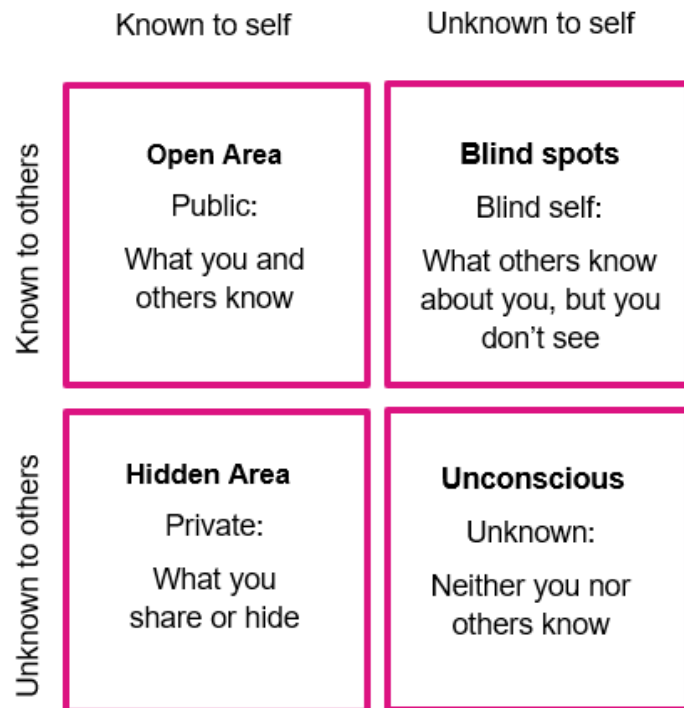
Brainstorm Patterns: Look at how people routinely act or react based on this event.

Uncover Structures: Identify the organizational policies, structures, and systems reinforcing these behaviours.

Determine Mental Models: Dig to the bottom to write down the core beliefs, assumptions, and values that keep the whole system going.

Understanding Culture and Behaviour

Johari Window



The Johari Window is a four-square grid. The sections that comprise the window are:

- **Open Area:** Known to Others & Known to Self.
- **Blind Spot:** Known to Others & Not Known to Self.
- **Hidden Area:** Not Known to Others & Known to Self.
- **Unknown:** Not Known to Others & Not Known to Self.

How to Use the Model

The goal of the Johari Window is to expand the Open Area by reducing the size of the other three quadrants. This is achieved through two main mechanisms:

- **Self-Disclosure:** Sharing your personal thoughts, feelings, and goals with others to shrink the Hidden Area.
- **Asking for Feedback:** Actively seeking constructive criticism from colleagues or peers to uncover blind spots and shrink the Blind Spot area.

Wellbeing and Joy in Work

Joy in Work Framework Exercises

Joy in work comes from connecting daily tasks to purpose, feeling valued, and having the conditions to do work well. It is shaped not just by individuals, but by team culture, leadership, and systems. Small, meaningful changes can significantly improve experience, wellbeing, and quality of care.

Reflect (2-3 mins)

- Think of a recent moment at work that brought joy, pride, or meaning.
- What were you doing?
- What made it meaningful?

Identify one action (2 mins)

- What is *one small action* you could take to create more moments like this?
(e.g. *connect with a colleague, celebrate small wins, protect time with patients*)

Make a pledge (1 min)

- Write down one action you will commit to this week.

Share (optional, 3–5 mins)

- Discuss in pairs or small groups your reflections on what brings you joy at work, the impediments that get in the way and action with a partner or small group.

Optional creative reminder

- Decorate a pebble or small object to represent your commitment.



Reference: Institute for Healthcare Improvement (IHI) (2017). *Framework for Improving Joy in Work*

Leadership and Self-Awareness

Authenticity and consistency in leadership

Why does authenticity and consistency matter?

Authentic leaders inspire trust and foster meaningful relationships. Consistency in behaviour and values builds credibility and stability within teams.

Exercise: Values alignment check

- 1. List your top 3 personal values.
- 2. Reflect on how your daily actions align with these values.
- 3. Identify any gaps or areas for improvement.
- 4. Share your reflections with a peer or mentor.

Reflection prompts

- 1. When do I feel most authentic in my leadership?
- 2. Are there situations where I compromise my values?
- 3. How do I ensure consistency in my decisions and actions?
- 4. What feedback have I received about my authenticity?

Action planning

Based on your reflections, write down 2-3 actions you will take to strengthen your authenticity and consistency as a leader.

Notes / reflections:

Vision and Change Leadership

Creating a Vision for your Change Guide



What do we mean by a vision?

A vision can be defined as 'a picture that brings to life an attractive future state for the organisation or the outcome of a change'.

