

Retrospectives

Create a structured, safe, time-bounded space for a team to inspect how it's working, decide one to three small changes, and commit to follow-through at sprint, project, or quarterly scale.

DURATION

60

min

GROUP SIZE

—

people

WHAT YOU BRING

Bring the actions from the last retro, a visible wall, sticky notes, and a willingness to hear uncomfortable things.

WHAT YOU LEAVE WITH

- 1-3 concrete actions, each with a named owner and deadline
- A review of whether last retro's actions actually happened
- Reinforcement of working habits the team wants to continue
- A summary and updated action tracker shared with the team

WHO TO INVITE

- **Facilitator.** Runs the session, protects psychological safety, enforces the time box, makes sure actions get owners.
- **The whole team.** Everyone who shares the work being reflected on; absent voices come in via pre-submitted notes.
- **Action owner.** A named team member who carries one action to the next retro and reports back on progress.
- **Cross-functional guests.** For project retros only: stakeholders or adjacent teams invited explicitly when lessons are cross-functional.
- **Product owner (between retros).** Protects the retro slot, checks in mid-sprint with action owners, tracks cross-retro patterns.

USE WHEN

At the end of every sprint or iteration as a routine cadence

After a project, migration, or launch closes

After an incident, as a systems-focused post-mortem

When team dynamics feel off and nobody is naming what's wrong

AVOID WHEN

As a substitute for a difficult one-on-one conversation

When the team has no power to change anything surfaced

When last retro's actions are still unresolved

When the group is individuals without a shared experience to reflect on

How the session runs

● Phase 1 – Check-in and review of last retro's actions (10 min)

One-word check-in round, then walk through each previous action: did it happen, did it help, carry forward, drop, or amend. Brisk pace, three to five minutes on the review.

● Phase 2 – Generate observations (15 min)

Ten minutes of silent writing, one observation per sticky note, at least two notes in each of Start, Stop, and Continue. Notes then go onto the wall in the appropriate column.

- **Phase 3 – Discuss and cluster (20 min)**

Cluster similar notes into themes and discuss them in size order. Five minutes per cluster: explain it, test whether the room agrees, name the impact, surface a possible action.

- **Phase 4 – Decide on actions (10 min)**

Pick one to three concrete actions, each with a specific observable change, a single named owner, and a timeline. Dot-vote if there are too many candidates; drop anything nobody believes in.

- **Phase 5 – Close (5 min)**

One-word round on how people feel about the next sprint, recap the committed actions and their owners, thank the team, and promise the summary. End on time, even if it means carrying topics forward.