elevate YOUTH CALIFORNIA

DHCS CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH CARE SERVICES

THE CENTER at Sierra Health Foundation

Planning Your Work & Working Your Plan

Disclaimer

- Elevate Youth California (EYC) is a program of the California Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) funded through Proposition 64 California Cannabis Tax Fund, Allocation 3, YEPEITA. Sierra Health Foundation: Center for Health Program Management (The Center) is contracted to support the implementation of EYC. This statewide program provides funding and technical assistance for organizations that are developing or increasing community substance use disorder (SUD) prevention, outreach, and education focused on youth.

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DESCRIPTION

Today, participants will move beyond goal setting to focus on effective planning and implementation. Building on the principles of strategic goal setting, this session provides practical tools and techniques to transform goals into actionable plans, prioritize tasks efficiently, and maintain steady progress. By the end of the workshop, attendees will gain valuable insights into creating a structured work plan tailored to their Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART)objectives, along with strategies to stay accountable and adapt to evolving challenges.

AGENDA

Six Steps

- Step 1: Transition from Goals to Plans
- Step 2: Prioritization & Time Management
- Step 3: Action Plan Development
- Step 4: Tools for Tracking & Evaluation
- Step 5: Overcoming Obstacles & Staying Flexible
- Step 6: Accountability Frameworks

STEP 1:
TRANSITION FROM GOALS TO PLANS

EYC PROJECT GOALS

- Social Justice Youth Programming
  - Civic engagement related to substance use issues or their root causes
  - Leadership development through youth-led community programming
  - Mentorship/relationship-building between peers and adults

- Substance Use Prevention Education, Services, and Supports
  - Substance use prevention and early intervention, outreach, and training
  - Providing and/or expanding access to resources, supports, or services that meet youths' individual needs

SMART OBJECTIVES ARE ESSENTIAL FOR EFFECTIVE GOAL SETTING & PROJECT SUCCESS

- **Specific** – Clearly defined objectives eliminate ambiguity, ensuring everyone understands what needs to be achieved.
- **Measurable** – Setting quantifiable targets allows for tracking progress and making data-driven decisions.
- **Achievable** – Realistic goals prevent frustration and keep motivation high, ensuring that objectives are within reach.
- **Relevant** – SMART objectives ensure that goals are relevant to the overall mission and contribute to long-term success.
- **Time-bound** – A deadline creates urgency and accountability, preventing procrastination and promoting consistent progress.

BREAK DOWN SMART OBJECTIVES OR ACTIVITIES

Break down your Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound (SMART) Objectives (original version) or Activities (updated format) into actionable tasks.

FROM SMART OBJECTIVES TO ACTIVITIES

SMART Objective:	**Increase the leadership skill levels of 100 youth participants in underserved communities by 20% within the next 18 months through targeted training programs and mentorship opportunities.**
Activities:	1. Design and launch a youth leadership training program.
	2. Recruit and onboard 20 qualified mentors.
	3. Enroll 200 youth participants in the program.
	4. Conduct pre- and post-program evaluations.

FROM ACTIVITIES TO ACTIONABLE TASKS

Activity #1:	**Design and launch a youth leadership training program.**
Actionable Tasks:	1. Engage youth participants in a training needs assessment.
	2. Research youth leadership competencies and best practices.
	3. Develop an initial list of core and optional topics.
	4. Facilitate a stakeholder review and feedback session.

EYC PROJECT GOAL EXAMPLE

- To prevent and reduce substance use by at least 50% as self-reported by 150 program participants. This will be achieved by increasing protective factors through engagement in formal one-on-one mentorship programs, cultural and healing-centered safe spaces, and cohort-based training/internship opportunities by December 2027.

FROM SMART GOALS/OBJECTIVES TO ACTIVITIES: EYC EXAMPLE

EYC Project Goal Example	To prevent and reduce substance use by at least 50% as self-reported by 150 program participants. This will be achieved by increasing protective factors through engagement in formal one-on-one mentorship programs, cultural and healing-centered safe spaces, and cohort-based training/internship opportunities by December 2027.
Activities	???

