Definition, Purpose, and Premises of Norms

The purpose of this tool is to provide essential information that supports the creation of impactful norms and working agreements. By defining key concepts, outlining their purpose, and presenting foundational premises, a team answers the critical question of *why* these agreements matter. Additionally, this tool offers guiding principles for crafting strong, effective agreements that enhance team productivity, foster collaboration, and contribute to overall success.

DEFINITION

Norms of behavior serve as parameters or boundaries to guide our actions, stating the team's intentions. They are the group's expectations for working behaviors.

PURPOSE

Norms exist to promote patterns of interaction that respect the individual while increasing the productivity and effectiveness of the group. They ensure group responsibility for the expected behaviors and guard against moving toward a negative and unproductive climate.

PREMISES

The following are the key premises of effective norms.

- Keep group norms *simple* and positive.
- Group norms are best when established by the group, for the group.
- Always ask for input if you offer group norms for consideration.
- Modify existing group norms as circumstances require.
- Post group norms for all to see.