



Escape the Office

A dynamic approach to team-building and leadership development



Team Leader Discussion Guide

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Part I: Notes for the Activity Organizer

Purpose of this guide

Welcome to *Escape the Office* – a guide to help your group make the most of this team-building activity.

This guide will help your team:

1. Understand the best practices for a successful escape experience.
2. Relate these practices to high-performance in your workplace.
3. Identify team strengths and opportunities for development.
4. Develop goals that will help your team collaborate more effectively in the workplace.

How to use this guide

Prior to your team-building event

- 1) **Designate a facilitator** to lead your team's post-escape discussion.
- 2) Once identified, the facilitator should take the appropriate time to familiarize themselves with the information and instructions in this guide in advance of your team-building activity. This will help prepare him or her to facilitate your session more effectively.
- 3) Inform the team in advance that the event will include the escape attempt as well as a structured discussion upon its completion.
- 4) Do not disclose the nature of the post-escape discussion to the larger team. These discussions are most effective when team members are unaware of the specific elements to be discussed after the escape attempt. This helps maintain the integrity of the activity.

Upon completion of escape attempt(s)

- 1) Ask team members to sit with their escape room teammates (groups of 4-5).
- 2) Set a clear purpose and framework for the discussion. While timelines vary depending on group size and dynamics, the agenda below represents an example of a clear framework. Remember that you can adopt this format to fit the needs of the team!
 - Introduction of discussion format and purpose – **2 minutes**
 - Explanation of *Escape the Classroom* methodology (background) – **2 minutes**
 - Instructions for completing the self-evaluation (video) – **1 minute**
 - Completion of self-evaluation (complete team evaluation individually – one per team member) – **10 minutes**
 - Discussion of self-identified strengths & challenges and best practices (escape room teams) – **15 minutes**
 - Discussion of self-identified strengths & challenges and best practices (entire group) – **30-60 minutes**
 - Development of team goals – **15 minutes**

Background

Escape *the Office* was developed by Jay Gosselin, founder of *MentorU* (www.mentorU.ca), in partnership with the team of escape experts at *Escape Manor*. The self-evaluation and discussion guide that follow represent the synthesis of 'best practices' in escape attempts and the *MentorU* model for high-performance. As you will see, there are many similarities between successful escape experiences and high-performance in the workplace.

Escape Manor - Best Practices

Since opening their doors in November 2014, Escape Manor has locked up over 100,000 groups in their exciting and challenging rooms. In developing *Escape the Office*, we asked their longest-serving staff members to identify the practices of the most successful teams. Their answers guided the development of the criteria for the self-evaluation that follows.

MentorU - High-performance

We correlated the data on escape room best practices with The *MentorU Model for High-performance* to help teams relate their escape experience to their day-to-day teamwork. Our model highlights five critical characteristics for high-performance in any team:

1. Shared Purpose
2. Good Communication
3. Effective Leadership
4. Mutual Trust
5. Synergy (complementary strengths and skills)

While team members will likely exhibit these characteristics differently in the escape game than in the workplace, there is much to be gleaned from analyzing your team's interaction in an unknown environment while pursuing a novel objective. The simple act of stepping into unfamiliar territory enables us to leave our existing perceptions of ourselves and our team members at the door. This new environment can shed light on our habitual roles and practices, offering an excellent opportunity for individual and team growth.

Overview

There are several features that make the escape experience a powerful tool for team-building. Among these is its format. Time constraints and the multiple-puzzle nature of the escape rooms do not allow teams to overthink or over-strategize. The process requires participants' full concentration.

This immersive experience allows little time for team members to consciously analyze the interpersonal aspects of their collaboration during the game itself. It is often difficult for players to identify the underlying beliefs, attitudes, and behaviours that are being put into motion during the escape attempt. These are important factors in determining the group's relations and performance. Therefore, the role of the discussion facilitator is to help the group reflect upon the nuanced interactions and signals they sent and received during the escape attempt.

With this guide, we seek to achieve 3 objectives:

1. **Awareness:** deconstruct what it means to collaborate and work effectively as a team.
2. **Evaluation:** identify current team strengths and opportunities for development.
3. **Development:** construct team goals that build upon strengths and improve deficiencies.

