Purpose

The Working Agreement document and working session meeting sets the course for product teams to establish and maintain effective, playful, and innovative collaboration. Typically, an hour-long conversation is all that is needed to commit to these behavioral expectations.

Prior to the working agreement session, an individual needs to be designated to have 1-to-1 conversations with everyone on the team to hear their concerns or problems they are facing on a regular basis. Keep track of what is learned during these conversations and use it as the starting point for the working agreement session.

Every individual on the team should be involved in this session so they can feel comfortable committing to the expectations, and to ensure their expectations are being met as well. If an individual is not able to attend, the meeting should be rescheduled to accommodate everyone.

During the session, all attendees should be encouraged to share at least one agreement that would lead to successful collaboration for the team. The Working Agreement is intended to be a living document and should be re-evaluated on a regular basis to ensure the team is collaborating effectively, that their expectations are being met, and that the expectations are reasonable to accommodate.

It is necessary to conduct the agile Retrospective ceremony to ensure feedback is received and that follow-up action, if necessary, is taken. Feedback and insights obtained during the Retrospective ceremony can have a direct effect on the Working Agreement, but it is not usually necessary to conduct another Working Session agreement unless there are significant issues with the current commitment. When new individuals are added or moved from the team, the Working Agreement should be revisited.

Below is a starting point for the Working Agreement document and it is likely to change depending on the team and the organizational requirements.

Show respect

* Speak up when needed; Support others who voice their opinions
* No personal attacks; Debate issues and the merit of ideas
* Do not interrupt; Let people finish what they are saying
* It is okay to disagree with each other respectfully

Contribution

* Everyone has an equal voice and valuable contributions
* Anyone can contribute to any product or discussion
* Reach out and learn new things from each other

Mental Health and Wellbeing

* Be considerate with people’s meeting schedule; Set aside 5 minutes at the start or end of each meeting to allow for biology breaks and focus time
* The last Friday of each month is set aside as Wellbeing days for contributors to focus on their own priorities
* Meeting Quiet Hours start every Friday at 12:00 Noon; No meetings should be scheduled after this time

Continuous Learning

* Time required for mandatory organization training should be accommodated during planning
* Last Friday of the month should be used for training whenever possible or reasonable
* Time for learning should be included in the estimates for work planning

Meetings

* Help others with time zone differences when scheduling meetings; Schedule meetings early in the morning or late at night, but not both
* Schedule meetings at least 24 hours in advance
* Be on time
* End on time
* Have an agenda

Be transparent

* Be clear and transparent about your agenda, intentions, and expectations
* Be upfront about your concerns, with the appropriate audience
* We will give constructive feedback
* We will be open to feedback
* We will follow up or act on feedback

Impediments

* Resolve blockers or impediments within the team
* Develop solutions within the team
* If the impediment cannot be solved within the team, give it to the agile coach

We make commitments as a team

* We will be held accountable for our commitments
* We work as a team to make a commitment and deliver on it

Incomplete stories are not good

* It is better to help get an existing story to Done than to start another story that cannot finish in the current sprint
* Track work completion with the Definition of Done checklist

Stories should not span across Sprints

* Stories that are incomplete at the end of Iterations should be reduced to what has been completed, and a new story is created for the remaining outcomes
* Work items spanning multiple iterations should be discussed during Retrospective meetings

Stories should have a Parent Feature

* When new stories are added to the Backlog, they must have an appropriate Parent Feature
* Parent Features provide needed Business Context, when starting new work familiarize yourself with the desired outcome of the feature

Daily Standups

* Discuss potential solutions outside of standup during Parking Lot discussions
* Plan new or existing work outside of stand-up; Attend planning sessions or schedule sessions with necessary stakeholders
* Keep it short and to the three items:
  + What did you do yesterday?
  + What are you going to do today?
  + Any blockers/issues?