



SPECIAL SUPPLEMENT

# BETTER THAN EVER

A CCS GROUP PROCESS TO HELP FACILITATE A  
CONSTRUCTIVE AND MEANINGFUL REVIEW AND  
PLANNING CONVERSATION WITH A TEAM  
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# better than ever



## CCS GROUP PROCESS FOR TEAM REFLECTION

### TIME

2-3 hours

### SIZE + SETTING

typically 4 – 12  
(max. 24 participants)  
seated in horseshoe or small groups

### YOU WILL NEED

CCS vision pack and  
sheet of vision stickers  
[per participant]

template: when I'm at my best

handout: better than ever  
team questions

handout: being better than ever  
[per participant]

coloured pens and flipchart

Post-it notes

CCS jumbo vision pack

### DOWNLOADS

[ccscards.com.au/ccsworld](http://ccscards.com.au/ccsworld)

**Building, growing and getting better creates a feeling of achievement and success. To help a team be better than ever — to create an environment where everyone can thrive — you need to help them clarify: where they have been, what they want to leave behind, what they want to bring forward and what new things they would like to introduce.**

**The CCS 'Better than ever' process is a reliable method for facilitating this vital team review and forward planning conversation.**

It is important to allow time and not to rush the process. Each person needs the time to reflect and share openly and honestly. Every response and contribution should be valued and affirmed — even if it is difficult. The goal is to move from that past and focus on a positive and energised future. To do this it's important to hear the reality of what has gone before and consider what it will take to build a better future.

The process opens by comfortably setting the expected participation and disclosure level, followed by exploring the reality of the past, the ideal environment going forward and affirming the strengths of individuals and the team. Participants are then given a transfer activity to carry out following the session.

1. opener
2. exploring reality: my experience of the last year
3. individual ideal: when I'm at my best
4. team: our collective best
5. team ideal: the better than ever team
6. affirmation
7. transfer activity: being better than ever.



## set up

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- Set out the room to have the team sitting comfortably in a horseshoe, or if there is more than 12 participants, sit them in small groups
- Participants should be able to see you and easily interact with each other
- CCS vision pack for each participant
- 1 randomly chosen CCS jumbo card placed face down in front of each seat.

## 1. opener

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We begin with an opener that immediately gets team members participating and alludes to the level of disclosure that is expected during the session. This is a single card opener in which participants are dealt a single jumbo vision pack card and respond using only this card as a stimulus.

As the facilitator it is appropriate for you to also take a random card and share your personal story.

Set the scene for the session by saying something like:

*“We will be exploring the reality of the past, and creating a picture of the future — bringing forward the best of the past and leaving behind the things that will no longer serve us as a team.”*

*“To do this, it’s important that everyone shares their truth — openly and honestly. There is no absolute right or wrong answer, there is only perspective. We want to hear from everyone.”*

*“To move forward positively it’s important that we share our truth. Some of it will be great, some of it will be not so positive. As our brains react more strongly to the negative, we are going to share that first.”*

*“So, let’s open with a simple, yet powerful activity we call downside up.”*

As the facilitator, you will demonstrate this first. Pick up your jumbo vision pack card and say something like:

*“In a moment I’ll ask you to share your ‘downside up’. You do this by looking at your card, think about what*



*it means to you about your experience of the last year. Then share with us a downside from the year, and an upside. I'll go first ..."*

Example:



*"I've got a picture of some really big rocks. My downside from the year when I look at this image, I think of the heavy weight I have carried. I have felt weighed down with some really big responsibilities and issues in the family, and at work this year and it's been tough. From an upside, when I look at the image, they are rocks piled on top of each other. I see this as some of the hurdles I have overcome, and by doing that I have been building a stronger sense of resilience. I've grown in ways that I didn't imagine."*

Hand over to the participants and ask for volunteers to go first. Go around the group and have every person share their card and thoughts. If the group is bigger than 12, have the smaller groups each share within their small group, then ask for some volunteers to share with the whole group.

## 2. exploring reality: my experience of the last year

Hand everyone a CCS vision pack and say something like:

*"Everyone has the same pack of cards. Each pack is made up of a specially selected set of photographs, illustrations and words. Any card can mean anything to anyone at any time — there are no set meanings and no rights or wrongs. So, feel free to select any cards that you believe best represent your feelings about a topic. We will be using the cards to help uncover our thoughts and feelings about the next few topics."*

Reassure the team that it's important to hear from everyone about their reality of the past so that we can constructively and positively move forward. Then say something like:

*"Now, I'd like you to go through your vision pack and choose any cards that, for you, describe your experience of the last year — good and bad."*

Play some music and allow participants the time to make their selections — assure the participants that there is plenty of time.

Once the cards have been chosen, say:

*"Now, take a look at your choices. Take a few moments to see if you can group them into themes."*



Then, ask everyone to share their choices with the person next to them — revealing one card or theme at a time. Remember, sometimes people do not truly know what they think until they hear what they say. So it's good practice to give them the chance to articulate their choices before sharing with the whole team.

