

Creating Team Working Agreements

- “Co-created, living document of shared behavioral norms for communication and collaboration
- “Reduces friction, eliminates ambiguity, and replaces unspoken assumptions with explicit commitments
- “Distinct from a team charter (mission/goals) and company policy (compliance rules)
- “Learners leave with a facilitation plan, starter template, and 30-day action roadmap”



The Hidden Cost of Implicit Norms



- Unspoken assumptions create friction, delays, and confusion



- Remote and hybrid work make written norms essential



- Signs: recurring conflict, unclear availability, decision bottlenecks



- Explicit norms improve trust, performance, and team well-being



WHAT WE SEE

Friction, delays, and confusion

WHAT WE DON'T SEE

Unspoken assumptions

What a Strong Agreement Covers



- Communication channels, response times, and meeting norms



- Decision-making processes and work availability standards



- Replace vague aspirations with observable, specific behaviors



- Use RACI, DACI, and consent-based decision-making frameworks



- Clear norms build psychological safety for feedback and mistakes



Pre-Work: Setting the Session Up for Success



- Send a clear invitation with goal, agenda, and pre-work several days ahead.



- Each member completes a personal "user manual": hours, location, comms, feedback style.



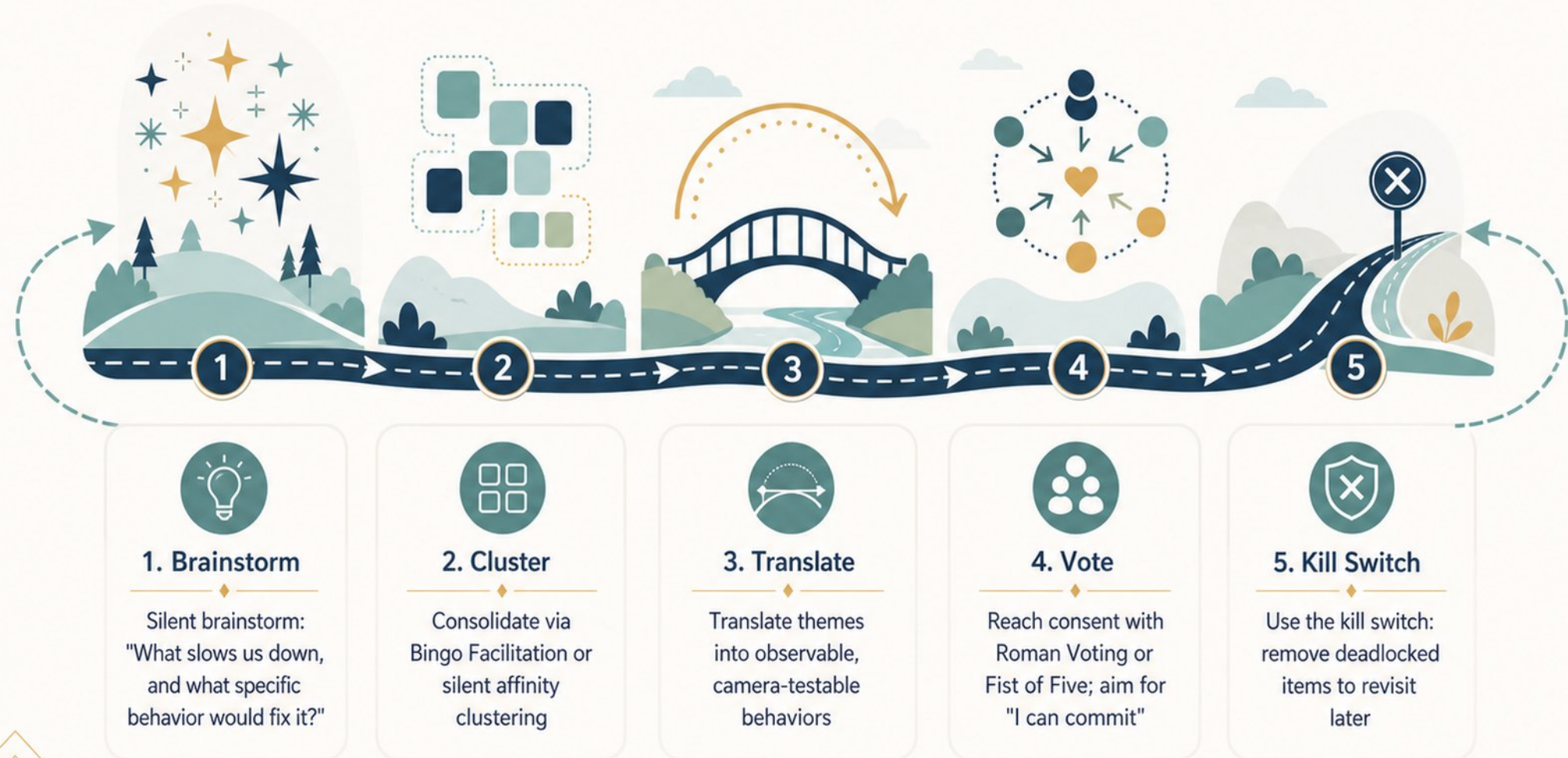
- Leader drafts starter communication channels and escalation paths to focus the session.



