

Trust is built through consistent, repeated small actions — not through grand gestures or single conversations. These exercises focus on the interpersonal and group dimensions of trust-building: how you build it with individuals, how you repair it when it breaks, and how you create the conditions for trust across groups.

EXERCISE 1 — The Trust Audit

Skill: Understanding the current state of trust in your key relationships

Time: 30 minutes · Frequency: Quarterly

What to do

List five relationships that matter most to you — professional, personal, or community. For each one, rate trust on three dimensions from 1 (low) to 5 (high):

Reliability: Do they do what they say they will do? Do I?

Honesty: Can we be honest with each other, including about difficult things?

Care: Do I believe they have my interests at heart — not just their own?

For any relationship where one dimension is notably lower than the others — that is where trust needs work.

Reflection questions

- Where is the pattern of low trust concentrated — reliability, honesty, or care?
- In the relationships where trust is low, what has happened to produce that?
- What is one specific action you could take this week to strengthen trust in one of these relationships?

EXERCISE 2 — The Repair Conversation

Skill: Rebuilding trust after it has been broken

Time: As needed · Frequency: Whenever trust has been damaged

What to do

Identify a relationship where trust has been damaged — by something you did, something they did, or a misunderstanding between you.

Prepare a repair conversation using these four elements:

1. Acknowledge what happened without minimizing or defending.
2. Name the impact — on the other person, on the relationship.
3. Take responsibility for your part, specifically.
4. Propose a concrete change — what will you do differently?

Reflection questions

- What made it hard to acknowledge what happened without defending yourself?
 - Did the other person feel heard and taken seriously?
 - What did the conversation reveal about what the other person most needed?
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EXERCISE 3 — The Shared Story Exercise

Skill: Building trust across difference through shared lived experience

Time: 45-60 minutes in a group setting · Frequency: As a group exercise

What to do — for use with a group or team

Invite each person to share a brief story — 3 minutes maximum — about a time when they experienced conflict and felt genuinely heard and respected. Not resolved — just heard.

After each story, the group has 2 minutes to reflect back what they heard — not to comment or evaluate, just to acknowledge.

After all stories have been shared, the group discusses: what did we have in common across our different experiences? What surprised us?

Reflection questions

- What common threads emerged across different people's experiences?
- Did any story change how you see someone in the group?
- What does this exercise reveal about what people most need in conflict situations?

EXERCISE 4 — The Consistency Practice

Skill: Building trust through reliable, repeated small actions

Time: Ongoing · Frequency: Daily for one month

What to do

Choose one relationship where you want to build or strengthen trust. Identify one small, specific thing you can do consistently every week for a month that signals reliability, honesty, or care.

Examples: following through on a commitment you have been delaying; sharing something honest you have been holding back; asking how the person is doing and genuinely listening to the answer.

Do it every week. Note what changes.

Reflection questions

- What did you choose to do, and why that specific action?
- Did you notice any change in the relationship over the month?
- What does this exercise reveal about what trust actually requires?

For group trust-building facilitation and coaching, contact diazprin@conflictmanagementspace.com