

Metro North Health CULTURE & ENGAGEMENT



Team purpose and culture activity

Defining 'why' and 'how' we work

Time: Approximately 2-3 hours.

Materials needed: A large screen to share examples/visuals, sticky notes, markers, whiteboard or flipchart, white A4 paper.

Participants: Team or department.

Values in Action: Respect, Integrity, Teamwork, High Performance.

Outcomes: Greater alignment, shared purpose, team cohesion, values-based behaviours, and increased focus on meaningful work.

Purpose

This activity helps your team clarify two foundational questions:

- **Why do we exist as a team?** (Purpose)
- **How do we work together?** (Culture)

By answering these, teams strengthen their alignment, focus, and cohesion. You'll walk away with a visual summary of your team's shared purpose and values-aligned culture to display proudly in your workspace.

Step 1: Individual reflection (10-20 mins)

Set a safe and relaxed tone with a quick check-in (e.g., a recent team win or personal highlight). Then ask team members to quietly reflect on:

- What is our team's core purpose?
- What's our ultimate goal, and how will we know we've succeeded?
- What value do we provide to Metro North Health and our wider community?

Tip: Encourage a personal connection – how does this purpose feel meaningful to me?

Step 2: Drafting purpose – ‘Why we exist’ (10-20 mins)

Review Metro North Health’s vision and purpose:

- **Vision:** *Changing the face of healthcare through compassion, commitment, innovation, and connection.*
- **Purpose:** *Create, connect, and apply knowledge to deliver high-quality health services.*

Ask each person to write their own draft version of the team’s purpose. It should be broad and aspirational—this isn’t the final version yet!

Step 3: Crafting a collective purpose (20 mins)

As a group, review individual draft purpose statements and shape them into one unified team purpose.

Tip:

Limit the collective purpose to 20 words or less.

Keep the tone inclusive and inspiring—it should resonate with *everyone*.

Celebrate once you reach consensus!

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Step 4: Defining culture – “How we work together” (10-20 mins)

Introduce the idea of culture as the behaviours, interactions, and norms that shape the team experience. Then ask each person to write words or short phrases describing your best or aspirational culture.

Examples:

- Supportive
- Bold decision-making
- Open communication
- Inclusive

Tip: Encourage quantity. More sticky notes = more insight. These can reflect current strengths or aspirational ideals.

Step 5: Refining Culture – Narrowing the essentials (20 mins)

Ask everyone to:

1. Remove half of their own sticky notes (keep only the strongest ones)
2. Identify and mark their **top 3 cultural essentials**

Display all remaining sticky notes where the team can see and discuss.

Step 6: Clustering and theming culture (20 mins)

Group similar sticky notes into clusters. Ask:

- What themes are emerging?
- Are there duplicates or gaps?
- Which ones align with the Metro North Health values?

Label each cluster with a unifying term (e.g., “Collaboration,” “Respect,” “Courage”).

Tip: Keep discussion focused – aim for no more than 5-6 key cultural themes.

Step 7: Defining behaviours – Bringing culture to life (10-20 mins)

For each cultural value or behaviour, define:

- What does this look like in action?
- What behaviours would hinder or go against this value?

Options:

- Break into pairs or small groups to define one cultural value each
- Or define as a full group if time allows

Example:

Value:	<i>Collaboration</i>
What does this look like in action?	<i>Inviting diverse views, active listening, co-creating solutions</i>
What behaviours hinder /go against this value?	<i>Withholding ideas, working in silos, dismissing others' input</i>

Step 8: Finalise and display (10 mins)

You now have a defined team purpose and a clear set of culture behaviours.

Ask for a volunteer to:

- Digitise and design a visual version (digital poster, handout, etc.)
- Share with the team for approval
- Display it in your physical or virtual workspace

Tip: Set a calendar reminder to revisit this in 6-12 months. Keep it dynamic and evolving.

Wrap-up and ongoing ideas

Congratulations! You’ve co-created a shared foundation that defines why your team exists and how you work together to live the Metro North Health values every day. Let it inspire your conversations, decisions, and actions moving forward.