- Gather recent pain points from retros or anonymous input to ground the conversation.

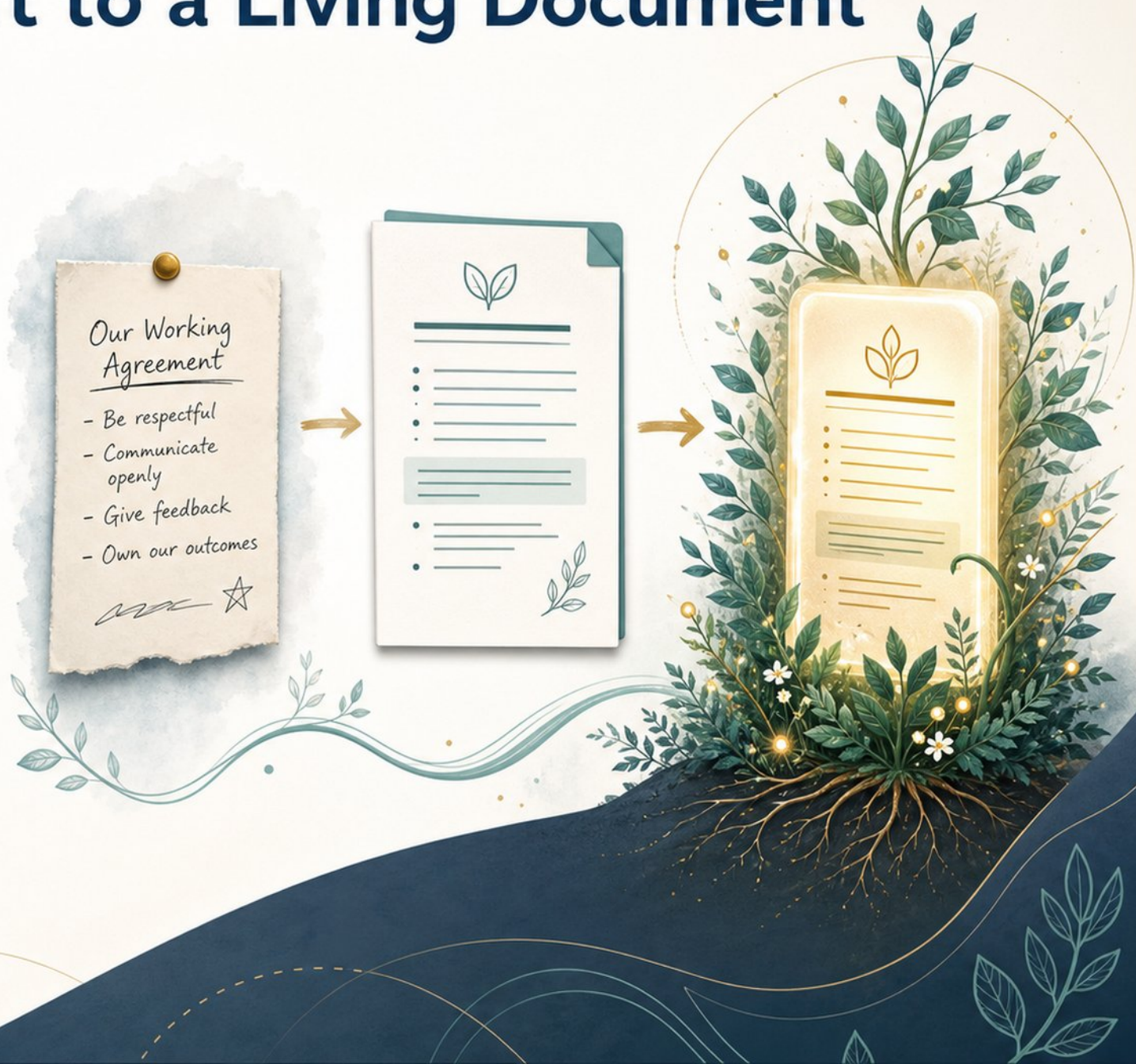


Running the Workshop: From Brainstorm to Draft



From Draft to a Living Document

- Socialize the draft and invite revisions; genuine commitment comes from co-ownership, not a single workshop.
- Make the agreement visible and accessible every day: pin it in Slack, embed it in Confluence, or post it on the team wall.
- Set a regular review cadence, e.g., quarterly, and specific triggers for revision: new team members, reorgs, or persistent violations.
- Define a neutral enforcement protocol, such as 'working agreement check,' to make violations discussable without blame.



Common Pitfalls and How to Avoid Them



- Keep it to 5–8 specific, observable behaviors addressing real friction



- Leaders must model the norms; exemption is the #1 failure factor



- Treat the agreement as a living artifact; review it quarterly



- Use pre-work and discussion to surface diverse communication styles



- If the agreement becomes a weapon, reset focus to shared goals

Tailoring Agreements for Your Context



Hybrid teams: Explicit in-office vs. remote equity norms; one remote, all remote.



Cross-functional teams: Shared language, clear decision rights, centralized documentation.



Short-life projects: Include scope, stakeholder communication. **Long-standing:** Focus on rhythms.



External partners: Define applicable agreement sections and review participation.