Why is a vision important?

It provides a foundation for planning our actions, helping us to understand the gap between the present and the desired future state.

It helps people to understand what the change process will look and feel like, making it more real for them.

Its attractiveness encourages commitment to the new future.

A vision is therefore much more than just a strapline or goal and performs a vital role in the process of engaging others and shaping the change programme.



Access the guide for full details on how to create a vision for your change idea - follow the QR code

How to create a vision

'Visioning' is a way of getting multiple people involved in shaping the future. People feel more ownership of something if they have helped create it, therefore the visioning process is a way of building commitment. It also means that the vision can be built on the local knowledge and expertise held by a broad group of people.

Visioning is based around three main stages:

1. Those leading the change set parameters or boundaries for the vision.
2. They then support a group, representing those with a stake in the future, to create the main features of the vision.
3. The vision (as an output) is then shared and discussed with as many people as possible and interpreted locally.

Mindset and Personal Effectiveness



'To be' list

Helps you stay intentional about how you want to behave and the impact you want to have, rather than focusing solely on tasks.



Gratitude practice

Shifts attention towards what is working well, which can improve mood and perspective over time.



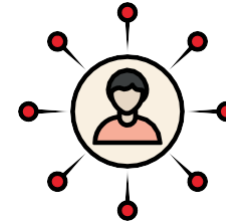
Personality style awareness (Insights discovery)

Supports more effective communication by helping you recognise and adapt to different working and communication preferences.



Positive Events Log

Helps counterbalance the brain's bias towards negative experiences by recording moments of progress or achievement.



Circle of control/ influence/concern

Reduces unnecessary stress by encouraging you to focus your energy on things you can directly affect.



If - Then planning

Strengthens your ability to handle challenging situations by deciding in advance how you will respond.



Journaling

Provides a structured way to process thoughts and emotions, making it easier to think clearly and spot patterns.



Pre-mortems

Reduces avoidable problems by anticipating what could go wrong and preparing sensible responses ahead of time.

Wellbeing and Energy Tools



Energy awareness - drainers and sustainers exercise

Helps you understand which activities or interactions increase or reduce your energy so you can plan your day more effectively.



Diary scanning for depletion

Enables you to anticipate demanding periods and balance them with time for recovery.



Mindfulness (5-4-3-2-1)

Use your senses to bring attention back to the present moment, helping you reset quickly and reduce mental overload. Brings your attention back to the present, which can reduce mental overload and steady your focus.



Sustainer activities

(micro-breaks, music, walking, pets, etc.)

Supports steadier energy and clearer thinking by adding short, restorative moments into your routine.



Breathing techniques (4-1-4-1 / 4-7-8)

Calms the body and mind by slowing breathing and helping regulate your stress response.

Credit: Art of Brilliance
www.artofbrilliance.co.uk

Building Trust and Psychological Safety

Connection before content

Helps create a more open and constructive conversation by building rapport before focusing on tasks or decisions.

Story sharing

Strengthens understanding and trust by allowing people to relate to one another through personal experience.

Credit: Art of Brilliance
www.artofbrilliance.co.uk



Trust-building behaviours

Improves working relationships by showing consistency, honesty, and respect in everyday interactions.

Psychological safety principles

Enables people to contribute more freely by ensuring they feel able to ask questions, express concerns, and acknowledge mistakes without embarrassment or risk.

Measuring and Understanding Culture

Psychological Safety Pulse

A psychological safety pulse check is a brief, periodic survey or 10-minute team meeting designed to measure how safe employees feel sharing ideas, taking risks, and admitting mistakes without fear of retaliation. It helps leadership identify toxic dynamics early and track workplace trust.

The pulse check is used to establish a baseline, team members can rate seven core statements on a scale, focusing on risk-taking, support, and mutual respect.

What it checks:

- Speaking up.
- Feeling supported.
- Emotional safety.

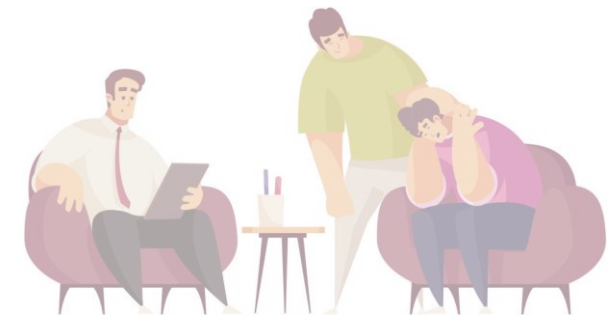
How:

- 3–5 questions, quarterly or monthly.
- Anonymous.
- Trend-focused, not scores.

