



Trust Readiness Tool

Trust is a vital ingredient in the psychological soil of group life and its presence creates the conditions that allow us to feel safe in each other's company – inviting us to lower our defenses so that we can wholeheartedly enter that vulnerable space in which learning and growth takes place. Having trust in each other creates a positive field in which concerns can be aired without fear of rejection, dreams can be shared and respected and the seeds of possibilities can be nourished and brought to fruition.

When any group is formed to carry out a task or to explore a specific issue that concerns them all and the members do not yet really know each other, there is an immediate need to establish a degree of trust. Giving people time to reflect on and speak about what they care about and what they are committed to doing, with respect to the work, is a good place to build trust.

It can be also helpful to think of trust as having three distinct elements.

- **Character:** a person or group's basic personality and way of being in the world.
Do they possess a good, true character?
- **Competence:** the degree to which the person or group is capable of doing their part, or job.
Do they have the right skills and expertise?
Do they have relevant and good ideas about the work?
Can they plan and implement the work competently?
- **Consistency:** the reliability of a person or group, and their results.
Is this person or group reliable and accountable?
Do they follow through on good ideas?
Are they consistently present and competent?

To assess the trust by these areas:

1. Identify the areas in which a person or group is or is not trustworthy.
2. Assign a numerical value, such as 1-5, for the amount of trust present.
3. If the trust level is 4 or above, it is probably safe to proceed. If the level of trust is 3 or below, this indicates an area of necessary inquiry and trust building. Proceed with the discussion of where more trust is needed.