



# **ND-Inclusive Meeting Template**

**A practical structure for emotionally safe, sensory-considerate meetings**

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## **Important note**

This resource is intended to support understanding and good practice in neuro-inclusive workplace design. It provides general guidance and does not constitute legal, medical, or clinical advice. Organisations should apply the principles in line with their own policies, regulatory obligations, and professional judgement.

# Purpose

To run meetings that:

- reduce cognitive and sensory overload
- support emotional safety and participation
- improve clarity, decisions, and follow-through
- work well for neurodivergent and neurotypical attendees alike

This template is about **better meetings**, not special treatment.

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## When to use

- Team meetings (regular or ad-hoc)
  - Decision or planning meetings
  - Strategy or review sessions
  - Mixed ND/NT groups
  - Any meeting over **30–45 minutes**
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## Before the meeting (essential)

### 1) Share the agenda in advance

- **Minimum:** 24 hours
- **Preferred:** 48–72 hours for complex topics

Include:

- **Purpose** (why this meeting exists)
- **What is / isn't happening** (e.g., discussion only, no decisions)
- **Topics in order** (one topic per section)
- **Time per item**
- **Preparation required** (read / think / none)
- **Decision owner** (if applicable)

*Advance agendas reduce anxiety, improve thinking time, and prevent surprise.*

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### 2) Set sensory-considerate defaults

- Offer **camera-optional** participation
- Share dial-in / chat options
- Avoid unnecessary background noise or visual clutter

- Choose rooms with manageable lighting where possible

State explicitly:

“Cameras are optional. Chat participation is welcome.”

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## Meeting structure (run-of-show)

### 1) Arrival & orientation (3–5 minutes)

**Purpose:** settle nervous systems and align expectations.

Say:

- “This meeting is scheduled for **X minutes.**”
- “We’ll cover **A, then B, then C.**”
- “No decisions today / Decisions will be made on **X.**”

Optional capacity check-in (non-emotional):

“If you need to step away or pass at any point, that’s okay.”

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### 2) Regulation buffer (2 minutes)

**Purpose:** reduce immediate load before content.

Options (choose one, keep it brief):

- a pause before starting
- quiet settling
- a reminder to get water / adjust setup

Avoid:

- emotional sharing rounds
  - putting anyone on the spot
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### 3) Topic blocks (core meeting time)

**Purpose:** keep demand predictable and contained.

For each topic:

- Name the topic and goal
- State whether it's **info / discussion / decision**
- Keep to one topic at a time
- Use **explicit turn-taking** where helpful
- Allow chat or written input
- Pause before moving on

Good prompts:

“We’ll spend 10 minutes on this.”

“Let’s pause before responses.”

“Passing is fine.”

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#### 4) Regulation breaks (for longer meetings)

**Required when:** meeting exceeds **60–75 minutes**

- 5 minutes every 45–60 minutes
- State break timing in advance
- Everyone takes the break
- No side discussions

After the break:

“We’re back. We’re moving to item two. No decisions yet.”

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#### 5) Integration & clarity (5–10 minutes)

**Purpose:** prevent confusion and post-meeting overload.

Cover:

- What was **decided**
- What is **still open**
- Who owns next steps
- When follow-up will happen

Avoid:

- adding new topics
  - rushing decisions at the end
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#### 6) Clear close (2–3 minutes)

End explicitly:

“We’re finished for today.”

“I’ll send a written summary by X.”

“Nothing else is required right now.”

Clear endings reduce post-meeting stress.

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## What leaders should say (useful scripts)

- “You don’t need to respond live.”
  - “Let’s slow this down.”
  - “We can decide later.”
  - “Passing is okay.”
  - “Silence is fine... take a moment.”
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## What to avoid (common pitfalls)

- Surprise agenda items
  - “Any other business” pressure
  - Cold-calling
  - Rapid-fire questions
  - Treating silence as disengagement
  - Pushing for resolution during distress
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These increase risk and reduce accuracy.

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## Signals it’s working

You’ll notice:

- steadier participation
- fewer escalations
- clearer decisions
- shorter meetings
- less follow-up confusion
- reduced fatigue after meetings

These are **system outcomes**, not personality changes.

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## Leadership framing (optional)

“We run meetings this way to improve clarity, inclusion, and decision quality. These practices benefit everyone and reduce unnecessary pressure.”

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## One-page agenda template (copy-ready)

**Meeting title:**

**Purpose:**

**Not happening today:**

**Topics & timing:**

1. Topic (10 min) – info / discussion / decision
2. Topic (15 min) – info / discussion / decision
3. Topic (10 min) – info / discussion / decision

**Preparation:**

**Decision owner:**

**Follow-up:**

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### Bottom line

ND-inclusive meetings aren't softer meetings.  
They're **clearer, calmer, and more effective.**

Good structure creates safety.  
Safety creates better thinking.