Example items:

“I feel safe to ask or for help when I need it.”

“It’s okay to express uncertainty in this team.”



Measuring and Understanding Culture



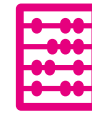
Qualitative methods

Focus groups and interviews: In-person discussions with a cross-section of employees can provide deep, nuanced insights into employee experiences and perceptions that surveys might miss. External facilitators are often recommended to ensure impartiality.

Observation: Observing daily interactions, meetings, and informal conversations can reveal the actual, lived culture and normal behaviour within the organisation.

Exit interviews: Gathering feedback from departing employees can provide candid insights into cultural weak spots, as employees may be more honest when they no longer fear retribution.

Reviewing stories and narratives: Analysing the anecdotes and "legends" that employees repeatedly tell can provide clues to the underlying values and assumptions of the workplace culture.



Quantitative metrics / KPIs

Employee Net Promoter Score (eNPS): This metric measures how likely employees are to recommend the organisation as a place to work, serving as a baseline indicator of overall satisfaction and culture.

Turnover and absenteeism rates: High rates can indicate underlying cultural problems, such as burnout or a toxic environment.

Productivity metrics: Analysing whether teams are consistently under-delivering against KPIs can prompt investigations into low morale or a lack of necessary tools/support, which are cultural issues.

Internal promotion rate: A high rate indicates a culture that values and invests in employee development and growth.

Employee feedback frequency and participation rates: High participation in surveys and feedback sessions indicates that employees feel valued and heard, suggesting a healthy communication culture.

Measuring and Understanding Culture

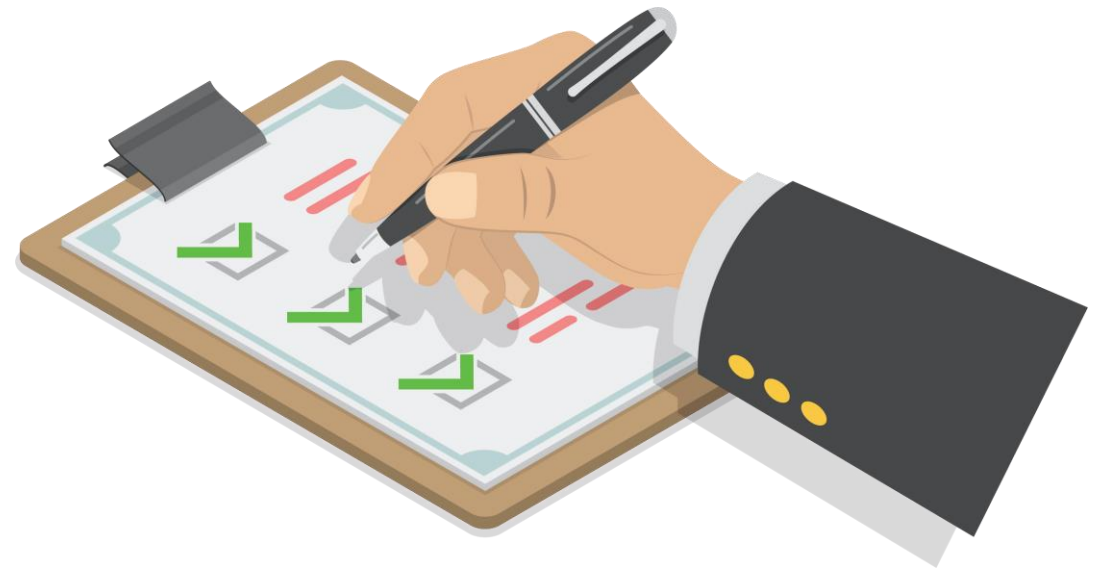
NHS National Staff Survey

What it is:

The NHS Staff Survey is a mandatory, large-scale survey completed by staff across trusts in England. It includes items on culture, leadership, morale, inclusion, psychological safety, and experience of fair treatment.

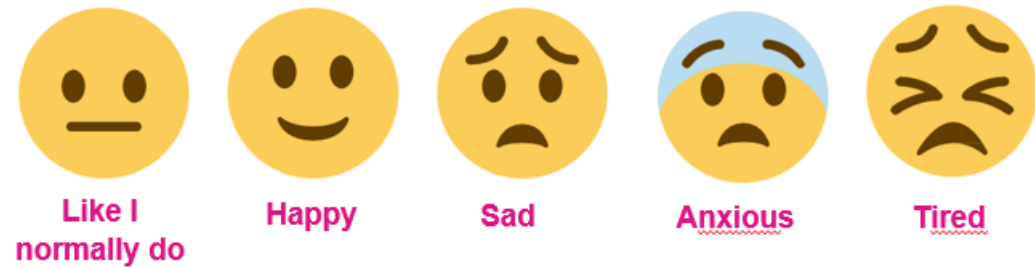
Why it's relevant:

- Standardised across the NHS - great for benchmarking year-on-year.
- Endorsed for clinical governance and CQC reporting.
- Covers culture-related domains such as fairness, voice, support, and well-being.



