

PRACTICAL TEAM TOOLS

Words to help the work you share.

Original NICU Hearts prompts informed by AHRQ TeamSTEPPS. Clinical review pending.

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Agree on the goal, roles, likely difficulties, available resources, and how to respond if the situation changes. Invite questions before moving on.

- What are we trying to accomplish?
- Who is doing what, and where might we need help?
- What could change our plan?

Source: ahrq.gov/teamstepps-program/curriculum/team/tools/briefs.html

WHEN SOMETHING CHANGES

Any team member can request a quick regroup. Describe what changed, agree on the revised plan, confirm responsibilities, and check shared understanding.

- What has changed?
- What needs to happen next, and who will do it?
- What needs clarifying before we continue?

Source: ahrq.gov/teamstepps-program/curriculum/team/tools/huddle.html

AFTER THE WORK

Reconstruct what happened together. Discuss behaviors and systems without blaming individuals. Choose one improvement, an owner, and a time to revisit it.

- What helped us work well together?
- What made the work harder?
- What is one change to explore, and when will we follow up?

Source: ahrq.gov/teamstepps-program/curriculum/team/tools/debrief.html

Learning aids, not replacements for formal training or local processes. Sources checked October 25, 2026. No endorsement implied. More: nicuhearts.org/team-tools

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MAKE UNDERSTANDING VISIBLE

Try: "I want to check that I understand the plan. My understanding is _____. What am I missing?" For an immediate safety concern, state it directly and use your local escalation process.

- What do I understand so far?
- Where is the uncertainty?
- Who needs to hear this question or concern?

Source: ahrq.gov/teamstepps-program/curriculum/mutual/tools/advocacy.html

LEARN WITH A COLLEAGUE

Choose a suitable moment and setting. Describe an observed behavior and its effect, ask for the other person's perspective, and agree on a next step. Recognize helpful actions too.

- What did I actually observe?
- How did it affect the work?
- What could we try or revisit together?

Source: ahrq.gov/teamstepps-program/curriculum/mutual/tools/feedback.html

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