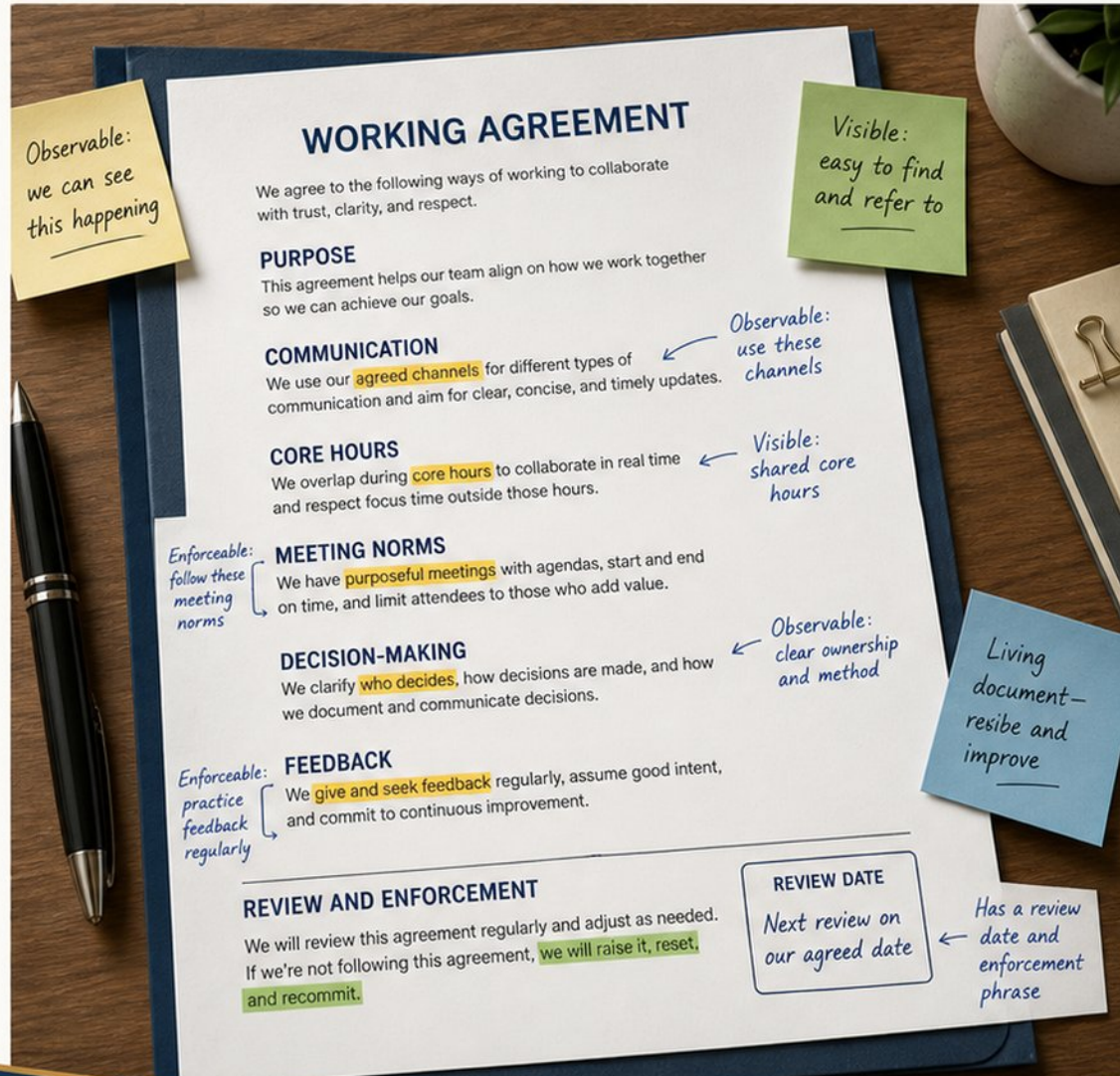
Quick-Start Templates and Real-World Examples



- **Minimal viable template:** channels, core hours, meeting norms, decision-making, feedback



- **Annotated examples:** Agile, remote-first, cross-functional, and hybrid teams



- **90-minute workshop run-of-show:** prompts, timing, and facilitator notes



- **Readiness checklist:** observable, enforceable, visible, has a review date and enforcement phrase

Building Commitment and Handling Resistance

- Frame as a tool to reduce their pain, not a top-down mandate
- Address "We already know" or "This is bureaucratic" with real pain points
- Use pre-work data to show hidden costs of implicit norms
- Make participation voluntary and let the team modify the process
