Team Connection Challenge

Break down silos and build stronger professional relationships across departments

30-Day Challenges

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Part 1 · About this challenge

Break down silos and build stronger professional relationships across departments

What this challenge covers

Learning Objectives:

- Build authentic professional connections across departments and roles
- Dismantle organizational silos that hinder collaboration
- Develop skills in vulnerability and professional relationship-building
- Create sustainable practices for maintaining cross-team connections

Key Topics:

- Professional networking and relationship building
- Cross-departmental collaboration
- Breaking down organizational barriers
- Vulnerability in professional settings
- Mentorship and peer support

Intended Audience:

All staff members in SUD treatment organizations, especially those working in siloed departments

Prerequisites:

None - suitable for all experience levels

Related Content:

Team Connection Assessment • Communication workshops • Team Chemistry modules

Breaking Down Silos, Building Up Teams

Why This Challenge Matters

In substance use disorder treatment, we often work in silos—clinical, medical, administrative, and support staff operating in parallel rather than together. This fragmentation impacts both team wellbeing and client outcomes.

This 30-day challenge is designed to break down barriers, build psychological safety, and create a culture of connection and mutual support. Each day offers a small, actionable step toward building a more connected, effective team.

Build Peer Connections

Dismantle Silos

Learn & Teach

Practice Vulnerability

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How to Use: Complete one challenge each day. Set aside 15-30 minutes for the activity and 5 minutes for reflection. Track your progress and watch your professional network transform.

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Part 2 · Week 1

Building Awareness

Day 1 · Awareness

Map Your Professional Network

Today's Challenge:

List all the colleagues you interact with regularly. Note which departments/roles they represent. Identify any 'silos' or gaps in your connections.

Reflection:

What patterns did you notice about who you connect with and who you don't?

Your reflection...

Day 2 · Connection

Coffee with Someone New

Today's Challenge:

Invite a colleague from a different department or shift for a 15-minute coffee chat. Ask about their role and biggest challenges.

Reflection:

What surprised you about their perspective or experience?

Your reflection...

Day 3 · Learning

Shadow for an Hour

Today's Challenge:

Spend an hour observing a colleague in a different role (intake, clinical, administrative, medical). Take notes on what you learn.

Reflection:

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How does understanding their role change how you might collaborate?

Your reflection...

Day 4 · Appreciation

Gratitude Round

Today's Challenge:

Thank three colleagues specifically for something they've done. Be detailed about the impact of their actions.

Reflection:

How did people respond to specific appreciation? How did it feel to give it?

Your reflection...

Day 5 · Vulnerability

Share a Learning Moment

Today's Challenge:

In a team meeting or with a peer, share a mistake you made and what you learned from it. Create space for others to do the same.

Reflection:

What happened when you modeled vulnerability? Did others share too?

Your reflection...

Day 6 · Bridge Building

Cross-Department Lunch

Today's Challenge:

Organize or join a lunch that includes people from at least 3 different departments/roles. Keep conversation light and personal.

Reflection:

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What commonalities did you discover beyond work roles?

Your reflection...

Day 7 · Reflection

Week 1 Integration

Today's Challenge:

Review your week's connections. Identify one relationship you want to deepen and one new connection you want to make next week.

Reflection:

What barriers to connection have you noticed? What's helping you connect?

Your reflection...

Week 1 Review: Building Awareness

What connections surprised you this week?

Reflect on unexpected connections or insights...

What barriers to connection did you encounter?

Time, culture, personalities, systems...

Which practice from this week will you continue?

Identify sustainable practices...

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Part 3 · Week 2

Deepening Understanding

Day 8 · Empathy

Walk in Their Shoes

Today's Challenge:

Ask a colleague about their most challenging client/situation currently. Listen without offering solutions—just understand their experience.

Reflection:

What did you learn by listening without trying to fix or advise?

Your reflection...

Day 9 · Collaboration

Offer Your Strengths

Today's Challenge:

Identify a skill you have that could help a colleague. Offer to teach, assist, or collaborate without expecting anything in return.

Reflection:

How did it feel to offer help proactively? What was the response?

Your reflection...

Day 10 · Learning

Ask to Be Taught

Today's Challenge:

Request that a colleague teach you something they're skilled at—could be clinical, technical, or administrative.

Reflection:

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What did you learn about being a student again? About your colleague as a teacher?

Your reflection...

Day 11 · Innovation

Brainstorm Across Boundaries

Today's Challenge:

Grab someone from a different area and spend 20 minutes brainstorming solutions to a shared challenge. No idea is too wild.

Reflection:

How did diverse perspectives change the ideas generated?

Your reflection...

