

Check-in/Check-out

What: Check-in and Check-out are ways of helping people be fully present in (check-in) and to bring closure to (check-out) conversations. These are simple, yet very powerful ways to encourage productive communication and create trust in groups.

Both techniques create an invitation for people to share what's on their mind and can be helpful in removing those usually unspoken thoughts or distractions. People are usually then better able to focus, really listen and participate. The added benefit, is practicing listening fully to each other. Since no one can interrupt, it releases us from the need to think about how we want to respond to who is speaking and allows us to just hear it. Check out works the same way as Check in except that it is a way of bringing closure to conversations.

Why: Check-in and Check-out are essential techniques in improving the quality of meetings. They give everyone an opportunity to express themselves and be heard. They also provide the leader the opportunity to open up a space for communication and fuller understanding of each other. The entire system (group) gets the opportunity to hear itself, to get a sense of the different perspectives each member brings to the group.

When: At the beginning and end of meetings. To start and close conversations about significant or difficult issues.

How: Preferably, have people sitting so that they can see each other.

- Each person speaks uninterrupted until they are done
- Say whatever you need to "get ready" for the meeting (check in) or to leave the meeting (check out)
- There is no "right" or "wrong" thing to say
- When done end with "I'm In" (check-in) or "I'm Out" (check-out)
- No response from those listening
- If you have nothing to say "pass"
- Be brief and speak from the heart

Check-in/Check-out

Optional: At the end of check in, ask the group if there is anything from the check-in process that they would like to discuss further.