- Leaders must participate as equals, not exempt themselves



Measuring Whether It's Working



Are violations raised openly without blame?



Do meetings start and end on time?



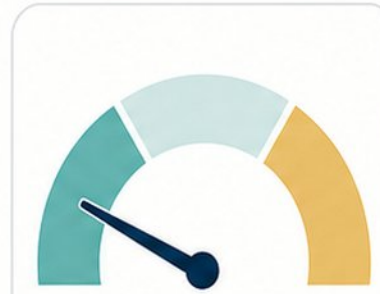
Are decisions made without repeated escalations?



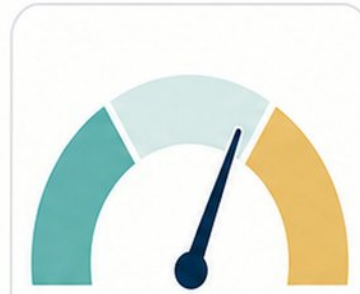
Use Keep, Modify, Kill in retros to assess each norm.



If a norm is ignored, adjust it — don't enforce blindly.



Violations Raised



Meeting Start Time



Decision Escalations



Confusion Incidents



Keep



Modify



Kill



Your First 30 Days: Action Plan



PersonWise.

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Scan the code or click anywhere to watch this course live, with voice Q&A

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