Day 12 · Recognition

Spotlight a Silent Contributor

Today's Challenge:

Publicly recognize someone whose contributions often go unnoticed. Be specific about their impact on the team or clients.

Reflection:

Who are the 'invisible' contributors on your team? How can they be better seen?

Your reflection...

Day 13 · Connection

Share Your Story

Today's Challenge:

In an appropriate setting, share why you chose this field. Ask others to share their 'why' as well.

Reflection:

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What themes emerged in people's stories? What connected you?

Your reflection...

Day 14 · Integration

Create a Connection Plan

Today's Challenge:

Based on two weeks of challenges, create a plan for one ongoing connection practice you'll maintain.

Reflection:

What connection practices feel most natural and impactful for you?

Your reflection...

Week 2 Review: Deepening Understanding

What connections surprised you this week?

Reflect on unexpected connections or insights...

What barriers to connection did you encounter?

Time, culture, personalities, systems...

Which practice from this week will you continue?

Identify sustainable practices...

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Part 4 · Week 3

Building Bridges

Day 15 · Leadership

Mentor for a Day

Today's Challenge:

Offer to mentor a newer staff member for one day. Share knowledge, introduce them to others, and answer questions.

Reflection:

What did you learn about your own journey by guiding someone else?

Your reflection...

Day 16 · Advocacy

Amplify a Voice

Today's Challenge:

In a meeting, actively support and amplify someone else's idea, especially if they're often overlooked.

Reflection:

How can you use your position to elevate others' contributions?

Your reflection...

Day 17 · Problem-Solving

Cross-Functional Case Review

Today's Challenge:

Organize or suggest a case review that includes perspectives from clinical, medical, admin, and support staff.

Reflection:

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How did multiple perspectives enhance understanding of the client's needs?

Your reflection...

Day 18 · Culture Building

Start a Ritual

Today's Challenge:

Propose or start a simple team ritual that promotes connection (morning huddle, gratitude round, wins of the week).

Reflection:

What rituals could help sustain connection beyond this challenge?

Your reflection...

Day 19 · Feedback

Ask for Growth Feedback

Today's Challenge:

Ask a trusted colleague for honest feedback about how you could collaborate better. Listen without defending.

Reflection:

What did you learn about yourself? About the courage it takes to ask?

Your reflection...

Day 20 · Celebration

Celebrate Small Wins

Today's Challenge:

Identify and celebrate three small wins from your team this week. Make sure different people are recognized.

Reflection:

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How does celebrating small wins change team energy and connection?

Your reflection...

Day 21 · Reflection

Connection Check-In

Today's Challenge:

Schedule brief check-ins with three people you've connected with during this challenge. How are those connections going?

Reflection:

Which connections are naturally sustaining? Which need intentional nurturing?

Your reflection...

Week 3 Review: Building Bridges

What connections surprised you this week?

Reflect on unexpected connections or insights...

What barriers to connection did you encounter?

Time, culture, personalities, systems...

Which practice from this week will you continue?

Identify sustainable practices...

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Part 5 · Week 4

Sustaining Change

Day 22 · Systems Thinking

Map the Workflow

Today's Challenge:

With colleagues from different areas, map how a client moves through your system. Identify connection points and gaps.

Reflection:

Where do silos create challenges for clients? How could better connection help?

Your reflection...

Day 23 · Coaching

Peer Coaching Exchange

Today's Challenge:

Set up a peer coaching exchange—30 minutes where you coach a colleague on a challenge, then switch roles.

Reflection:

How is peer coaching different from advice-giving? What made it effective?

Your reflection...

Day 24 · Innovation

Dream Team Meeting

Today's Challenge:

If you could redesign team meetings for maximum connection and effectiveness, what would you change? Share ideas with leadership.

Reflection:

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What small changes could make meetings more connecting and productive?

Your reflection...

Day 25 · Vulnerability

Share a Current Challenge

Today's Challenge:

Share a current professional challenge with your team and ask for support or perspectives. Model asking for help.

Reflection:

How does sharing challenges change team dynamics? What support emerged?

Your reflection...

Day 26 · Legacy

Document Team Wisdom

Today's Challenge:

Start documenting team wisdom—tips, insights, and practices that should be passed on. Include voices from all roles.

Reflection:

What knowledge might be lost if people leave? How can you preserve it?

Your reflection...

Day 27 · Appreciation

Connection Appreciation

Today's Challenge:

Write brief notes to 5 people who've made this challenge meaningful. Share specific impacts of connecting with them.

Reflection:

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How has expressing appreciation deepened connections?

Your reflection...

Day 28 · Planning

Design Your Connection Practice

Today's Challenge:

Design a personal practice for maintaining and building connections going forward. Be specific and realistic.