Practical Conversation Tools

Team Temperature Check Tools



A **Temperature Check Tool** is a simple but powerful way to gauge how participants are feeling at the start of a meeting. By inviting people to choose an emoji that reflects their current mood or rate their current state on a scale it can help signal whether support might be needed.

Facilitators can quickly understand the emotional climate of the room. This helps tailor the conversation, offer support where needed, and set a more empathetic tone. Teams can easily integrate this tool into their own meetings by displaying the icons at the start, asking for quick responses verbally or in chat, and using the insight to guide engagement and discussion effectively.

This can also be used to check in with how team members feel at the start or end of a shift and can help surface how colleagues are feeling so that team leaders or colleagues can respond to offer support if needed in a timely manner or ignite positive conversation.

Practical Conversation Tools



Check-in Conversation Templates

Purpose: Build trust, surface blockers, support growth.

Opening:

“What’s been taking up most of your energy this week?”

Work and progress

“What’s going well right now?”

“Where are you feeling stuck or slowed down?”

Support and growth

“What support would make the biggest difference?” “What’s one skill or area you’d like to develop next?”

Close

“What’s one priority before we meet again?”

“Anything else you want me to know?”



Difficult Conversation Guide

Purpose: Address issues clearly while maintaining respect.

State the facts:

“I want to talk about [specific behaviour/situation].”

Describe impact:

“The impact I’m seeing is [effect on team/work].”

Invite perspective:

“How does this look from your side?”

Co-create next steps:

“What could we try differently going forward?”

Confirm next steps.



Team Check-in Templates

At the weekly team meeting use a framework that consistently captures team reflections. Several options are available but Best / Next / Help is one example, where each person answers:

Best: One win from the week.

Next: What the focus is for next week.

Help: Any help needed.

Team Understanding and Collaboration Tools

OD / Personal User Manual

Why use it?

- Builds stronger, more empathetic relationships.
- Increases clarity and reduces misunderstandings.
- Supports a more open, inclusive culture.

How does it help?

By sharing what energises you, what challenges you, and how you prefer to work, this tool:

- Makes team dynamics more visible and transparent.
- Helps people work better together.
- Turns differences into strengths, not friction.

In practice

Use this tool:

- In new or existing teams.
- During onboarding or team development.
- To strengthen everyday collaboration.

Access
template via
QR code



Example Completed Personal User Manual

1. What gives me energy is?

Learning new things, seeing theories in action and collaborative working. Honesty (for both good and bad comments).

2. What depletes me is?

Meetings for meeting's sake and a thousand words when ten will do.

3. What drives you nuts?

Mainly the changing of the goals with no explanation/warning and a lack of feedback (both positive and negative).

4. What qualities do you particularly value in people who work with you

Honesty, a willingness to accept others' ideas and thoughts and provide appropriate feedback.

5. The best way for people to communicate and engage with me is?

In person or via telephone/Teams call.

6. What are some things that people might misunderstand about you that you should clarify?

I sometimes come across as casual and that I don't care, but that's my way of handling situations and I promise you I do care.



Energisers to Support Engagement

Engaged participants enable greater collaboration for improvement.

Some activities to energise a group are featured over the next few pages.

Energisers Index

Energiser activities are featured over the next few pages, and can be used online or in person.

Enthusiasm	Human connection	Self-reflection	Psychological safety
- Battery exercise - If you were to write a book - Gift to the room - To dunk or not to dunk - Energy in the room - Time to pause - Complete the sentence - Community harmony scarf - Pick a spoon - Looking forward to	- Battery Exercise - What do you want from the session? - If you were to write a book - Gift to the room - To dunk or not to dunk - Alphabet - Show your Cup - Community harmony scarf - Famous duos - Magic waiting room - Four corners - Favourite biscuit - Getting to know your name - Battery exercise - What's my role? - Inspiration cards - Time to pause - Complete the sentence - Looking forward to	- Battery Exercise - If you were to write a book - Gift to the room - Alphabet - How you feel today - On this sheep scale - Complete the sentence - Pick a spoon - Bring an object - Which Butterfly are you - Which Tea strength are you - Looking forward to - Inspiration cards	- Battery Exercise - What do you want from the session? - Creating safe spaces - Gift to the room - Time to pause - Pick a spoon - Which Butterfly are you - Which Tea strength are you - Getting to know your name - Looking forward to

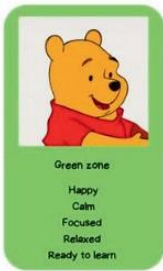
To dunk* or not to dunk, that is the question!

