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AVANTI ACADEMY IN PRACTICE

Around the Table

Partnership and multi-agency working in practice

Workbook

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How to use this workbook

Each part of Around the Table includes a short Try it activity. When the narration invites you to pause, turn to the matching sheet here and take ten minutes or so to work through it for your own role. There are no right answers. The point is to leave with something you will actually do. Keep your completed sheets: they make a useful record for supervision, appraisal or your personal development plan.

Part 1 · Why Partnerships Succeed or Stall

Partnership health check

Choose one partnership you belong to, formal or informal. Work through the prompts below on your own first. Then decide on one plain question you could ask the group, or the chair, to open an honest conversation about how it is working.

Who is around the table, and who tends to send a deputy or apologies?
Which stage has it honestly reached, from spectator to transform? What is your evidence?
What is its purpose really? Would the other members choose the same word?
Which quiet weakness is most at work: no real stake, a vague goal, clashing values or a key person gone?
What is one question you could ask the group, and when will you ask it?

To reflect on: *Think of one partnership you belong to. If you named its stage and purpose out loud at the next meeting, what do you expect would happen?*

One-page partnership agreement

Choose a partnership you are setting up or already belong to. Fill in what you genuinely know under each prompt, mark anything you are guessing with a question mark, and circle the one gap you will raise with partners first.

What we are for, in one sentence every partner would sign:
Who puts in what, and what each partner cannot offer:
Who chairs, who coordinates, who leads each piece of work, and who holds the money and risk:
How decisions are made, how disagreement is raised, and who speaks for us in public:
When we first review, what will count as success, and how we would end well:

To reflect on: *In a partnership you are part of, which practical item, such as purpose, roles, communication or review, could you not explain without guessing?*

Map one shared case

Choose one person you support who is also involved with other services. Use initials or no name at all, and keep this page private. Work through the prompts, then choose one join you could improve this month.

Which agencies are involved, and what does each one actually do for this person?
Where does the person have to repeat their story, wait, or chase information?
Who is the person's main contact? Do they know it, and do the other agencies?
What one change would make the biggest difference to the person this month?
Who will you call or meet to make that change, and when?

To reflect on: *Think of someone you support whose story has to be told to several services. Where does their journey break, and who could you call to fix one join?*

My information sharing habits

Think about how you and your team share information with partners. Answer the prompts honestly, without names or identifying details. Then note one habit you will keep and one you will change.

The last time I shared a concern with another agency: what I shared, with whom, and how I recorded it.
The last time I held back: what stopped me, and what I would do now.
My go-to people for advice on sharing, and how quickly I can reach them:
In one partnership I belong to: our duty, their duty, what we decide together, and the gap.
One habit I will keep, and one I will change:

To reflect on: *When did you or your team last hold on to a worry because you were unsure whether you were allowed to share it? What would have helped?*

Trust and power check

Choose one partnership. Look back at the notes or minutes from the last two meetings if you have them. Work through the prompts, then choose one promise to keep and one piece of power to share before the next meeting.

Promises my organisation made at recent meetings:
Which were kept, which slipped, and did we say so?
Who sets the agenda, chooses the venue and speaks first?
One thing we could share: the agenda, the venue, the chair or a small budget:
A disagreement we have avoided, and the concern underneath each side:

To reflect on: *In one partnership you are part of, who sets the agenda, and what promises has your organisation made that are still waiting to be kept?*

My ninety-day partnership plan

Choose one partnership you belong to. Draft a ninety-day plan using the five headings below. Keep it small and real. Then decide which partner you will show it to first, and when.

Pick one: the partnership, its honest stage, and its purpose in one sentence.
Listen: who will I talk to first, including people with lived experience and front-line staff?
Map: one journey or one gap, and what it tells us.
Act: one small, real change, what we will pool or share, and who leads it.
Review: our date, what would count as success, and who we will report to.

To reflect on: *What is one small, real change your partnership could make in the next ninety days that no single partner could make alone?*

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