Put examples of activities based upon the above EYC Project Goal example in the chat.

FROM ACTIVITIES TO ACTIONABLE TASKS

Activity #1:	
Actionable Tasks:	

Select an activity from the chat. What are examples of actionable tasks that support this activity?

STEP 2: PRIORITIZATION & TIME MANAGEMENT

MANAGE YOUR ENERGY, NOT YOUR TIME

True, and sometimes a time management hack is also helpful.

EISENHOWER MATRIX

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- Helps to determine the urgency and importance of tasks using a 2x2 Matrix.
- **First quadrant — Focus / Do First**
  - Important tasks that need to get done.
- **Second quadrant — Schedule**
  - Tasks are important but less urgent.
- **Third quadrant — Delegate**
  - They are less important, but still pretty urgent.
  - Keep track of delegated tasks by e-mail, phone, or within a meeting to check back on their progress later.
- **Fourth — Don't Do**
  - Things you should not be doing at all.

TIME MANAGEMENT TIPS WHEN WORKING WITH THE EISENHOWER MATRIX

- Putting things to-do on a list frees your mind, but always question what is worth doing first.
- Try limiting yourself to no more than eight tasks per quadrant. Before adding another one, complete the most important one first. Remember: It is not about collecting but finishing tasks.
- You should always maintain only one list for both business and private tasks.
- Do not let you or others distract you. Do not let others define your priority. Plan in the morning, then start working on your tasks.
- Try not to procrastinate. Don’t over-managing your to-dos.

https://www.eisenhower.me/eisenhower-matrix/

PRIORITIZATION & TIME MANAGEMENT COMBINATIONS

- Using the Eisenhower (Urgent/Important) Matrix can be key for prioritization.
- Additional time management techniques can be used with the Eisenhower Matrix.
- Complete your "Focus/Do First" (High Importance & High Urgency) Tasks and "Schedule" (High Importance & Low Urgency) Tasks using:
  - Time-blocking strategies whereby time is scheduled on your calendar for tasks.
  - The Pomodoro method.

https://pomodorotimer.online/

https://www.pomodorotimer.me/

WHAT IS A POMODORO TIMER?

- A Pomodoro timer is a technique that is used to improve productivity and time managment originally developed by Francesco Cirillo in the 1980s. The word “pomodoro” is Italian for tomato, refers to the tomato-shaped kitchen timer that Cirillo used as a university student.
- The original method used 25 minute work intervals, separated by 5 minute breaks, and eventually a longer break of 20-30 minutes after 4 work intervals. The technique can however be adjusted to suit any work style.
- During the work intervals, you focus on your work without any interruptions—no checking your phone, no wandering on social media.

STEP 3:
ACTION PLAN DEVELOPMENT

ACTION PLAN DEVELOPMENT

- Developing an action plan requires establishing milestones and assigning responsibilities.
- Establishing milestones:
  - Milestones are checkpoints to measure progress and maintain momentum.
- Assigning responsibilities:
  - Clearly assign tasks and milestones to specific individuals or teams.
  - This creates accountability and promotes on time task completion.

STEP 4:
TOOLS FOR TRACKING & EVALUATION

ACTION PLAN

- An action plan is a structured, step-by-step guide to achieving a goal. It breaks down a project into specific tasks, responsible parties, deadlines, and measures of success.
- Key features of an action plan:
  - Goals that clearly define the end objective (e.g., Educate 500 youth on the risks of substance use disorder through a peer-led prevention program in 12 months).
  - Tasks that list the specific steps needed to reach the goal.
  - A responsible person assigned to each task.
  - A timeline and deadlines that specify when each task starts and finishes.
  - Resources needed to identify funding, tools, or personnel required.
  - Success indicators to define how you will measure whether the task was completed successfully.