Discussion Through Self-Evaluation

The facilitator's role will be to help team members reflect on the interpersonal skills, verbal and non-verbal communications that enabled or hindered their performance. The self-evaluation that comes at the end of this guide serves as the basis for the group discussion. Due to the time-sensitive nature of the escape experience, it is likely that the team members were not consciously aware of the subtle cues that they sent and received during the experience. To maximize the value of this exercise, we suggest that you offer the following guidelines to the team members prior to starting the self-evaluation:

1. Rather than simply rating your performance on each item in the evaluation, be sure to justify each rating through examples of attitudes and behaviours that were demonstrated during the escape attempt
2. Identify the reasons why you believe each item is a "best practice" for successful escape experiences
3. Discuss how each best practice relates to your workplace, and identify any relevant lessons from this experience that can be applied to your day-to-day lives

Part II: Notes for the Discussion Facilitator

Setting up for Success

This team-building activity is composed of three basic parts:

1. Escape attempt;
2. Self-evaluation and group discussion related to this escape attempt;
3. Goal setting

NOTE: *Facilitators are welcome to participate in the escape attempt themselves, but we DO NOT recommend sharing the best practices with your teammates in advance, as this will influence the behaviour of team members. The objective of this exercise is to identify and improve upon your team's natural behaviours, attitudes and interactions.*

It is important to clarify the format for your post-escape self-evaluation and group discussion, your role as facilitator and the objectives for the activity in advance. As facilitator, it is then equally important to relay this information to your team members at the outset of the activity. Here are a few suggestions to help you get started:

❖ Meeting space for the group discussion

It is important to ensure that you have a distraction-free space available where you can hold your discussion. Restaurants and other public spaces make it difficult to both hear and concentrate. For groups larger than one escape room, we recommend using a private space such as a conference room or other private space.

❖ Explain the structure for the discussion to your team members

You are likely to notice that your team will move through the evaluation quickly, often without thoroughly exploring *why* they believe they deserve their self-assessed score on each item. This is where the role of the facilitator is crucial. It is your responsibility to help them slow down and explore the attitudes and behaviours that they experienced in depth.

At the outset of the self-evaluation, read the following instructions aloud:

1. Nominate one team member to read each of the 'best practices' aloud and take notes.
2. Proceed through the evaluation items one-by-one, making sure not only to score yourselves, but also to give reasons and/or examples to support your scores – you should aim to answer the three following questions:
 - a. Why do we deserve this score (how did we demonstrate this characteristic through attitudes and behaviours)?
 - b. Why is this a best practice in escape rooms?
 - c. How does this relate to our day-to-day work?
3. Identify your greatest strengths and opportunities for development as identified through this exercise.

Facilitation: The Basics

As facilitator, there are many ways you can guide the post-escape attempt discussion. *Your purpose is to help the team uncover insights related to their collaboration, communication, trust and leadership.* These insights play an important role in identifying team strengths and opportunities for development. The pages that follow will support you by offering some suggestions and guidance in this facilitation.

Here are a few helpful hints for effective facilitation:

- ❖ Approach your role as a *learner*, rather than a *teacher* – this will assist you in asking relevant questions and leading the team to uncover important insights themselves. This will be more impactful.
- ❖ Every team has a different dynamic and objectives. You should adapt the discussion to the elements that are most important or interesting for your team.
- ❖ Ask a team member to take notes if you wish to capture the essence of the discussion.
- ❖ This is a flexible process – there are no right or wrong answers, so have fun!

To help your team extract as many insights as possible from this discussion, it will be important for you to adopt the following techniques:

❖ Open-ended Questions

To help your team members explore their feelings, motivations, and behaviours, you will want to ask questions that encourage them to explain their point of view or experience. Do your best to avoid “yes or no” questions. In their place, use questions that seek to extract their emotions and reasoning. Here are a few examples of open-ended questions:

- What do you think you did well?
- What are some parallels between the escape attempt and our day-to-day work challenges?
- How did you attempt to make other team members feel included?
- How were you feeling when someone helped you work on a puzzle?
- What style of leadership did you use in the escape room?

