

The Team Contract

What are the rules and behaviors we want to abide by in our team?

The Team Contract is a simple poster used to negotiate and establish team behavior and rules, both in general or temporarily. Psychological safety is increased and potential conflict reduced by:

- Aligning relationships on appropriate and inappropriate behaviors, making the team values explicit.
- Creating a cultural base to work in harmonious conditions.
- Allowing legitimate measures in case of noncompliance.
- Preventing a sense of inequity and injustice from developing within the team.

The poster presents two trigger questions to help participants position in terms of ins — what is accepted — and outs — what should not be accepted:

1. What are the rules and behaviors we want to abide by in our team?
2. As individuals, do we have preferences for working in a certain way?

This includes topics such as team behaviors and values, decision-making rules, how to coordinate and communicate, and framing expectations in case of failure. By helping

clarify expected behaviors in advance, the Team Contract offers a big payoff for a small investment of time.

The Team Contract helps:

Make values explicit — share ideas, principles, and shared beliefs as tangible behaviors.

Set the rules of the game — set clear expectations by applying a fair process.

Minimize conflict — prevent unnecessary conflict and a reference point in case of noncompliance.



Dive Deeper

To discover the academic backstage of the Team Contract, please read:

- Mutual Understanding and Common Ground (in *Psycholinguistics*), p. 258
- Relationship Types (in *Evolutionary Anthropology*), p. 274
- Trust and Psychological Safety (in *Psychology*), p. 266