

Example Flow of a Relational Meet

Aim of this resource

This resource offers examples of how to integrate relational approaches into meetings or gatherings. Working relationally is an approach of seeing and connecting with people as a whole person. Relational working prioritises building connections and forming nourishing relationships rather than being extractive and damaging. This example flow is based on a full day gathering as part of [Social Action Inquiry Scotland](#).

How to use this resource?

Explore the examples within this resource, with the invitation to revisit it as many times as needed to build up incorporating more relational aspects into your meetings or gatherings. Included within this resource are reflective questions to explore incorporating relational ways of working in your spaces.

Before the Meeting or Gathering

There are opportunities to incorporate relational ways of working before the meeting or gathering. Some examples include;

- Co-creating the agenda together. Have a conversation with everyone about what feels important to bring into the meeting.
- Ask whether the channels you're using to communicate about the meeting suit everyone's needs. For example, some people may prefer WhatsApp or a phone call, rather than only receiving information *via* email.
- Be open to incorporating people's needs into the meeting schedule, such as comfort breaks, bringing along stim toys, or using online collaboration tools that everyone finds accessible and are comfortable using.
- Sending the agenda ahead of time and allowing people to reach out if they have any questions or would like any clarification.
- If you are meeting in-person, select a venue that is accessible.

Example Meeting or Gathering Schedule

9.15 - 9.30 - Arrival, with selection of breakfast bars, fruit, tea & coffee provided.

👤 If the meeting is in-person providing some snacks and drinks can help people pause, connect to each other, settle themselves especially after travel, and fuel themselves for the gathering.

If the meeting is online, having an open online call with flexible meet and greet, and time to grab some food or drinks can mimic this settling into an online space.

09.30 - 10.00 - Check-in and the shared intentions for the day.

💛 **Check-in:** *The goal is to ensure everyone is fully present, fostering a supportive and collaborative atmosphere. Check-in's can be as simple as asking everyone to share a word about how they are feeling or a quick reflection on what's on their mind before diving into the meeting agenda.*

Note: This activity takes time to go around everyone. Rather than restricting to perceived meeting times, expand current meeting times to allow for more relational and emergent conversation.

Examples of Check-in's include:

1. Using a question(s) as a guide.

For example:

- What colour(s) describe how you're feeling today?
- How are you arriving (*emotional*) to this meeting today?
- What are you looking forward to for this gathering?
- What are you anxious or unsure about for this meeting?
- What would you have liked to gain by the end of the gathering?

Note: Participants don't have to use the check-in question if it isn't helpful toward letting them check-in to the meeting. They can express in a way that best suits them how they are.

2. Using card decks or images as a prompt or invitation.

Here are some we liked and used in the Inquiry:

- [The Sacred Creators Oracle: A 67-Card Deck & Guidebook for Your Creator Soul](#) by Chris-Anne.
- Photo deck with varying images on. Ask participants to pick one that speaks to them and explain why.

More examples of check-in's can be found at the start of every episode of the Inquiry's podcast series Wavicle, which can be accessed via [Spotify](#).

10.00 - 10.45 – Setting parameters or intention collectively.

🚫 Begin with agreeing the intentions or parameters for the meetings. For example, asking permission to record the meeting (notes, voice or pictures), the invitation to co-facilitate the meeting, volunteers to take notes, lead breakout sessions or be time keeper. Agreeing upon how everyone is stepping in. This is especially crucial when everyone is stepping into something different together and it's important to agree upon who is holding what responsibilities within.

10.45 - 11.00 - Comfort Break

🍵 Comfort breaks not only help transition between sessions but also help regain energy levels, especially if breaks allow for time outside.

11.00 - 12.00 – Paired walk or chat as part of a 2-4-All Activity.

🌱 Introducing a paired walk or chat at the beginning of a 2-4-All Activity allows for people to build connections on a 1-to-1 basis. This can be less overwhelming and more inviting for people to contribute, than participating in larger groups spaces from the beginning.

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For more information on 2-4-All Activities explore [Liberating Structures webpage](#).