A fun energising activity which invites people to share whether they dunk or do not dunk a biscuit in their tea/coffee.

(*Dunk or dip means to submerge the biscuit in a drink e.g. tea or coffee).



How are you feeling today?



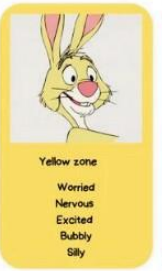
Green zone

Happy
Calm
Focused
Relaxed
Ready to learn



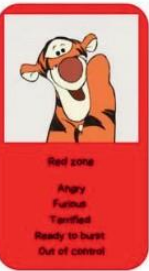
Blue zone

Sad
Upset
Tearful
Tired
Bored



Yellow zone

Worried
Nervous
Excited
Bubbly
Silly



Red zone

Angry
Furious
Terrified
Ready to burst
Out of control



Pick a spoon

Gather a selection of spoons and ladles of different sizes.

Invite people to select a spoon which reflects how they feel today, where the larger the spoon, the more energetic they feel.

People select a spoon and hold it up, BUT do not explain why they selected that spoon, simply share using non-verbal communication how they are feeling.

This offers members of the group space to reflect on how they are feeling and for the person leading the room to have a sense of the energy in the room which may inform other activities if the energy is low. This works best in person.

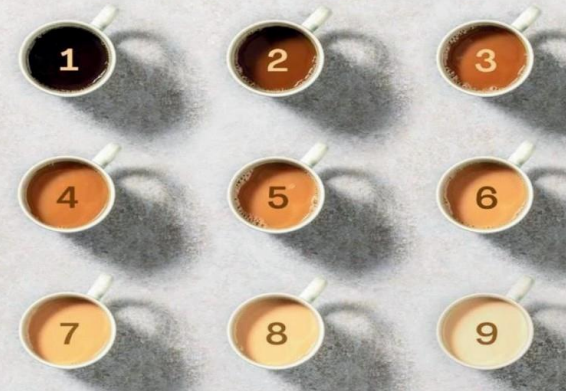
On this sheep scale- how do you feel today?



How do you feel today?



Which tea strength are you?



Which tea strength are you?

Which butterfly are you?



Getting to know each other through our name

Describe the activity and why we are doing it: namely, invite each participant in turn to tell a story about any part of their name (first name, last name, middle name, nickname).

Explain they can share as much or little as they are comfortable with.

Pose some questions to spark what story they may want to share.

- How was your name chosen?
- Were you named after someone?
- Does it have any cultural or historical meaning?
- Is there a story or experience related to your name you would like to share?

Let them know they have 2 minutes to share.

If people are going into a breakout room ask that someone be assigned as timer, note taker, and person who will share back.



Enthusiasm ☐ Human Connection ☒ Self-Reflection ☐ Psychological Safety ☒

What are you looking forward to?

Invite people to share something they are looking forward to. This reminds them of something they are anticipating as well as sharing their ideas with others.

We live in challenging times and some people may feel they have nothing to look forward to.

Offering suggestions of simple pleasures may help e.g. a nice cup of tea.

I am looking forward to.....

You may want to spend a further few minutes in open discussion about the comments in the chat box or what people shared if this was a face-to-face event.

If a large gathering, you may ask people to put their answers on a flip chart before the session begins and use it as an energiser by sharing what people have written.



If you were to write a book, what would it be about and why?

Purpose:

- To learn more about your colleagues.
- To build knowledge about other people's strengths, talents, skills (and sometime quirks), what interests them and excites them.
- To use this as a point of connection down the line.

Steps:

Go round the physical or virtual room and ask colleagues to share. As facilitator you can share first or last depending upon the dynamics of the group and how much initiation they might need.



Enthusiasm ☒ Human Connection ☒ Self-Reflection ☒ Psychological Safety ☒



One word to describe what you want from this meeting

Purpose:

- Create connection between different attendees (meetings between 8 and 15 people).
- Clarify why they are at a meeting.
- Forge more collaboration as well as appreciate alternative perspectives better.

Steps:

Go round the physical or virtual room and ask colleagues to share. As facilitator you can share first or last depending upon the dynamics of the group and how much initiation they might need.



Creating psychologically safe spaces

In the chat box invite people to complete the following sentence. If you are using this in person, invite people to put their sentences on a post it and add to a pre prepared flip chart which has the following partial sentence already written.

The values I think would help create a safer space to share include.....

