People’s states of mind can have a powerful impact—positive or negative—on any meeting. Starting team meetings with a state of mind check-in provides a valuable opportunity to gauge team members’ mindsets and capacity for the work ahead, and to take any necessary steps to provide interpersonal support and enable optimal work effectiveness. For longer meetings, it may be helpful to include one or more additional check-ins. Below are our basic guidelines.

When You First Begin – Share some context with your team:

- **State of mind** is our moment-by-moment experience of life, as generated by our thinking and as expressed by our feelings and emotions. All human beings experience many different states of mind throughout our lives. States of mind can shift in the course of a week, a day, or an hour—or even in an instant.

- **The State of Mind Chart** divides states of mind into several distinct levels. The dark line in the middle is called the “neutral line”; the three rows labeled plus 1, plus 2, and plus 3 are referred to as being “above the line”; and the three rows labeled minus 1, minus 2, and minus 3 are referred to as “below the line.” The image above shows some of the most common words that people tend to associate with each of these levels. We use the terms “plus” or “minus” rather than “positive” or “negative,” because the states above the line are not necessarily good, and those below the line are not necessarily bad. None of us stays above the line at all times, nor should we aspire to do so.

- **Becoming skillful with state of mind** means being able to recognize our own states of mind in the moment; understand the impact of these states of mind on our effectiveness, relationships, and performance; and use this understanding to guide our choices—including taking steps to shift states of mind when necessary.

For Every Check-In – Facilitate sharing of state of mind and (optional) requests:

- **Ask team members** to share their state of mind. It’s best to issue an open invitation and let people choose when to respond, rather than calling on individuals one by one. Team members respond in numerical form (e.g., “I’m a plus 1,” “I’m a minus 2,” “I’m a plus 2.5.”). Note that it’s fine to use decimal places; some people prefer to make these finer distinctions. Some people may choose to provide a brief explanation (e.g., “I’m just tired,” “I’m energized after our last meeting, etc.), while others may not.

- **Inquire about requests to raise state of mind.** You might say, “For those of you who checked in below the line, is there anything we can do here that might raise your state of mind?” This type of collaborative support often leads to helpful ideas and solutions. However, if individuals do not wish to make a request, or to share any more details about their below-the-line state of mind, there is no pressure to do so.