WORKSHOPSKILL · FACILITATION KIT

Step In If… — Facilitator Run Sheet

Folder: `step-in-if` · Category: trust · 8–20 people · 15 min · offline + online · print props · tool pack

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15	8–20	print props
MINUTES	PEOPLE	SETTING

Step In If… — Facilitator Guide

A 15-minute, 8–20 person trust and belonging exercise. The group stands in a circle. A statement is read aloud — “Step in if you’ve ever felt like the new person who nobody showed the ropes to” — and anyone it’s true for steps into the middle, looks around at who’s standing with them, and steps back. No explanations, no names attached. It makes shared experience visible in your body, which is faster at building trust than any round of introductions.

How this relates to the other trust folders: Step In If… *shows* a team how much it already shares — no ratings, no written record. The Safety Check *measures* how safe the room is on four questions; The Reliability Ledger and The Trust Timeline *repair* what has quietly broken. Run this one when the missing thing is the sight of common ground, not a number or a rupture to fix.

Objectives

By the end of the activity, participants will have:

1. Physically seen, several times over, how many people in the room silently share an experience they assumed was private.
2. Had at least one quiet assumption about a colleague broken without a word being said about it — including, likely, one about themselves.
3. Named in the debrief one thing they’ll now assume less about someone, and one hard-to-say topic worth a proper conversation.

When to use this activity

- A team (or two teams that must work together) that’s civil but hasn’t yet seen how much they share.
- A new group where people are performing confidence and hiding that they feel like outsiders.
- You have 8–20 people who can stand in a circle (or raise a hand online) and 15 minutes — and you want belonging shown, not announced.

Setup

Clock: fifteen minutes end to end. Give it twenty if people are genuinely stiff about standing in a circle — the first two statements cost more than the rest.

Space: a clear centre everyone can step into and see each other from; standing room for a loose circle. Below 8 it’s thin; above 20, run two circles.

Materials per circle:

Item	Source
The six card faces — statement, step-in, look-around, step-back, someone-alone, debrief	`step-in-if-prop-cards.pdf`
8–10 “Step in if…” statements, easiest first (printed on the statement card, or written for this team)	`step-in-if-prop-cards.pdf` (rewrite them for your team)
1 × poster with the two rules in view (optional but recommended)	`step-in-if-activity-poster.pdf` (A3) on the wall

Grouping: one circle of 8–20; the whole group runs together, one reader. Remote, each person unmutes or raises a hand instead of stepping.

Roles: you (or a rotating reader) read statements aloud and hold the two rules — nobody explains a step, nobody watches for who didn't step; everyone else simply steps in when it's true, or doesn't.

How to run it

Time	Phase	Facilitator does	Participants do
0–3	Set	People stand in a circle. State the two rules and the one commitment: nobody is asked to explain a step, and nobody is watched for who didn't step.	Get into the circle; agree out loud that the rules hold
3–7	Ease in	Read the first 3–4 statements, deliberately small and concrete, so stepping in feels cheap.	Anyone a statement is true for steps into the centre, pauses a beat to take in who's there, steps back out
7–12	Step in	Read 4–6 statements that climb toward the ones that matter, including one or two where someone might stand alone. Never say why you stepped in.	Step in, look around, step back — the seeing is the exercise
12–15	Land	Run the short debrief: what it felt like to step in, to stand alone, to see others already there.	Offer one sentence each on what the room just showed them

Then run the full debrief — see `step-in-if-debrief.md`.

The card

The six faces step the run in order — statement, step-in, look-around, step-back, someone-alone, debrief — so a reader can run the circle off the deck without narrating mechanics. The someone-alone face exists to prepare the room, in advance, for the statement only one person answers to: being the only one, seen, is its own kind of trust. The debrief face keeps the landing from dissolving into chatter.

Failure modes

1. **No one steps in.** Your first statements are too big or too exposing. Rescue: start deliberately small and physical ("step in if you've had coffee before this meeting") so stepping in feels cheap.
2. **It becomes about who's watching who.** Rescue: restate the rule out loud and immediately — you may only see who *did* step in, never audit who didn't. The watching is what kills the safety.
3. **Someone stands alone and it's rough.** Rescue: don't rush past it or over-comfort it. Hold the beat, let them be seen, and thank the room for the honesty — that's the moment trust is actually made, not the easy statements.

Variations

- **New team:** open with low-stakes statements ("step in if you moved cities for this job"), build toward the ones that matter.
- **After a hard project:** "step in if you were exhausted but kept going" — the shared load is the point.