These values can be captured and referenced or added to if it's a group which meets often. You may want to spend a further few minutes in open discussion about the comments in the chat box.

Enthusiasm ☐ Human Connection ☒ Self-Reflection ☒ Psychological Safety ☒

Alphabet

Part 1: Pick a letter in the alphabet (random).

Part 2: Choose an emotion word to describe how you feel about the session today using the letter you picked.



Famous duos

Prior to the session prepare a series of pairs e.g. salt and pepper. During the session give the following instruction. This activity works better in person.

Each of you will have 1 half of a pair. You have 5 minutes to find your other half - some are easier than others!

Once you've found your match, please:

- ♦ Introduce yourself, including what team you are from.
- ♦ Share if, and how, you know of your pair (or not!).
- ♦ Tell each other how you commuted to this session today.



Show your cup

This works better in a virtual environment.

Everybody just holds up their mug, cup or drinking container and then any unusual ones can be picked out. A nice way to see how people might have different tastes.



Enthusiasm ☐

Human Connection ☒

Self-Reflection ☒

Psychological Safety ☐

Bring an object

Bring an object to use as a prop to help support an idea or theme. E.g. bring an object which symbolises your network and share with the group the reason for your choice.



Magic waiting room

Purpose:

Create a better welcome experience to virtual meetings.

Steps:

- Establish breakout waiting rooms and allocate people as they join the meeting.
- Assign a team member to each breakout room to be the host and to greet people by name as they join.
- Invite people as they join to turn on camera and microphone to say hello. Introduce people as they join to attendees.
- Give time to connect with them as they all settle into the online space. Call the group to order in time for the official whole-group 'Hello and Welcome'.

The Battery Exercise

1. Break into groups of around 4-6; each group has a large sheet of paper and pens.
2. Take a couple of minutes before starting for group members to introduce each other in case they have not met before. To begin, each individual group member writes one thing which they feel drains the network's energy (2min).
3. The group then discuss together the ideas already on the paper and any other ideas they identify which also drains the network's energy and add that to the sheet of paper (10min).
4. Don't worry if to begin with the paper looks pretty messy, for now it's about capturing ideas.
5. Bring all the groups back together to share what was on their pieces of paper. If you are doing this online, you may have chosen to use online whiteboards or some other online resource.
6. Collectively identify themes across all sheets of paper which drain the network's energy and start a fresh sheet of paper with a battery in the middle and what drains our energy to the right of the battery. You may identify main headings and subheadings.
7. Repeat the exercise starting at step 3 but this time the focus is what energises the network. When this is finished you will now have one poster with a battery in the middle and on one side what drains the network's energy and on the other what recharges the network's energy. This now provides a tool for network members to explore ways to save energy and to top it back up. Capture this for future reference and when the energy of the network drops, use it to re-energise the network and its members.

Enthusiasm ☐ Human Connection ☒ Self-Reflection ☒ Psychological Safety ☒

Some ideas to boost energy

Taking the temperature of a network or meeting is a very simple visual tool which can be used each time your network meet to check in with the energy in the room. You could use Mentimeter as a fun way to do this anonymously and in a more interactive way. If the energy of the network is flat, then invite suggestions from members around what would help raise the energy. It is helpful to do the battery exercise (see previous page) first as it helps explore where the network's energy goes and how to top it back up again.

Energy boosts:

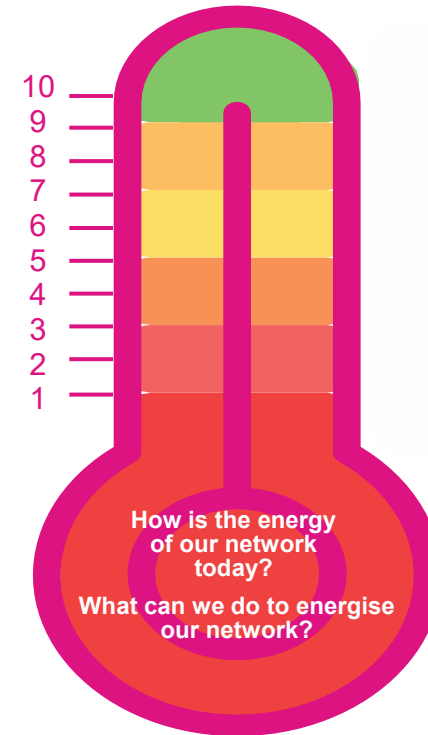
Have fun:

- Keep it authentic.
- Celebrate success.
- Be fair and inclusive.
- Communicate effectively.
- Be curious about differing viewpoints.