❖ Follow-up Questions

You are likely to notice that team members will answer some of your initial questions vaguely:

- Q: How did you end up working with Jonathan on that puzzle?
A: “it just happened that way”
- Q: How were leadership roles established?
A: “It was organic”
- Q: Why were you successful in opening that lock?
A: “We worked together”

These are difficult questions to answer. Many of the messages people send and decisions they make are determined in the unconscious mind. Certain aspects of our behaviour are repeated with such regularity that they have become automatic. Therefore, it often takes intentional reflection and coaching to bring these behaviours to the conscious level. During an escape attempt – a dynamic and time-sensitive project – most of our cognitive energy is devoted to the task(s) at hand. This leaves little energy to analyze *how* we are interacting and *why* we are feeling the way we are. Therefore, it is only once the project is finished that we can dedicate enough energy to this reflection to properly identify what feelings, motivations and attitudes were contributing to teamwork and collaboration.

As facilitator, you will need to persist in helping team members truly “dig in” and consider how they were interacting on a micro-level. This includes asking questions related to non-verbal communication (active listening, body language, tone of voice, interrupting others, considering everyone’s opinion, etc.)

Consider the example from above, with follow-up questions:

- Q: How did you end up working with Jonathan on that puzzle?

A: “It just happened that way”

- Follow-up Q: Who was working on the puzzle first?

A: “I was, then Jonathan came over”

- 2nd Follow-up Q: How did he approach you? How did you receive him?

A: “He wandered over and asked what I was working on. I explained what I had found, and then we brainstormed ideas”

- 3rd follow-up Q: What were the non-verbal messages that each of you sent that fostered good collaboration?

A: “He didn’t try to take over – his tone of voice and body positioning made it clear that he wanted to help, rather than take control. I showed that I was open to receiving his help by providing the information he needed to be of assistance”

- Additional Follow-up Qs: Is this similar to the way you tend to interact at work? Why or why not? What factors are at play that make this scenario different? What can be done to improve your collaboration in the workplace?

❖ **Reflective statements – clarify meaning**

Reflective statements can be coupled with open-ended questions to help clarify meaning and establish common understanding amongst all team members. These statements – similar to paraphrasing – offer the facilitator’s interpretation of a team member’s description of events or feelings. Reflective statements serve two purposes:

1. Ensure that messages are being received as they were intended
2. Help the sender clarify their own thoughts and/or feelings

Here are a few examples of reflective statements that a facilitator might use:

- “It sounds like you were trying to keep the team on track, but no one was interested in seeing it your way. Why do you think that was the case?”
- “Am I hearing correctly that, while Jennifer was not working on the puzzle the whole time, her fresh perspective was the key to finally breaking the code?”
- When you use the term “leader”, I am hearing you relate that to a directive communication style. Do you believe that being a leader means delegating tasks and giving orders?”

❖ **Relating the escape experience to the workplace**

To maximize the benefit of your team-building event, you will want to help your team members identify similarities and differences between this experience and their day-to-day interactions and environment. Most importantly, you will need to help them understand how the lessons drawn from the escape experience can be leveraged and transferred to the workplace. In some cases, teams “perform” better in the room than they do in their typical work environment. In other cases, teams feel that their teamwork in the room is an accurate reflection of their regular interactions. In either case, the information extracted in this process should be used to implement relevant objectives to continually improve team relations. As facilitator, your role is to help the team establish goals to implement these changes.

❖ **Goal setting**

To carry the benefits of this team building exercise forward, you will want to identify one or two key team goals based on the information drawn out of the escape experience. These goals should be accompanied by action-oriented objectives that are easy to implement immediately. Here are a few tips to help you create meaningful goals:

- Ask the note taker to capture any perceived team strengths and challenges that arise from the discussion.
- Plan to dedicate 15 minutes at the conclusion of the discussion to review these strengths and challenges.
- Help the group come to a consensus regarding the one strength that they would like to amplify in the workplace and the one challenge that they would like to work on.
- Identify possible actions (objectives) that every member can implement to help the team meet this goal.
- Circulate these goals and related objectives upon return to the office and integrate them into team meetings or other processes to facilitate their integration and sustainability.