- **Remote:** each person unmutes or raises a hand instead of stepping; the look-around becomes the camera.
- **Rotating reader:** hand the statement card to a different person each round — who reads shapes which steps happen.

Facilitation notes

- Include a statement or two where someone might stand alone, and say beforehand that it's okay — being the only one, seen, is its own kind of trust.
- No one explains a step. You step in or you don't; it's your own, and that's complete.
- The order is the design: easiest first. A room that has stepped three times cheaply will step once expensively.

Put it on the wall

Print `step-in-if-activity-poster.pdf` (A3) to keep the circle, the minute flow and the two rules — no explaining, no auditing — in view during the run.

Props in this folder

- `step-in-if-prop-cards.pdf` — poker-spec print sheet (63.5 × 88.9 mm, bleed and cut guides): statement, step-in, look-around, step-back, someone-alone and debrief faces, branded backs
- `step-in-if-guide.md` — this run sheet
- `step-in-if-debrief.md` — the debrief questions and the failure modes of the debrief
- `step-in-if-run-sheet.pdf` — the print edition: this run sheet + the debrief, bound as one A4 document with bookmarks
- `step-in-if-activity-poster.pdf` — the whole tool on one A3 wall sheet: the circle, the flow, the two rules
- `step-in-if-start-here.md` — one page, thirty seconds, then print and go
- `SKILL.md` — machine-readable manifest for AI agents
- `*-Letter.pdf` — US Letter editions of the print documents

Agent version

Every file in this folder has a stable public URL — an AI agent can fetch the cards, the debrief and this run sheet with three curl commands (see `SKILL.md`). The paper version needs nothing but a circle, a reader and a printed statement card.

Step In If… — Debrief

> The exercise does the seeing; the debrief turns the seeing into trust — without it, the circle was just calisthenics.
>
> Use with `step-in-if-guide.md`. The landing phase at minute 12 is the compressed version; this sheet is the full one.

How to run this debrief

- Run it while the room still feels the shape of what it saw — five minutes after the last step-back, not the next day.

- Hold the no-explaining rule into the debrief: people may say what it *felt* like, but nobody is asked to confess *which* statement they stepped in to.
- Close on one assumption broken and one conversation worth starting. A debrief that ends in general warmth changes nothing.

Name what it felt like

- When you stepped into the centre and looked around, what did it feel like to see others already there — or to be the only one?
- Which statement made you surprised at who stood with you? Being surprised is the assumption breaking.
- Was there a statement you didn't step in to but wanted to? What held you back — the room, or the rule that you can't explain why?

The six debrief questions

1. The shared surprise.

"Which step-in made you realize someone you'd written off as 'totally sorted' carries the same thing you do?"

→ Targets: the specific quiet assumption just broken — name it and it stops being private.

2. Standing alone.

"What was it like to be the only one in the centre — and what would it take for that to be survivable rather than humiliating here?"

→ Targets: the someone-alone moment; being the only one, seen, is its own kind of trust, but only if the room holds the beat.

3. The un-stepped step.

"Which statement did you *not* step in to, even though it was true? What made the room too expensive for it?"

→ Targets: the cost curve of speaking up — the missing steps are the honest safety data.

4. Reading each other differently.

"You now know, physically, things about each other nobody said out loud. How does that change how you'll read each other next week?"

→ Targets: converting the sight into default interpretation, not a nice memory.

5. The value of no-explaining.

"What's it worth that no one had to explain a step — that it was allowed to just be true? Where else could we let people show, not say, where they are?"

→ Targets: the mechanism itself; this is the trust the exercise actually builds.

6. The next run.

"Which quiet, hard-to-say statement should we make safe to talk about properly — and who starts that conversation? When do we run this again, with what statements the moment calls for?"

→ Targets: one named follow-up conversation and a date; belonging shown once goes stale.

Failure modes of the debrief

Failure mode	Why it happens	The rescue
It turns into confessions	People feel they must justify a step to speak at all	Restate the rule out loud: you may say what it felt like, never which statement you answered. The watching is what kills the safety.
General warmth, no specifics	The debrief drifts to “that was nice” because naming an assumption costs something	Ask for the one assumption, about yourself, that broke today — the facilitator answers first.
The alone-stepper gets smoothed over	The room rushes past the hardest sight to comfort it	Don’t over-comfort; hold the beat, thank the honesty, and come back to that statement’s topic in question 6.