Make time to unwind:

- Seek understanding not blame when things don't go to plan.
- Appreciate each other.
- Create space to build healthy relationships.
- Create a psychologically safe space.

Produced by COPE Scotland www.cope-scotland.org
@COPEScotland



Checking the temperature / energy in the room

What's my role?

This is a simple tool to help manage our expectations of ourselves and each other, by sharing the role we see ourselves in today at this gathering.

You can use a Mentimeter / Zoom poll so people can feel safe to share anonymously.

While not identifying individuals, you may choose to reflect with the group about the results. If the meeting had planned for follow up actions but there are no stewards/co-creators, then the tone of the meeting may be less focused on a push for action and more on working towards collective action and responsibility.

These materials can be downloaded from www.copescotland.com



Inspiration Cards

There are many variations of this, choose one which works for your group. This example relates to inspiration for confidence in future collective endeavours.

Invite people to pick a card from the pack if in person, or from a selection on the screen if online and share what inspiration they may take from it for what the group are seeking to achieve.

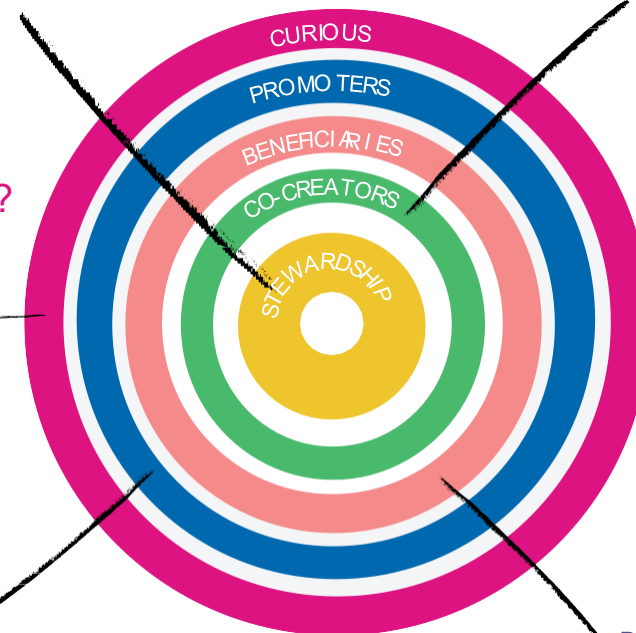
STEWARDSHIP
I will take responsibility.

Which role best reflects where you are at this moment in time?

CURIOUS
I may be interested to know more.

PROMOTERS
I will share it so others benefit.

CO-CREATORS
I will help if you ask me to do something.



Nurturing Network Weaving in Scotland
Inspired by June Holley networkweaver.com
Produced by COPE Scotland

BENEFICIARIES
I will use it.

Community harmony scarf

The idea of the scarf is to have specific sections, comprised of ribbons of 1 metre long which are woven together, and that section is given a specific focus e.g. for those who care for others, for those who inspire.

This may be a longer activity for your group and would best be done in person where a theme for your section is agreed, and each member brings a ribbon/chooses from ribbons provided and dedicates the ribbon to a person or an idea. This is also a great way to upcycle old ribbons and when the section is complete display it as a reminder of the ideas which have been woven together.



Gift to the room

The contributor experienced this at a 2-day applied suicide intervention skills training workshop ran by Living Works and thought it was a great way to create a safe space and connect.

Invite people to offer a gift to the room. If this is a larger meeting it maybe you choose to go into breakout rooms. Invite people to introduce themselves to each other and then offer a gift to the room e.g. a book, author, film, gardening tip, something which may offer others joy or inspiration.

In addition to inspiring others, it can remind contributors of gifts to give themselves.



Time to pause

Often people are rushing from one thing to the next with no room to pause. Starting a session with a simple breathing exercise or other idea to help bring people into the moment can offer space to refocus and more able to bring attention to the session ahead. There are many ideas to choose from. This is one audio podcast which may be of interest.

www.copescotland.com/resources/learning-to-hit-the-pause-button



Enthusiasm ☒

Human Connection ☒

Self-Reflection ☒

Psychological Safety ☒

Complete the sentence

Facilitator reads out each of the beginning sentences and participants are encouraged to share the first thing that springs to mind rather than spending time thinking it through e.g.

If only...

It makes me...

I have to...

When all is said and done...

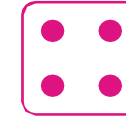
Type in chat or onto a shared space (e.g. whiteboard). People may put funny, work-related, home-related thoughts.

Facilitator encouraged to mention a few as they appear and perhaps summarise range of feelings, scenarios that people are sharing and to be mindful of this when participating in the session.



Favourite biscuit

Participants introduce themselves and share their favourite biscuit – or chocolate, or sandwich filling.



