Prioritizing Behavioral Norms

The steps on the following page will help you prioritize a set of team behavioral norms that will support executive team effectiveness. The first step is for each executive team member to choose six of the following behavioral norms (or new ones they do not see here) using this worksheet.

Shared Ownership	Trust (Psychological Safety)	Equity and Inclusion	Constructive Conflict	Collaboration	Accountability
• We make the best decision for the organization overall, not for our own function or department. • We share our perspectives and ask questions even if the issue is not in our area of expertise. • We prioritize the work of the team above our personal functional responsibilities.	• We seek to build relationships with our teammates, so we better understand each other. • We model vulnerability, explaining personal perspectives and sharing our mistakes when they arise. • We actively seek and acknowledge the input from our teammates, demonstrating our desire for their views. • We show respect to our teammates' perspectives by not interrupting or dismissing their input.	• We often ask each other "what bias might be in this conversation and how can we mitigate it?" • We seek out marginalized voices and bring their input into this room. • We make improving diversity, equity, and inclusion a priority in our organization and our work.	• We engage in candid, constructive debate. • We generate alternatives and play "devil's advocate." • We mine for conflict, seeking out different viewpoints. • We have the real conversation in the room, avoiding side negotiations.	• We actively listen to and consider the ideas of our teammates. • We build on the ideas and perspectives of our teammates. • We care about the problems of our teammates and proactively share ideas and information.	• We uphold our team commitments and behaviors. • We close out meetings with a recap of each members area of accountability. • We follow through as a team and individually. • We support decisions once made, regardless of personal views. • We give each other feedback and support to improve our team experience.

These are examples. There may be other dynamics or behaviors that are critical for the context or work of specific teams. Also, some behaviors can contribute to more than one dynamic.

Prioritizing Behavioral Norms:
Instructions

1 **Set team norms: agree on the critical few (5-6) behaviors to focus on**

- As a team, review the list of team dynamics and associated behavioral norms and ask:
  - What are the most critical behaviors we need to prioritize to execute the specific work we have set out to do as a team?

2 **Explore actions you can take to more consistently achieve these behaviors**

- For each identified behavioral norm, ask:
  - What would it look like for us to be at our best at this behavior?
  - What gets in the way of us consistently demonstrating this behavior?
  - What commitments do we need to make or steps do we need to take as individuals or as a full team to improve?

3 **Establish ongoing ways to remind and reinforce these behaviors over time, e.g.,**

- Attach shared behavioral norms to meeting agendas
- Commit to proactively show appreciation for others' productive behaviors and, when needed, provide feedback focused on the behavior, not the person
- Assign "behavior stewards," team members who are responsible for holding the team accountable for one or more team behavioral norms
- Reserve time every quarter to do a process check

> Are we living into our behavioral norms?

4 **Research shows that better interpersonal relationships enable better teamwork; to that end, create structured opportunities for team members to get to know each other better, e.g.,**

- Start every meeting with a check-in question that reveals something personal about yourself (builds understanding and vulnerability)
- Invest in intentional team-building exercises (e.g., offsite retreat, personality assessment tools, executive coaching)
- Plan opportunities to get to know people outside the work context
- Invest in one-on-one relationships; have each team member spend one-on-one time with every other team member periodically. (Find suggestions for specific questions for this time together on pages 33-34.)

Prioritizing Behavioral Norms:
Client Example

Erie Neighborhood House Leadership Team behavioral norms

Erie House as an agency is our #1 team.

We demonstrate trust and courage by voicing our opinions and asking others to do the same.

We give each other the benefit of the doubt and ask clarifying questions before jumping to conclusions.

We're responsible for agency culture and demonstrate cohesive leadership by presenting a unified front and not undermining each other or decisions agreed upon as a team.

We demonstrate vulnerability and ask for help.

We really listen, ask why, and seek to understand rationale and intentions, from each other and all staff perspectives.

Wherever possible, Leadership Team will be consulted for input on decisions that impact the agency.

We are solutions-focused, and focus on our mission, in all the work that we do.

Remember that participants are our number one priority, and our decisions are grounded in our mission and values.

We commit to understand and champion others' departments, and each other.

We close out each meeting with a recap of what has been decided, how decisions will be communicated, and what each person is accountable for and when.

We commit to being present and engaged.