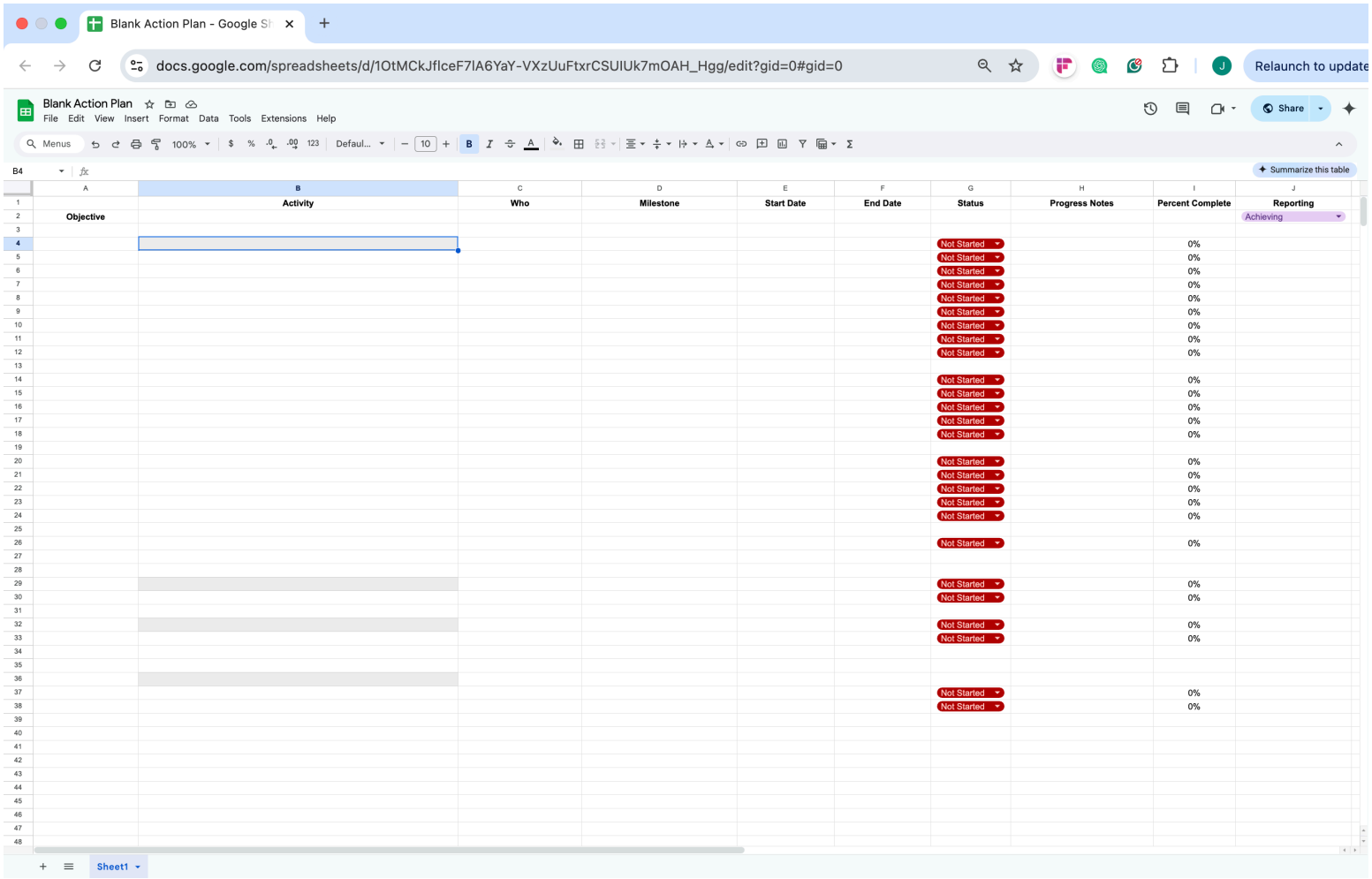
SIMPLE ACTION PLAN EXAMPLE

Task	Responsible Person	Deadline	Resources Needed	Success Indicator
Select a SUD Prevention or Peer Mentoring Curriculum	Program Coordinator	Feb 15	Research materials, experts	Curriculum completed
Recruit and train 15 peer mentors	Volunteer Coordinator	March 1	Outreach plan, training budget	15 mentors trained
Launch school workshops	Youth Peer Mentors	March 15	Venue, outreach materials	10 workshops completed
Enroll 500 youth participants	Outreach Team	June 30	Marketing and school partnerships	500 youth enrolled