Four corners

Ask participants a question and depending on their answer ask them to move to the corner of the room that best describes them (each corner will have an answer signposted).

When in their four groups ask participants to introduce themselves and share some of the reasons that they chose this corner.

Examples of questions:

- If you could be a superhero would you be Wonder Woman, Spiderman, Batman, Superman?
- If you had the day to yourself, would you sleep, watch Netflix, shop, read?
- Would you choose a beach, hiking, water sports or city-based holiday?

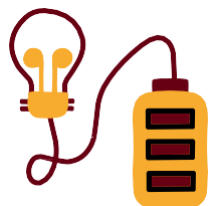
credits: COPE Scotland and Q Community

Enthusiasm ☒

Human Connection ☒

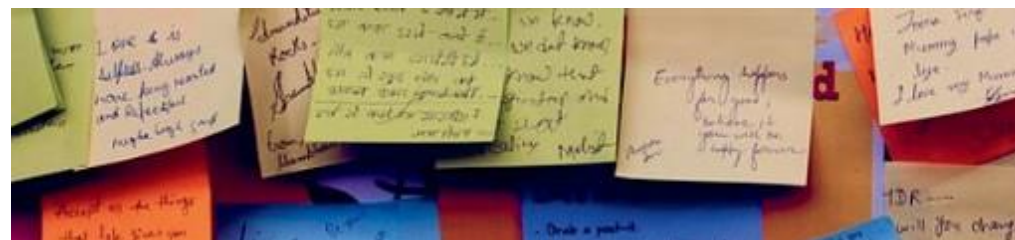
Self-Reflection ☐

Psychological Safety ☐



Quick online energisers

- 1. Two truths and a lie:** Ask each participant to share two truths and one lie about themselves in a chat or virtual whiteboard. Others can guess which statement is the lie. This activity helps participants learn interesting facts about each other and encourages engagement.
- 2. Virtual scavenger hunt:** Create a list of items participants are likely to have in their homes (e.g. a book, a mug, a plant) and give them a few minutes to gather as many items as they can. Participants can then show the items on camera, and this can serve as a light-hearted energiser.
- 3. Quiz:** Use tools like Mentimeter or Kahoot or Slido to create a quick poll or quiz related to the session topic. This can serve as an engaging way to introduce the session's theme and gauge participants' prior knowledge or opinions.
- 4. Show and tell:** Invite participants to share a meaningful object they have nearby and explain why it's important to them. This helps create a personal connection among participants.
- 5. Mood check-in:** Ask participants to share their current mood using emojis in the chat or describe it in one word. This can help the facilitator gauge the group's energy level and adjust the session accordingly.
- 6. Digital icebreaker questions:** Pose fun or thought-provoking questions in the chat, such as "If you could have dinner with any historical figure, who would it be?" Participants can type their answers, and the facilitator can read them aloud to spark conversation.
- 7. Card selection and sharing thoughts:** Share a series of images that are numbered. People are invited to pick the number of the card which speaks to them. It may be some people pick the same number which works too as often people offer different meanings to the same card.





Quick in-person energisers

- 1. Name and action:** Have participants stand in a circle and introduce themselves with their name and an action that represents them (e.g., "Hi, I'm Krishna," while miming a jump shot). The next person repeats the previous names and actions before adding their own, creating a memory challenge.
- 2. Human Bingo:** Create bingo cards with different characteristics or experiences (e.g. "Has travelled to more than five countries," "Can play a musical instrument"). Participants mingle to find people who match each description and fill their card.
- 3. Story cubes:** Use story cubes or dice with images on them to inspire creativity. Each participant rolls the dice and creates a short story based on the images. This can be a fun way to stimulate imagination and storytelling skills.
- 4. Speed networking:** Arrange participants in two lines facing each other. Give them 1-2 minutes to introduce themselves and discuss a topic before one-line shifts to create new pairs. This helps participants make quick connections and learn about each other.
- 5. Ball toss:** Have participants stand in a circle and toss a ball to each other. The person catching the ball must answer a question posed by the thrower. This activity is dynamic and helps participants focus and engage.
- 6. Silent line-up:** Ask participants to line up in order based on criteria like birth month or height without speaking. This encourages non-verbal communication and teamwork.
- 7. Card selection and sharing thoughts:** There are many variations of these, some people have collected their own card deck to use. People are invited to pick a card which speaks to them, if their first choice is chosen then to select another, the cards are spread out on a table/floor where this is safe and practical to do so. People can choose to share why that card spoke to them.



Contact

Health Innovation East Midlands

e: emahsndelivery@nottingham.ac.uk

w: healthinnovation-em.org.uk