Note: If the meeting is online, break-out rooms can be used at each stage of the 2-4-All Activity.

12.00 - 13.00 - Lunch is provided.

🍽️ Having a shared meal together helps to build connections and aids energy levels.

Note: accommodating the dietary requirements of everyone involved helps everyone feel nourished and included.

13.00 - 15.00 – Time for activities that align with intentions of the meeting

💡 This block of time is now dedicated to any activities that align with the intentions of the meeting or gathering. A reminder to schedule a comfort break into this block.

During the Inquiry we designed and took part in many meetings and gatherings with relational ways of working in mind.

Here we share some important considerations and learnings for a relational session;

Time: Relational sessions need time, we allocate at least 15 additional minutes beyond our initial estimate to facilitate meaningful engagement.

Flexibility: It is important to have containers so having a main objective of the day and a focus for the session along with some non-negotiables. However we have learnt that with a relational meet, we need to trust the collective in figuring out the intention. Having a loose agenda is handy but be prepared for it to be changed in keeping with the energy and the expertise at the meet.

Shared Landing: Together, we established the session's intention, highlighting the strength of co-creation.

Incorporating Activities: To enhance collaboration, we included a variety of interactive activities. These activities created a fun and engaging environment that encouraged open dialogue and mutual support.


Breakout Groups: During this stage, the bigger group determined whether they would like to stay as a unit or divide themselves into groups. Decisions were also made whether groups would focus on the same tasks or address different task into smaller groups. Collaboration with those they hadn't met before was encouraged. Each group was responsible for identifying actionable steps and timelines in relation to their group task.

Group Sharing: After brainstorming, groups reconvened to present their actionable steps and timelines to the larger group, fostering a sense of co-ownership and collective accountability.

Commitment: We concluded the session by inviting both individual and group commitments to the next steps and timelines, ensuring clarity and shared responsibility moving forward.

Explore Tools and Resources: We used tools and resources from others to help us in designing our meetings and gatherings. Explore the *Tools for Emergent Facilitation* section in [Emergent Strategy](#) by adrienne maree brown.

15.00 - 16.00 - Plotting the Next Steps

 Ensure you dedicate sufficient time at the end of meeting or gathering to discuss and capture any next steps. This is an opportunity for everyone to contribute in addition to summarising any key takeaway or actions that are required by those involved. The next steps can then be shared *via* the chosen communication channels after the meeting or gathering.

In the Inquiry we captured the next steps by providing everyone present with post-it notes, with the invitation to the group to write down on the post it notes and place them

in the shared space. One member of the group then read off the post-it notes and the next steps were discussed and captured.

16.00 - 16.30 - Check-out and reflections of the day.

♥ **Check-out:** *a way for people to transition from the meeting to another space or meeting or head space. For us in the Inquiry, it also served as a crucial moment for reflection and closure. During this time, we were all encouraged to share our key takeaways, feelings, and any commitments we have made moving forward.*

Examples of Check-out's include:

1. Using a question(s) as a guide.

For example:

- What are you grateful for today?
- How are you leaving (*emotional*) from this meeting today?
- What will you do to nourish yourself today?
- One word that describes what you are taking away from this meeting.

Note: Participants don't have to use the check-out question if it isn't helpful toward letting them check-in to the meeting. They can express in a way that best suits them how they are.

More examples of check-out's can be found near the end every episode of the Inquiry's podcast series Wavicle, which can be accessed via [Spotify](#).

16.30 - Departure from the meeting.

🗉 When setting the departure time for the meeting or gathering, we were flexible to others travel arrangements and if possible, we also aimed to finish early or on time to allow everyone to move into other spaces without feeling rushed.

Reflective questions

Use the following reflective questions to explore relational ways of working and how to incorporate it into meetings and gatherings.

1. What does relational ways of working mean to you?
2. How do you envision working relationally will be like and feel like?
3. Are there any examples within this resource or elsewhere that you can incorporate into your ways of working?
4. Can you take one element to your next work day? What would it be?