Good luck with your event... and remember – have fun!

Self-evaluation: Facilitator's Guide

Upon completion of escape attempt(s)

- 1) Ask team members to sit with their escape room teammates.
- 2) Set a clear purpose and framework for the discussion. While timelines vary depending on group size and dynamics, the agenda below represents an example of a clear framework. Remember that you can adopt this format to fit the needs of the team!
 - Introduction of discussion format and purpose (video) – **2 minutes**
 - Instructions for completing the self-evaluation (video) – **1 minute**
 - Completion of self-evaluation (complete team evaluation individually – one per team member) – **10 minutes**
 - Discussion of self-identified strengths & challenges and best practices (escape room teams) – **15 minutes**
 - Discussion of self-identified strengths & challenges and best practices (entire group) – **30-60 minutes**
 - Development of team goals – **15 minutes**

At the outset of the self-evaluation, read the following instructions aloud:

1. Complete the self-evaluation individually. Remember – you are evaluating the team as a whole.
2. Proceed through the evaluation items one-by-one, making sure not only to score yourselves, but also to identify reasons and/or examples to support your scores – you should aim to answer the three following questions:
 - a. Why do we deserve this score (how did we demonstrate this characteristic through attitudes and behaviours)?
 - b. Why is this a best practice in escape rooms?
 - c. How does this relate to our day-to-day lives and teamwork?
3. Identify your greatest strengths and opportunities for development as identified through this exercise.
4. You will then share your evaluation results with your escape room team members and identify commonly identified strengths and opportunities for development
5. *We will then come together as a larger group to determine a couple of goals for the larger team to leverage our strengths and improve upon our challenges
**if group size exceeds one escape room*

We offer some questions and talking points below to assist in guiding the discussion.

Shared Purpose:

“It is amazing what you can accomplish when you do not care who gets the credit” – Harry Truman

Best Practices	Evaluation		
Took Immediate action	Needs Improvement	Good	Excellent
Celebrated breakthroughs as a team	Needs Improvement	Good	Excellent
Individual egos were set aside (prioritized team over self)	Needs Improvement	Good	Excellent
Took time to step back and look at the “big picture”	Needs Improvement	Good	Excellent
Team demonstrated determination in achieving objective (escape)	Needs Improvement	Good	Excellent

❖ **Sample questions**

- Immediate action: Why do you think it is important to get started right away? Is this best practice similar or different from your typical practices at work? How can the lesson here be applied in the workplace?
- Celebrated breakthroughs: What did celebrations look like for your team? Were each of you equally as excited about your teammates’ breakthroughs as for your own? How do you celebrate in the workplace? Could you celebrate more? What impact do you think these celebrations would have on team dynamics and motivation?
- Egos set aside: What does it mean to set aside individual egos? How was this demonstrated? What is different about the environment of the escape room compared to the workplace that reduces the desire to satisfy individual egos? How could the sense of shared purpose be improved in the workplace?
- Big picture: How often did you share information with the entire team? Did you ever physically come together as one group to connect the disparate information that was found? Do you take the time to share information with all team members in the workplace? How do you identify the “nice to know” versus the “need to know” information within your teams and across the larger organization?
- Demonstrated determination: How did you demonstrate determination? Was this similar or different to the determination you display at work? Why was it similar/different?

❖ **Helpful hints**

- Teams who perform the best usually take 2-5 minutes to (individually) scan the room immediately upon entering, trying to identify any information that may be relevant to solving puzzles.
- It is usually best to work in small groups for the majority of the time, but to come together to share puzzles and information every 10-15 minutes, or when you get “stuck”.

❖ **Did you know?**

- In his book, [How to Fly a Horse](#), author Kevin Ashton highlights the importance of “getting started” to stimulate creativity. As he says, “Nothing begins good, but everything good begins. Everything can be revised, erased, or rearranged later. The courage of creation is making bad beginnings”. This lesson can be transferred from the escape room to your workplace: get started right away, then take time to check in with teammates to brainstorm and improve upon your concept later.