ACTION PLAN

- Why an action plan is beneficial:
  - Ensures clarity on what needs to be done.
  - Holds people accountable for tasks.
  - Provides a roadmap to success.

ACTION PLAN



https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1OtMCkJfIceF7lA6YaY-VXzUuFtxrCSUIUk7mOAH_Hgg/edit?usp=sharing

Link to Google Sheet with a blank Action Plan.

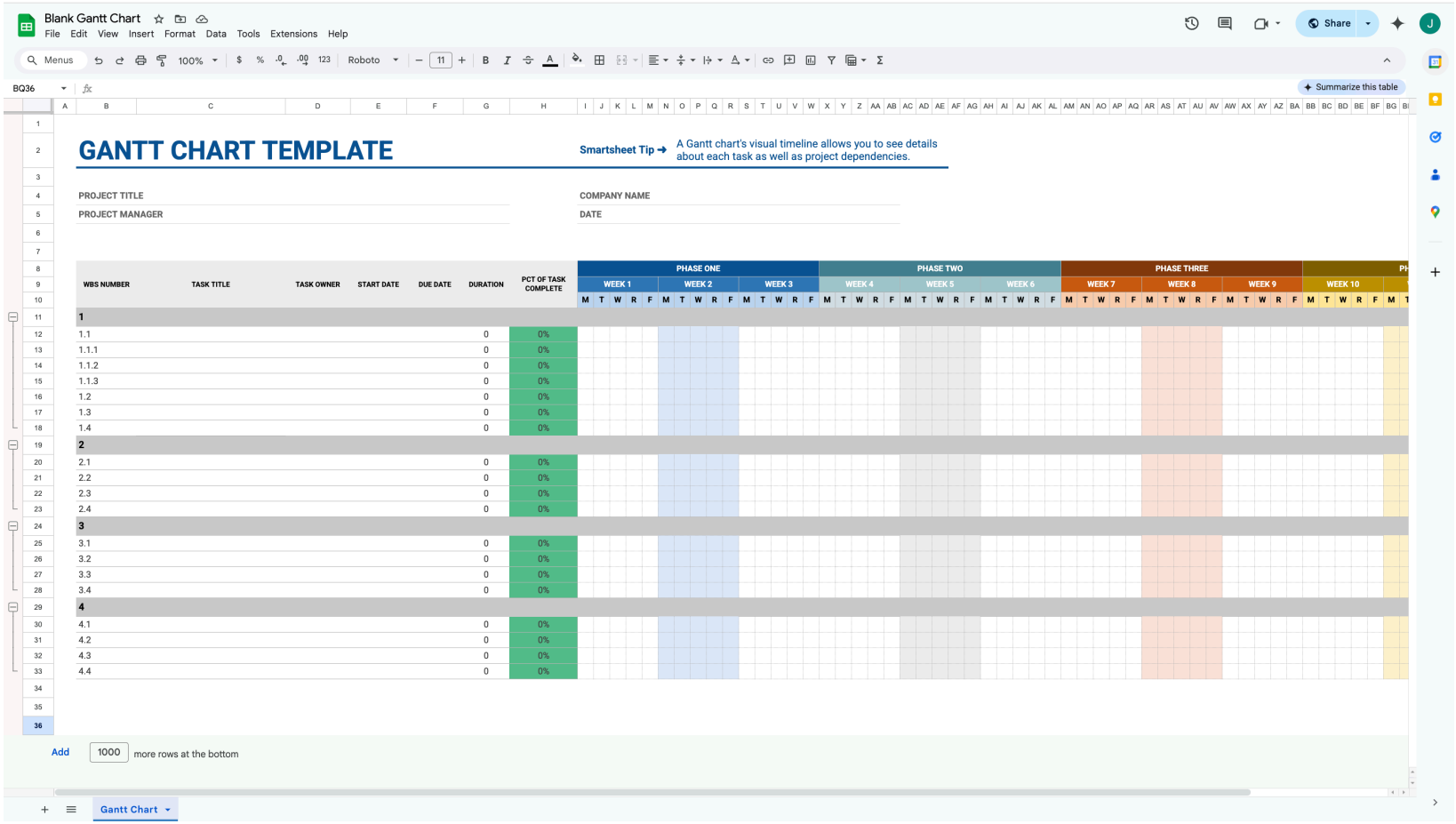
GANTT CHART

- A Gantt chart is a visual project management tool that illustrates a timeline of tasks, indicating when activities start and end. It aids in tracking progress, managing dependencies, and ensuring deadlines are met in an organized manner.
- Key features of a Gantt chart:
  - Tasks listed on the left, where activities are divided into phases, sub-tasks, or milestones.
  - A timeline at the top, with a horizontal bar (or shaded area) representing the duration of each task.
  - Progress tracking using color coding or progress bars to indicate how much of a task is completed.
  - Dependencies that refer to tasks that must be completed before others can begin.

GANTT CHART

- Simple Gantt chart Youth Substance Use Disorder Prevention Program example:
  - Task 1: Select a SUD Prevention or Peer Mentoring Curriculum (Jan 1 - Feb 15).
  - Task 2: Recruit Peer Mentors (Jan 10 - March 1).
  - Task 3: Launch Peer-Led Workshops in Schools (March 15 - June 30).
- Why a Gantt chart is beneficial:
  - Ensures tasks remain on schedule.
  - Assists in coordinating teams working on different aspects of a project.
  - Identifies bottlenecks or delays early on.

GANTT CHART



https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1E61x86HmTt06RNdtOhgg71J1z3uw-Kw6UtAyfCme038/edit?usp=sharing

Link to Google Sheet with a blank Gantt chart.

A Gantt chart can also be created using a Microsoft Excel template.

