

The 5-Minute Alignment Check

A quick clarity reset when people are stretched and priorities blur

Developed by Abby McIntyre Consulting (2025)

This is a quick tool to use before a meeting or update. Spend five minutes getting clear on what matters so your team doesn't have to guess.

It helps you confirm direction, reduce assumptions, and steady your team - especially when capacity is low. Use it at anytime the work feels heavy and people are running low on energy.

Purpose (1 minute)

1. **What are we actually here to do?** *(One sentence you could say out loud without stumbling.)*
2. **If this goes well, what changes by the end?** *(One sentence. Keep it real, not ideal.)*

Priority (1 minute)

1. **What's the one thing that matters most in this conversation?** *(Pick one. Not three.)*
 - ☐ Make a decision
 - ☐ Share an update
 - ☐ Clarify direction
 - ☐ Ask for resources
 - ☐ Shift behaviour or focus
 - ☐ Something else (name it)
2. **What can wait?** *(List one or two things you do NOT need to cover.) This is where most meetings drift. Naming it ahead of time stops that.*

Reduce Assumptions (1 minute)

1. **What are people probably guessing about right now?** *(List one or two things. Don't soften it.)*
2. **What's changed since the last time you talked about this?** *(Anything at all. Even small shifts matter.)*
3. **What do people need to know so they aren't filling in the blanks themselves?** *(Keep it tight.)*

Assumptions are what slow teams down the fastest, especially when they're tired.

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Make People Feel Seen (1 minute)

1. **Who is going to feel the impact of this most?** *(Name the group, role, or person.)*
2. **What might they be worried about?** *(Be honest.)*
3. **What do you want them to hear from you?** *(Write one clear, human sentence.)*

Example

"I know the load is heavy and the timing isn't ideal. Here's what matters most right now."

This one step often does more than any plan.

Confirm Next Steps (1 minute)

1. **What needs to happen in the next week - realistically?** *(Two or three actions, max.)*
2. **Who owns each action?** *(Names, not titles.)*
3. **When will we check in again?** *(Pick a date and stick to it.)*

Repeat these at the end of your meeting.

It's the fastest way to stop rework and keep people grounded.

Let me know how this works for you. I'd love to hear what you notice.

Until next time,

Abby

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