Effective Practices shared during the webinar

What are some effective ways to generate a set of group agreements?

- Brainstorm with the group
- doing a values exercise
- Ask the group for their input to create the agreements
- create a space where people feel free to express their opinions
- Take a few minutes at the start of a meeting to draft group agreements and post on a board
- make a list and ask the group their opinions
- Meeting scheduled with schedule polls.
- Write norms on newsprint, review
- Ask what standards group members hold themselves to
- shared group doc to compile ideas
- Individual lists --->board share-->and then asterisk duplicates
- Have the group decide on the ideas for the group.
- open dialog
- I do thumbs-up/thumbs-down/thumbs-sideways scales to build consensus or figure out where there isn't consensus (especially over zoom!)
- Group collaboration and establishment of group guidelines where everybody feels empowered to express their respective opinions in a safer space
- Create a safe space and have members share their reflections free of judgment and then ask for their feedback
- For ongoing teams you could create boilerplate agreements reminders for subsequent agendas
- Create a safe space and have members share their reflections free of judgment and then ask for their feedback
- I did group needs/expectations, and then had an individual expectations conversation with each of my members about what they need from me as a Leader

How can you reinforce group agreements that are in place?

- Leading by example!
- Keep group members accountable
- keep a living written document to refer to
- make it a safe space for others to call out if a norm is broken
- Revisit the importance of or reason why the agreement was put in place.
- encouraging everyone to be accountable for themselves
- come back to your list during meetings
- Revisit/post at meetings
- Create a quick poll to check which ones we have had issues with and follow up/modify as needed

- Review the agreement with the group, if there are any members not adhering to the agreement hold the accountable.
- getting feedback
- Revisit the importance of or reason why the agreement was put in place.

How do you create respectful and effective communication with and among your members?

- Figure out what mode of communication works best for them: phone call/text/email/etc
- Placing instructions in a group format, instead of pointing out one member alone.
- I check-in with my VISTAs one on one. I listen to what they have to say and I respond respectfully whether I disagree or not. And then we try to come up with a solution
- Listen more and try to make sure what we talk about relates to and advances the meeting objective
- I tend to draft my emails in a way that covers all types of communications styles and follow up with members 1:1 to ask their preference
- Be direct. Build a relationship beyond sending instructions
- Typing what you want to say (for email) and coming back to it a bit later to make sure it still makes sense
- I send out emails every month detailing what is needed for monthly reports. I have monthly check ins and send timely emails for dated items.
- Admitting when you make mistakes is huge for ensuring communication and trust
- Weekly newsletter with key deadlines and other resources
- Be informal on occasion. Friendliness can take you a long way

What are your best practices for guiding members or to promote peer support among members?

- Workplace by Facebook
- Slack, Shared google resource drive, milanote
- We use Slack.
- Microsoft Teams, Google Drive/Forms/Sheets, Box
- Slack
- Microsoft Teams, Zoom, Trello
- I use GroupMe
- We have a CREW app, Google Sheets, and have ISTs in the Spring and Fall.
- we have a facebook group
- Shared calendars!
- I also make a point to connect VISTA Members who are currently working on the same objectives. We spend a part of our check-in discussing our projects so they can reach out to each other.
- we start our video conferences early to have an "open office hours" to chat casually
- I also establish the expectation that they have to take responsibility for some group cohesion - they usually by and large want to be connected because it's a big selling point of our cohort, so

setting that as an expectation means they're more willing to connect with each other without me being involved.
- We have lots of different VISTA created channels in slack to encourage them to use it (like share your pets; baking; vista challenges (like a virtual bingo or video competition)
- Group Zoom calls
- Try to make sure that the more informal, friendly culture is there to not feel weird about reaching out to others

How do you keep your team presence engaging and lively?

- I cut up and tell stupid jokes with my team. We spin a wheel to determine who shares their "highs and lows". I am real and share my successes and failures. I am not shy about my failures.
- Cat tax. If you have a pet, you have to post a picture
- Select a few VISTA members to collaborate to lead monthly Zoom Calls
- I try to remember something about everyones personality and bring it to the spotlight.
- We have a wonderful work culture so most of this comes naturally. We also routinely collaborate as well, which is helpful
- good things of course
- Featuring a VISTA member success in the monthly newsletter.
- Zoom meetings have been useful
- Weekly newsletter with fun memes and featuring member's success stories
- I also did an icebreaker where when we came back from break we each brought a physical item to share with the group - really good for getting people to open up over Zoom
- I do informal one-on-one calls. If I glean a good story or success on those calls, I share with the whole team
- Before COVID, we did lunch and learns, so we now have the3 occasional virtual lunch and learn from our homes
- We had our first virtual IST.
- Motivational email and theme days of the week
- We've done a week of virtual team building activities via zoom