GANTT CHART VS. ACTION PLAN

Feature	Gantt Chart	Action Plan
Purpose	Visualizes timeline and progress.	Lists step-by-step tasks and details.
Best For	Tracking deadlines, dependencies, and milestones.	Defining who does what and when.
Format	Bar chart on a timeline.	Table format with details.
Focus	When tasks happen and how they connect.	What needs to be done and by whom.
Overall	A Gantt chart helps track progress visually.	An action plan helps define the work.

STEP 5:
OVERCOMING OBSTACLES & STAYING FLEXIBLE

STAY ADAPTABLE

Flexibility is not a sign of instability — it's a survival strategy.

PRACTICAL STRATEGIES FOR REMAINING FLEXIBLE

- Adopt a “Plan B” Mindset — always have backup options for critical activities.
- Use an Iterative Planning Approach — for example, instead of locking in a final plan, check in with your project partner quarterly or monthly and adjust as needed.
- Encourage Youth Feedback and Co-Design/Co-Creation — programs that evolve with youth input remain relevant and engaging. For example, use mid-program surveys to tweak session formats instead of waiting for end-of-program evaluations.

RISKS & CONTINGENCY PLANS

Effective risk identification and contingency planning help organizations stay adaptable while ensuring steady progress toward goals.

LOW YOUTH ENROLLMENT IN THE TRAINING PROGRAM?

- Expand outreach efforts to include schools, community centers, and social media.
- Offer incentives such as certificates, stipends, or community service hours.
- Implement a rolling enrollment system to allow new participants to join later.

Why?

A multi-channel recruitment strategy increases program visibility.

Incentives motivate youth participation without altering the program's core mission.

A rolling enrollment approach provides flexibility to accommodate more participants over time.

