

# CULTIVATING CONNECTION WITHIN YOUR VIRTUAL TEAM: 26 Tips from A to Z

- A** **ACKNOWLEDGE** the challenges of teaming virtually and engage the team in identifying how to address what might get in their way.
- B** **BAN** multitasking during team meetings, calls, and video-conferences.
- C** **CONDUCT** short check-in calls, chats or videoconferences to celebrate success, heave a collective sigh of relief, or just start a tough week together as a team.
- D** **DELEGATE** tasks intentionally to facilitate relationship- and trust-building among team members.
- E** **ENSURE** that the dignity and self-esteem of each team member is protected to promote a psychologically safety environment that encourages trust.
- F** **FIND** common ground outside of the workplace with others and encourage the same among team members.
- G** **GATHER** feedback from team members frequently about what's working, what's not, and how you all can work better together.
- H** **HONE** your early warning system, anticipating and addressing issues when they first surface so they don't poison team dynamics.
- I** **INVITE** team members to post pictures of their families and share personal updates to the extent that they are comfortable.
- J** **JUGGLE** the short-term pressure to deliver objectives and results with the longer-term priority to foster a sense of connection and community with your team.
- K** **KEEP** the shared vision, values, norms and agreements present in the team's shared virtual space by including in on agendas, posting it in a chat pod, and/or reviewing them at the beginning of meetings.
- L** **LET** team members take turns facilitating meetings or share in other leadership tasks to increase each member's investment in and connection to the team.
- M** **MAKE** time during meetings for personal and professional check-ins before delving into the agenda.

N

**NAME** or label the emotions you think you're observing as a way to clarify, learn more about others, and surface issues that should be addressed.

O

**OVERCOME** the lack of physical/visual cues by developing your virtual listening skills, keeping an ear out not just for what's said, but how it's said and what's not said to follow up.

P

**PROMOTE** open communication by encouraging (and expecting) team members to share appreciation and feedback directly with each other.

Q

**QUIET** your environment and encourage others to do the same so you can minimize the use of 'mute' and maximize attention and engagement.

R

**RECOGNIZE** collaborative behavior publicly to reinforce efforts that help to build community and connections.

S

**SCHEDULE** virtual office hours, making yourself available to your team at pre-determined times to ensure an 'open door' policy... even when the door might be hundreds of miles.

T

**TALLY** up each time a team member makes a comment or contribution during a meeting so you can identify and draw out those who may be less vocal.

U

**USE** games (like Words with Friends) or offer trivia challenges as a way to connect in a different way.

V

**VISIT** remote team member when you're in the area, whenever possible allowing also for unstructured time to connect around non-work-related issues.

W

**WATCH** the dynamics between team members who work at your location and those who don't, making sure that there's no sense of special treatment or home court advantage.

X

**eXPAND** your command of technology so you can keep glitches and issues down to a minimum – and allow team members to maintain their connection and progress.

Y

**YUK** it up every once in a while, knowing that humor helps to break down barriers and foster connections among people.

Z

**ZERO** in on norms and agreements as a way to help the team work through issues that might be getting in their way.