Good Communication:

“The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place.” – George Bernard Shaw

Best Practices	Evaluation		
Shared information efficiently (both in smaller groups and with the whole team)	Needs Improvement	Good	Excellent
Team members all had a roughly equal share in conversation	Needs Improvement	Good	Excellent
Provided a “Transfer of Information” when rotating team members through puzzles (explained steps taken, clues available and thought process)	Needs Improvement	Good	Excellent
Explicitly communicated a “discard pile” of used clues	Needs Improvement	Good	Excellent

❖ Sample questions

- Shared information efficiently: How did you inform each other of the information you gathered? Did you communicate only in small groups? Only as a single team? What behaviours are required to communicate efficiently in an escape room? How does this compare to the workplace?
- Equal share in conversation: How much time did each team member spend talking versus listening? Were there any team members that were drowned out or who felt unable to contribute to the conversation? Why do you think it is important that each team member have a roughly equal share in conversation? Is this also important in the workplace? If so, how can you ensure that this balance is achieved?
- Transfer of information: Tell me about a time when you were working on a puzzle and you needed help – how did the transfer of information take place? Did you stay and talk your teammate(s) through the puzzle (what you found, what you had tried, your logic and reasoning), or did you pass the puzzle off and move on to another problem? Why do you think the transfer of knowledge is important? Can you think of situations in the workplace where this transfer is not done effectively? Why does this happen and how can the transfer of information be improved?
- Discard pile: How did you signal to your teammates that a clue or piece of a puzzle had been used? Were there occasions when team members re-used clues without knowing their purpose had already been served? How does this concept relate to the workplace?

❖ Helpful hints

- Teams who communicate efficiently in the escape room find a way to collaborate in small groups, but share the relevant information and updates with the larger team. This can be accomplished in a variety of ways, but it is important to have multiple lines of communication and for everyone to both hear and be heard.
- The most effective collaboration always includes some transfer of knowledge and ideas. Most puzzles are solved by combining multiple perspectives, and it is usually helpful when one team member explains the set of clues or objects and their logic to another, rather than their interpretation of the solution to the puzzle.

❖ Did you know?

- In their influential study, [Project Aristotle](#), Google identified that their highest-performing teams shared a trait referred to as “psychological safety”. Defined by Harvard professor Amy Edmondson as a “shared belief held by members of a team that the team is safe for interpersonal risk-taking,” psychological safety includes aspects like conversational turn-taking, which is essential in fostering creativity and engagement from all team members. This is an important reminder to always make a concerted effort to include the more introverted team members in the conversation, rather than letting them “fend for themselves.”

Effective Leadership:

“Every one of us has the capacity to lead.” – Simon Sinek

Best Practices	Evaluation		
Used “divide and conquer” approach (working groups of 2-3)	Needs Improvement	Good	Excellent
Every team member was empowered to contribute in a meaningful way (leadership roles were fluid and organic)	Needs Improvement	Good	Excellent
Puzzles were prioritized effectively, but never abandoned	Needs Improvement	Good	Excellent
Consensus was achieved when making important decisions	Needs Improvement	Good	Excellent
Team made effective use of their “hints” (timing)	Needs Improvement	Good	Excellent

❖ Sample questions

- Divide and conquer approach: How were the working groups established? What was the benefit of working in smaller groups? What are the potential benefits of this style of collaboration and problem solving in the workplace? What format of collaboration do you typically use to solve problems at work? Could you possibly improve your current approach? If so, how?
- Empowered team members: What are the contributing factors that led to feelings of empowerment/disempowerment? How was empowerment demonstrated? What impact did these actions/ communications have in the pursuit of your objective? How was the leadership style here different than in your workplace? What could be done to make team members feel more empowered in their day-to-day roles at work?
- Puzzle prioritization: What is the difference between an abandoned and prioritized puzzle? What are the advantages of setting something aside momentarily? How did you communicate when you felt that you had incomplete information or skills to solve a puzzle? Can you identify any similarities or differences in the prioritization process here as compared to the workplace?
- Consensus: What were some of the moments where a consensus was sought? Was it achieved? Why is this important in the context of the escape room? What are the positive effects of seeking consensus on decisions in the workplace? When consensus is not possible, what steps can you take to ensure that all team members remain engaged and connected to their colleagues and the organization?
- Using the hints: What factors contributed to your decision to delay or move forward with asking for your hint? What was different about asking for help from the “expert” rather than a team member? Are there any parallels between this decision-making process and when you ask for help (or don’t) at work?