Now, go around the team and have every person share their choices and thoughts. If the team has more than 12, you may wish table groups to share and then summarise their thoughts on a flip chart to share back to the group. During the sharing process, it's important to encourage participants to engage and probe for meaning and understanding of the responses.

**Capture the main thoughts from the whole team on flipcharts.**

Move on with:

*“Thank you for sharing so openly. Now, put all your cards back in their box and let's move on together.”*



### 3. individual ideal: ‘When I’m at my best’

To perform at their collective best, a team should work together to create an environment that provides regular opportunities for each team member to perform at their individual best. As such, this next part of the process gives individuals a way to identify the elements of an experience that are conducive to them performing at their best.

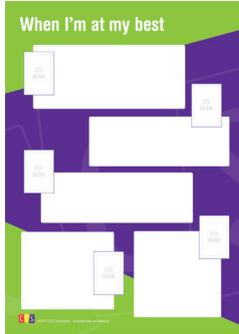
Ask participants to put their vision packs aside and say something like:

*“To at your best as a team, you need to be at your best as individuals. So, let's look at that.*

*“Close your eyes for a moment. Think of a time or times, when you have been at your absolute best. A time you felt in your groove, when you were performing at your very best. You were on fire. You felt amazing. You just knew that you ‘nailed it’.*

*“Take yourself to that moment: what was going on around you? What did you do in that moment? Who was with you? What were you doing? Thinking? Feeling? What helped to allow you to be so great?*

*“Now, open your eyes and go through your pack and find as many cards as you like to describe the **elements of this experience**. Don't so much tell the story — focus more on the elements that created the opportunity for you to be at your best?”*



Play some music and give them the time they need to make their selections. Then, ask everyone to reveal their choices and to share their thoughts with the person next to them.

Hand each participant a copy of the *When I'm at my best* template and a sheet of CCS vision stickers. Encourage them to refine their choices down to 5 cards and record their choices.

### 4. team: our collective best

Divide the team into groups of 3 or 4.

Have them share their *When I'm at my best* choices with each other.

Then, have them discuss the following questions:

- When are we at our individual bests?
- What elements are common and what elements are unique?
- What elements are required for our collective best?

The group can summarise their responses either by making a few notes on a chart or by selecting a few representative CCS cards.

Have each group share their 'discoveries with the team.



### 5. team ideal: the better than ever team

Give each group the *Better than ever team questions* handout and a book of Post-it notes.

Have them consider each of the four questions on the handout and record their conclusions in three categories: leave behind, bring forward and introduce. Record one thought per Post-it.



To be a better than ever team:

- What do we need to leave behind?
- What do we need to stop doing?
- What do we need to bring forward and do more of?
- What could we could introduce to help us?

Draw up flip charts headed:

'Leave behind', 'Bring forward', 'Introduce'.

Have groups place their thought Post-its on the appropriate charts.

Once all groups have posted their choices, facilitate the team through a discussion and refinement of all the responses.

Highlight the most important elements under each category.

Encourage the team to record and distribute these important elements and use them to inform future strategies and team initiatives.

## 6. affirmation

Close the session by providing the team with an impactful way to affirm each other and thank each other for their contributions to the team.

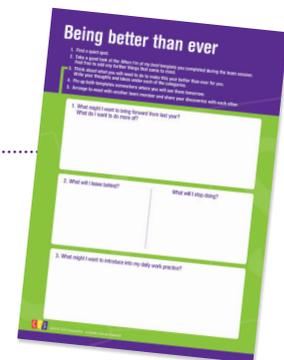
Ask participants to stand in 2 lines facing each other. With their vision pack in hand, facing the person opposite, ask each person to choose a card to affirm the contributions and strengths of their partner and then share why they chose what they chose.

Repeat for two or more people.