DIFFICULTY RECRUITING QUALIFIED MENTORS?

- Tap into existing networks such as alumni, local professionals, and nonprofit leaders.
- Reduce mentor requirements slightly while providing additional training.
- Create a peer mentorship model where older youth mentor younger participants.

Why?

Using existing networks speeds up mentor recruitment.

Training slightly less-experienced mentors ensures consistency in quality and builds a pipeline.

Peer mentorship strengthens leadership skills while keeping the program youth-driven.

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT DELAYS?

- Use an agile approach: release core modules first while refining later sections.
- Assign multiple team members to different curriculum sections to work in parallel.
- Adapt existing leadership training materials instead of creating everything from scratch.

Why?

Agility ensures the program launches on time.

Dividing work across team members prevents bottlenecks.

Using existing content reduces workload while maintaining effectiveness.

LOW ENGAGEMENT FROM YOUTH PARTICIPANTS?

- Use interactive, project-based learning instead of lecture-style sessions.
- Allow participants to co-create parts of the program (e.g., choosing guest speakers).
- Implement a gamification strategy where youth earn points or rewards for participation.

Why?

Hands-on learning keeps youth engaged and fosters skill application.

Youth co-leadership increases ownership and commitment.

Gamification adds motivation and excitement, increasing retention.

CONTINGENCY PLAN (EXAMPLE)

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Contingency Plan	Responsible
Low youth enrollment in training program	Medium	High	Expand outreach, offer incentives, implement rolling enrollment	Outreach Coordinator
Difficulty recruiting mentors	High	High	Use alumni networks, train youth leaders as peer mentors	Program Manager
Curriculum development delays	Medium	High	Release core modules first, parallel content creation	Training Team

STEP 6: ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORKS

CHECKING IN

Check-ins are structured conversations where participants support, reflect, and hold each other accountable for progress.

These check-ins work because they foster collaboration, motivation, and problem-solving while reinforcing commitment to goals.

WEEKLY GOAL-SETTING CHECK-IN

- Every Monday, peers meet (in-person or virtually) for 30-minutes to share their top three (3) goals for the week.
- Each person provides a quick update on progress toward previous goals.
- Peers offer suggestions, encouragement, and accountability for next steps.

Why Weekly Goal-Setting?

Keeps goals top of mind and ensures consistent progress.

Provides an opportunity for early intervention if someone is struggling.

Fosters a culture of accountability without feeling like a formal review.

15-MINUTE DAILY STAND-UP (ADAPTED FROM AGILE METHODOLOGY)

- Peers check in daily for 15 minutes to answer three key questions:
  - What did I accomplish yesterday?
  - What will I work on today?
  - What challenges am I facing?
- Meetings are kept short and focused on sharing actionable updates.

Why Daily Stand-Ups?

Helps maintain momentum and transparency without taking up much time.

Encourages problem-solving by allowing peers to offer solutions immediately.

Ideal for teams working on time-sensitive projects or learning new skills.

PEER ACCOUNTABILITY BUDDY SYSTEM

- Each participant is paired with an accountability buddy.
- Buddies check in twice a week via text, call, or meeting.
- They ask each other questions like:
  - “What progress have you made since our last check-in?"
  - “What’s the biggest challenge you faced, and how can I help?”
  - “What’s your next step, and when will you complete it?”

Why Peer Accountability Buddy System?

Encourages personalized support since buddies build strong one-on-one relationships.

Provides a sense of shared responsibility and keeps motivation high.

Allows for honest conversations that might not happen in larger group check-ins.

MONTHLY REFLECTION AND FEEDBACK SESSION

- At the end of each month, peers conduct a structured reflection session where they:
  - Review what went well and what could be improved.
  - Provide constructive feedback to one another.
  - Set goals for the next month.

Why Daily Stand-Ups?

Encourages deeper self-reflection and long-term growth.

Allows peers to celebrate achievements and adjust strategies as needed.

Strengthens relationships and provides valuable feedback in a safe space.

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Questions?

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Thank You!

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