Reflection:

What will you commit to doing weekly to maintain cross-team connections?

Your reflection...

Day 29 · Teaching

Share the Challenge

Today's Challenge:

Share this challenge with others. Offer to support someone else in building connections across silos.

Reflection:

How could this challenge spread through your organization?

Your reflection...

Day 30 · Celebration

Celebrate and Commit

Today's Challenge:

Celebrate completing the challenge! Share your biggest insights with your team and commit to one ongoing practice.

Reflection:

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How have you changed as a connector? What will you sustain going forward?

Your reflection...

Week 4 Review: Sustaining Change

What connections surprised you this week?

Reflect on unexpected connections or insights...

What barriers to connection did you encounter?

Time, culture, personalities, systems...

Which practice from this week will you continue?

Identify sustainable practices...

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Part 6 · Tips for Success

Tips for Success

Making Connections Easier

- Start with "I'm doing a professional development challenge..."
- Keep initial connections brief (15-20 minutes)
- Focus on curiosity rather than networking
- Use meal times and breaks for connection
- Be genuine—this isn't about politics or advancement

Overcoming Common Obstacles

- "Too busy" → Start with 5-minute connections
- "People aren't interested" → Lead with curiosity about them
- "It feels awkward" → Acknowledge it: "This feels a bit awkward but..."
- "Nothing in common" → Look deeper—we all want to help clients
- "They're difficult" → Practice compassionate curiosity

Remember: The goal isn't to become best friends with everyone. It's to build understanding, respect, and collaboration pathways that benefit your team and clients. Small connections create big changes in organizational culture.

Final Reflection & Commitment

How have you grown as a connector and collaborator?

What three connection practices will you maintain going forward?

How will you help spread a culture of connection in your workplace?

Congratulations on Your Connection Journey!

You've taken 30 days to invest in building bridges and breaking down silos. The connections you've made will continue to strengthen your team and improve client care.

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"Helpers Helping Helpers"

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Part 7 · Team Connection Assessment

Team Connection Assessment

Take this assessment before starting the challenge to identify areas for focus

Evaluate your team's connection culture and identify opportunities for growth

Cross-Department Collaboration

How well do different departments work together?

I regularly collaborate with colleagues from other departments

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

Strongly Disagree · Strongly Agree

Information flows freely between different departments

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

Strongly Disagree · Strongly Agree

We have effective processes for cross-department projects

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

Strongly Disagree · Strongly Agree

Different departments understand each other's roles and challenges

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

Strongly Disagree · Strongly Agree

There are no 'us vs them' attitudes between departments

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

Strongly Disagree · Strongly Agree

Saved as you go — leave and come back to the same question.

Note: This assessment is designed to identify strengths and opportunities in team connection. Honest responses will provide the most valuable insights for improving your workplace culture.

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5 ○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

Team Psychological Safety

How safe do team members feel to be vulnerable and authentic?

I feel comfortable admitting mistakes to my colleagues

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

Team members can bring up problems and difficult issues

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

It's safe to take risks and try new approaches in this team

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

No one on this team would deliberately act in a way that undermines my efforts

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○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

My unique skills and talents are valued and utilized

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

Peer Support & Learning

How well does the team support each other's growth and development?

Colleagues regularly share knowledge and skills with each other

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

I have opportunities to learn from peers in different roles

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

Team members actively mentor and coach each other

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

We celebrate each other's successes and growth

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

There's a culture of continuous learning and improvement

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

Communication & Connection

How effectively does the team communicate and connect?

Communication between team members is open and honest

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

I have meaningful professional relationships beyond my immediate team

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

Conflicts are addressed constructively when they arise

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

Team members know each other as whole people, not just roles

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

We have regular opportunities for informal connection

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

Organizational Silos

To what extent do silos exist in your organization?

Departments operate independently with little interaction

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

Information gets 'stuck' within departments

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

There's competition rather than collaboration between departments

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

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Client care suffers due to poor coordination between departments

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

Staff identify more with their department than the organization's mission

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

Support & Wellbeing

How well does the team support each other's wellbeing?

Colleagues check in on each other's wellbeing regularly

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

Team members support each other during difficult times

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

We address burnout and compassion fatigue proactively

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

The team celebrates personal and professional milestones

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

I feel genuinely cared about by my colleagues

○ 1 ○ 2 ○ 3 ○ 4 ○ 5

Scoring guide

Score: 80 and above — Excellent: Strong culture of connection and collaboration

Score: 60–79 — Good: Solid foundation with room for growth

Score: 40–59 — Fair: Significant opportunities for improvement

Score: below 40 — Needs Attention: Critical need for connection initiatives

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