❖ Helpful hints

- The most successful teams in escape rooms break out into smaller teams and typically change partners at least once over the course of their escape. The psychological benefit of this system is that each team member feels that their ideas can be heard, and that they feel empowered to contribute to the outcome in a meaningful way.

❖ Did you know?

- Self-Determination Theory, a term coined by Edward L. Deci, Ph.D. and Richard Ryan, Ph.D., states that *autonomy, competence and interpersonal relatedness* are the three conditions necessary to effectively foster lasting motivation in a person. Escape rooms are an excellent display of this theory in action. By empowering team members to actively pursue projects that are meaningful to them and to form positive, authentic working relationships with others, team members often experience significant positive motivation without any external material incentives.

Mutual Trust:

“Trust, but verify.” – Ronald Reagan

Best Practices	Evaluation		
Team members did not “micro-manage” each other	Needs Improvement	Good	Excellent
Demonstrated open-mindedness and inclusion of all team members	Needs Improvement	Good	Excellent
Team members showed empathy, positive regard and genuineness towards one another	Needs Improvement	Good	Excellent
Team members asked for and offered help effectively with each other	Needs Improvement	Good	Excellent
Team members were open to having their work verified	Needs Improvement	Good	Excellent

❖ **Sample questions**

- **Micro-managing:** What are some potential signs of micro-management in the escape room? Name some of the negative effects of this type of interaction. What were the differences between your interactions in problem solving in the escape room as compared to the workplace? If you felt responsible for your own actions and projects here, how could a similar level of responsibility be achieved in the workplace?
- **Open-mindedness and inclusion:** How were these principles demonstrated? Why do you think they are important for success in an escape room? Are they equally as important in the workplace? If so, why? How can you do a better job of fostering these principles in the workplace?
- **Empathy, positive regard and genuineness:** How would you define each of these principles? How can these be displayed in the context of an escape attempt? Why are they important? Can you give me an example where this type of behaviour was demonstrated? How can you implement these principles in your relationships?
- **Asking for and offering help:** How did you ask for and offer help to each other? What was efficient or inefficient about this process? Was it different than the process that you take at work? Why? How could your workplace collaboration be improved?
- **Having work verified:** What do you think is meant by the word “verified”? What is most important – that team members be *open* to the possibility of verification, or that the work is *actually verified*? Why? What are some of the differences in having your work verified in this context compared to the workplace? What could be improved at work in this respect?

❖ **Helpful hints**

- Team members often overestimate the level of effort that is required to demonstrate empathy, unconditional positive regard and genuineness during an escape attempt. While creating this specific combination of conditions is a skill that takes effort to develop, the simple act of listening, being open to new ideas and sharing your honest opinion in a collaborative manner is enough to foster interpersonal trust. This is, however, easier said than done in the often ego-driven and competitive environment of the 21st century workplace.

❖ **Did you know?**

- [Carl Rogers](#) is one of the founders of the *Humanistic approach* to counselling. His theory argues that a trusting therapeutic relationship is the foundation for positive change, and that certain conditions are necessary to build trust with clients. Three of these conditions have been widely accepted as fundamental counselling principles across all forms of therapy: the demonstration of empathy, unconditional positive regard and genuineness towards clients. If these are necessary in a therapeutic relationship, are they not also important for all interpersonal relationships?

