

Metro North Health CULTURE & ENGAGEMENT



Check-in and check-outs

Time: Approximately 5 to 15 minutes (depending on team size).

Materials needed: None.

Participants: Any team or meeting group.

Values in Action: Respect, Integrity, Teamwork, Compassion.

Outcomes: Builds trust, boosts morale, and creates more engaging and connected meetings.

Purpose

Check-ins and check-outs are simple, high-impact rituals that help teams build connection, trust and shared understanding. Even just a few minutes at the beginning or end of a meeting can:

- make meetings feel more human and energising
- strengthen psychological safety
- ensure people feel heard, valued and present
- build a positive, supportive team culture

These options can be used in any meeting and adapted to suit time, tone and purpose.

How to run this activity

Choose one short check-in or check-out option based on the time you have available. Most take 5–10 minutes.

1. Meaningful welcome questions (5-10 mins at the start of the meeting)

Begin your meeting with a light or thoughtful question that helps people connect on a personal level. Avoid generic questions like “How’s everyone?” and try one of these instead:

Sample check-in questions:

- “What simple thing brings you the most joy?”
- “What’s something you learned recently that surprised you?”
- “What’s your go-to comfort food?”
- “What’s your favourite moment from this week so far?”

Tip: Rotate who asks the question each meeting to encourage participation.

2. Emoji check-ins (5-7 mins)

Ask each person to choose an emoji that reflects how they're feeling today. Give each person a moment to share why.

Tip: This works well at the start of virtual meetings.

3. Mid-meeting creative check-ins (5-10 mins)

Use these during long meetings to re-energise the group.

Examples:

- *"What superpower would help us finish this meeting strong?"*
- *"If stranded on a desert island, what 3 items would you take?"*
- *"Which fictional character best represents your teamwork style?"*

Tip: In large groups, use breakout rooms for quick sharing.

4. Storytelling check-outs (10-15 mins at the end of the meeting)

Close the meeting with a reflection or real example connected to your work or values.

Prompt examples:

- *"Share a customer or team interaction that left a positive impact."*
- *"What is one key insight or takeaway from today's meeting?"*

Tip: Keep responses short and focused.

5. Gratitude check-outs (5-10 mins)

End meetings with a moment of appreciation.

Prompt examples include:

- *"What are you grateful for today?"*
- *"Who would you like to thank from the team?"*
- *"What are you proud of (inside or outside work) this week?"*

This builds morale and reinforces a supportive culture.

6. Self-reflection check-outs (5-10 mins)

Ideal for leadership, development or planning meetings.

Prompt examples include:

- *"What's one action you'll take after today's meeting?"*
- *"How does this conversation relate to your current goals?"*
- *"What will you do differently moving forward?"*

7. Optional fun challenge: Wellbeing check-ins (5 mins)

Support wellbeing with a fun and healthy prompt.

Examples:

- *“How many steps have you taken this week?”*
- *“What’s one thing you’ve done to take care of yourself today?”*

Optional: Create a friendly team challenge (e.g., step tracker).

Final thoughts and tips

- **Be intentional** — choose check-ins and check-outs that match the tone of the meeting.
- **Be inclusive** — give everyone the chance to speak or contribute.
- **Be flexible** — adapt the time and format based on your team's needs.
- **Be creative** — rotate prompts, involve different team members, and keep it fresh.

Meetings don't need to feel transactional. With thoughtful check-ins and check-outs, leaders can create meaningful moments of connection that foster respect, trust, and high performance.

Even just a few minutes can make a big impact.