## 7. transfer activity: 'being better than ever'

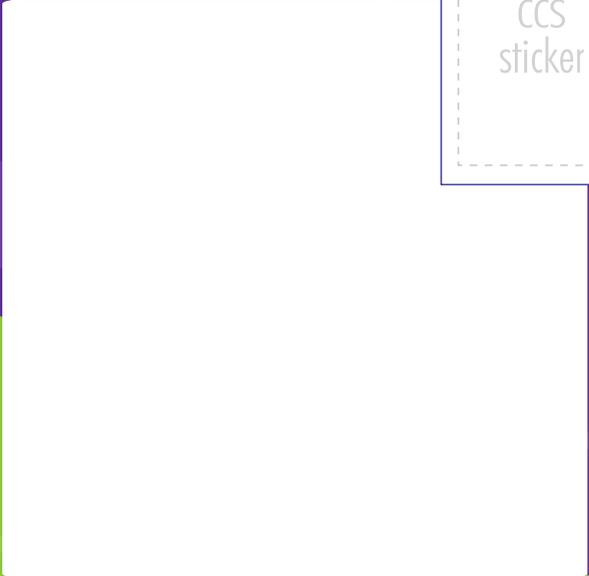
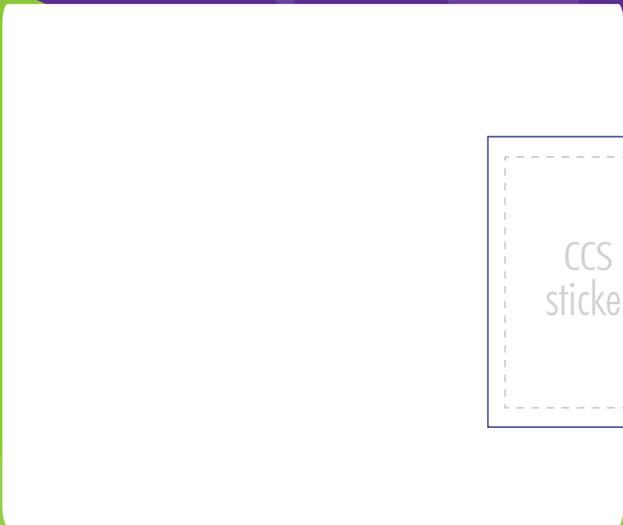
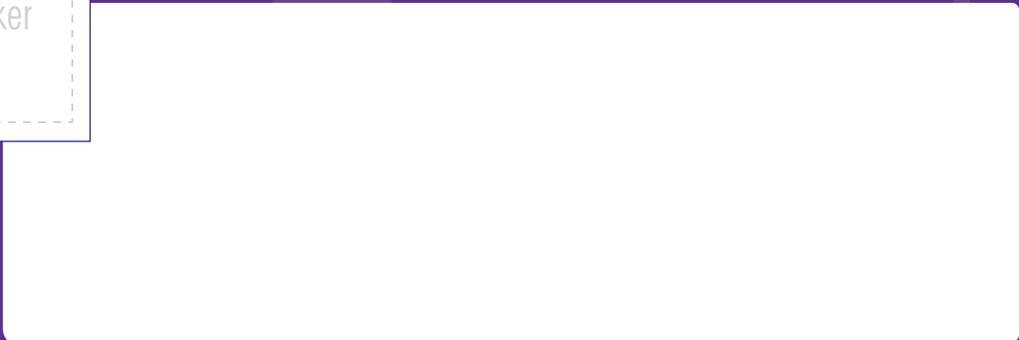
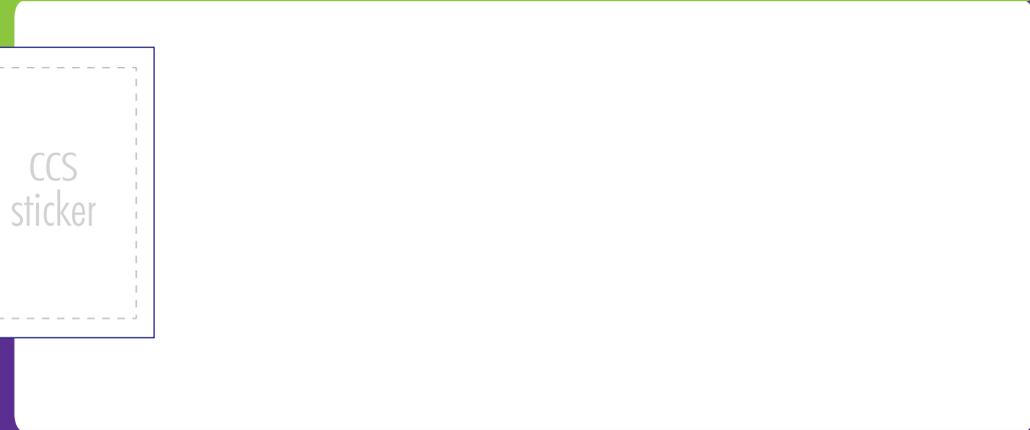
Give participants a way to deepen their insights about when they are at their best by giving them the *Being better than ever transfer activity handout*.

1. Find a quiet spot.
2. Take a good look at the *When I'm at my best* template you completed during the team session. Feel free to add any further things that come to mind.
3. Think about what you will need to do to make this year better than ever for you. Write your thoughts and ideas under each of the categories.
4. Pin up both templates somewhere where you will see them tomorrow.
5. Arrange to meet with another team member and share your discoveries with each other.



You may also like to allow them to keep their CCS vision pack for further reflection.

# When I'm at my best



# THE BETTER THAN EVER TEAM

To be a **better than ever team**:

What do we need to leave behind?

What do we need to stop doing?

What do we need bring forward and do more of?

What could we could introduce to help us?

Record your responses under these 3 headings:

Leave behind • Bring forward • Introduce.

# Being better than ever

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2. Take a good look at the *When I'm at my best* template you completed during the team session. Feel free to add any further things that come to mind.
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1. What might I want to bring forward from last year?  
What do I want to do more of?

2. What will I leave behind?

What will I stop doing?

3. What might I want to introduce into my daily work practice?