Synergy: (complementary strengths)

“Synergy is better than your way or my way. It’s our way.” – Stephen Covey

Best Practices	Evaluation		
Team members made use of their individual strengths	Needs Improvement	Good	Excellent
Team had a good balance of “do-ers” (focused on solving puzzles) and “connectors” (focused on sharing information and connecting clues)	Needs Improvement	Good	Excellent
Each team member felt positive about their individual contribution	Needs Improvement	Good	Excellent

❖ **Sample questions**

- **Individual strengths:** How were strengths identified and/or communicated between team members? What were these strengths? Were they specific to puzzles or were they more global/ general? What are some of the ways that team members made use of these strengths? What is the difference between a strength and a skill? Do your team members make use of their natural strengths in the workplace? If so, how is this achieved? Is each member empowered to access the full potential of their strengths?
- **“Do-ers” & “connectors”:** Why do you think it is important to have a balance of do-ers and connectors? Were there any team members who felt that they acted in both these roles at times? How did you feel when acting on one role or the other? Do these roles exist in the workplace on any level? If so, how are they defined (in other words, what organizational roles can be defined more by the term “do-er” or “connector”?) How do team members from these two basic job-types tend to work together in your workplace? Is this approach optimal? Can it be improved? If so, how?
- **Positive individual contributions:** Why do you think it is important for each team member to feel positive about their contribution? How can this be accomplished in the workplace? What behaviours and attitudes are required to maintain these positive feelings on an ongoing basis? Who is responsible for ensuring that this happens?

❖ **Helpful hints**

- In the context of the escape room, the term “do-er” relates to people who tend to spend more time focused on solving the puzzles themselves. “Connectors”, on the other hand, tend to spend more time helping their teammates process the information they find, and sharing information with the group. In relation to career development concepts, “do-ers” tend to identify more with investigative personality types (engineers, scientists, research psychologists, etc.) In this same context, “connectors” tend to identify more with enterprising or social personality types (business people, teachers, nurses, etc.)

❖ **Did you know?**

- Research from the field of [positive psychology](#) has shown that focusing on one’s greatest [character strengths](#) in the workplace helps cultivate meaning and purpose in our work. Rather than concentrating on repairing weaknesses, positive psychology interventions encourage individuals and organizations to intentionally apply their strengths to the work that they do. While most traditional approaches to professional development emphasize intentional skill-building exercises, strength engagement is a more holistic practice that aims to integrate innate talents into every aspect of the individual’s life. Escape rooms often elicit team members’ natural talents and preferences in an autonomous and organic manner. [Job Crafting](#) is one tool that organizations can use to help their employees increase their sense of meaning and purpose in their day-to-day tasks and responsibilities.

Goal Setting

To take advantage of the insights gleaned from the escape room experience, we recommend identifying a specific team goal to be implemented immediately. To achieve a goal (achievement-oriented), it is important to clarify objectives (action-oriented) that will enable the accomplishment of the desired outcome. Use the space below to describe one meaningful, achievable goal for your team, as well as some of the objectives each team member can set for themselves to help the team attain the desired outcome.

We offer the following example to help clarify what is meant by the terms *goal* and *objective*.

(Example)

Goal: Celebrate achievements as a team more regularly

Objectives:

- Identify short-term milestones in addition to long-term accomplishments to be celebrated
- Thank one of your fellow team members for their contribution every day
- Share genuine compliments with team members when you have positive thoughts

Goal: _____

Objectives:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

A message from MentorU

Thank you for using this *Escape the Office* self-facilitated team building exercise. I trust that your team was able to draw out some important lessons and build stronger relationships through this process.

While the self-awareness and mutual trust developed during team-building activities are important, high-performance requires deliberate practice. As research has shown, [deliberate practice](#) is enhanced through the use of a coach, and we would love to help your team implement techniques to maximize their performance.

At *MentorU*, we help individuals and teams develop key interpersonal skills and strategies to enable maximum effectiveness and fulfillment in their work. Our approach flows from our philosophy of team high-performance, which requires shared purpose, good communication, effective leadership, mutual trust and synergy.

We offer individual and group coaching sessions that build skills in some or all of these elements of high-performance, depending on your team's needs. Whether you are looking for a one-day workshop, a comprehensive training program or ongoing coaching, we would love to help you achieve your goals.

Here is a sampling of the topics that we cover:

- [Shared Purpose](#) – aligning personal and organizational mission and values for maximum meaning
- [Job Crafting](#) – identifying and integrating team members' authentic preferences, values and talents to maximize their sense of purpose and productivity at work
- [Speaking for Significance](#) – the art of engaging your audience for maximum impact in presentations
- [The Two Sides of Trust](#) – developing skills to foster interpersonal and operational trust

While we list these topics to give you a sense of the type of work we do, it is by no means exhaustive. Therefore, we invite you to reach out and let us know if you have specific personal or professional development objectives. We would love to help your team build these important skills and others.

Wishing you a life of action, openness and authenticity,

Check out my [TEDx talk](#) on Purposeful Education

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- Striving for Significance





Team Self-Evaluation

Instructions

1. Complete the below evaluation individually. Proceed through each item one-by-one, and **evaluate your team's performance** making sure not only to provide a grade (needs improvement, good, excellent), but also to give reasons and/or examples to support your scores – you should aim to answer the three following questions:
 - a. Why do we deserve this score (how did we demonstrate this characteristic through attitudes and behaviours)?
 - b. Why is this a best practice in escape rooms?
 - c. How does this relate to our day-to-day work?
2. Identify your greatest strengths and opportunities for development as identified through this exercise.
3. Discuss your evaluation results with your escape room teammates and find areas where your ratings align well, and others where they may differ. Discuss why this is the case, giving each team member an opportunity to express their opinion.
4. Bring all escape room participants together, and have each team share their greatest team strengths and opportunities for development with the larger group (if applicable)

1. Shared Purpose:

Best Practices	Evaluation		
Took Immediate action	Needs Improvement	Good	Excellent
Celebrated breakthroughs as a team	Needs Improvement	Good	Excellent
Individual egos were set aside (prioritized team over self)	Needs Improvement	Good	Excellent
Took time to step back and look at the “big picture”	Needs Improvement	Good	Excellent
Team demonstrated determination in achieving objective (escape)	Needs Improvement	Good	Excellent

Comments:

2. Good Communication:

Best Practices	Evaluation		
Shared information efficiently (both in smaller groups and with the whole team)	Needs Improvement	Good	Excellent
Team members all had a roughly equal share in conversation	Needs Improvement	Good	Excellent
Provided a “Transfer of Information” when rotating team members through puzzles (explained steps taken, clues available and thought process)	Needs Improvement	Good	Excellent

Explicitly communicated a “discard pile” of used clues	Needs Improvement	Good	Excellent
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Comments:

3. Effective Leadership:

Best Practices	Evaluation		
Used “divide and conquer” approach (working groups of 2-3)	Needs Improvement	Good	Excellent
Every team member was empowered to contribute in a meaningful way (leadership roles were fluid and organic)	Needs Improvement	Good	Excellent
Puzzles were prioritized effectively, but never abandoned	Needs Improvement	Good	Excellent
Consensus was achieved when making important decisions	Needs Improvement	Good	Excellent
Team made effective use of their “hints” (timing)	Needs Improvement	Good	Excellent

Comments:

4. Mutual Trust:

Best Practices	Evaluation		
Team members did not “micro-manage” each other	Needs Improvement	Good	Excellent
Demonstrated open-mindedness and inclusion of all team members	Needs Improvement	Good	Excellent
Team members showed empathy, positive regard and genuineness towards one another	Needs Improvement	Good	Excellent
Team members asked for and offered help effectively with each other	Needs Improvement	Good	Excellent
Team members were open to having their work verified	Needs Improvement	Good	Excellent

Comments:

5. Synergy: (complementarity of strengths)

Best Practices	Evaluation		
Team members made use of their individual strengths	Needs Improvement	Good	Excellent
Team had a good balance of “do-ers” (focused on solving puzzles) and “connectors” (focused on sharing information and connecting clues)	Needs Improvement	Good	Excellent
Each team member felt positive about their individual contribution	Needs Improvement	Good	Excellent

Comments:

Team Strengths/highlights:

Identify 1-3 of your greatest strengths as a team throughout this experience

Opportunities for Development:

Identify 1-3 of your challenges as a team throughout this experience