

Expert one-on-one meeting template pack for performance and wellbeing

How to run one-on-ones that support employee growth, boost engagement, and help to create a culture of safety at work.



Overview

A few things inside:

- 100+ practical one-on-one questions across wellbeing, performance, alignment and growth
- Tailored prompts for different roles, departments and leadership levels
- A printable meeting format to build consistency
- Tips for talking about mental load and motivation without overstepping
- Guidance aligned with WHS, WorkSafe NZ and UK HSE frameworks

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What is a one-on-one meeting?

A one-on-one (or 1:1) meeting is a regular, dedicated time for a manager and team member to connect in a private, focused setting. Unlike team meetings or performance reviews, one-on-ones are designed to be ongoing conversations that support the employee's experience in real time — from daily challenges to long-term growth.

They're not just about checking progress on tasks. They're a space to talk about clarity, support, stress levels, goals, and anything else that might be affecting how someone shows up at work.

Done well, 1:1s are one of the most powerful tools managers have to build trust, spot issues early, and create a psychologically safe environment for their teams.

“70% of the variance in team engagement is determined solely by the manager.”

Gallup

Why one-on-ones matter more than ever

One-on-one meetings are a simple but powerful way to build connection, alignment, and trust between managers and their teams. When they're used consistently and with intention, they create space to talk not just about performance but also about motivation, mental load, and what support looks like day-to-day.

These conversations are critical as workplaces navigate hybrid models, changing expectations and growing responsibilities around employee wellbeing.

Across Australia, New Zealand, and the UK, there's an increasing focus on managing psychosocial risks at work. In Australia, this is shaped by [Safe Work Australia's model WHS laws](#). New Zealand takes a similar approach through the [Health and Safety at Work Act 2015](#), overseen by [WorkSafe NZ](#). In the UK, employers must meet obligations under the [Health and Safety at Work Act 1974](#), alongside guidance from the [Health and Safety Executive \(HSE\)](#) on managing stress and mental health at work.

Used well, one-on-ones can play a meaningful role in meeting these responsibilities while also supporting your team's wellbeing, growth, and every day work experience.

Unfortunately, a lot of managers are not equipped or trained to hold productive one-on-one meetings. Gallup found in a recent study that among nearly 15,000 employees, [only 16% said the last conversation](#) with their manager was extremely meaningful.

Let's create more meaningful conversations at work.

This template pack is designed to provide guidance on how to structure one-on-one meetings, suggest some example questions, and share tips for effective facilitation.

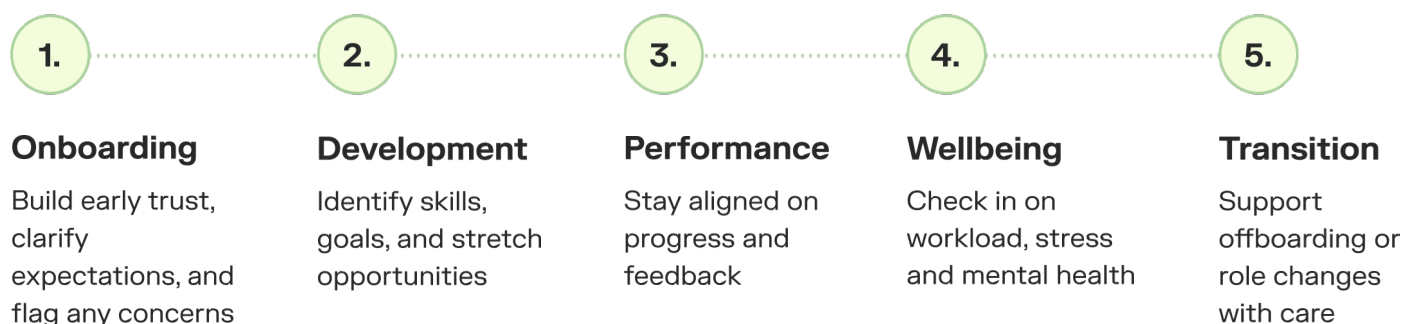


How to structure a one-on-one meeting

- ☐ **Frequency:** Weekly or fortnightly
- ☐ **Duration:** 30–60 minutes
- ☐ **Setting:** Ideally face-to-face or over video in a private, focused environment
- ☐ **Format:** Can be employee-led or manager-guided, depending on preference and needs
- ☐ **Tracking:** Keep brief notes and follow up consistently. You can use HR and employee engagement software to take notes, or simply keep a track of things in a private document.

Where one-on-ones fit in the employee experience

Used well, 1:1s support key moments throughout the employee lifecycle:





How can HR leaders embed one-on-one meetings into company culture?

To cultivate proactive 1:1s, HR teams can champion them as a powerful tool for building connection, alignment, and trust. By equipping leaders with practical resources like adaptable templates and targeted question prompts, HR can encourage meaningful conversations that go beyond task updates to include wellbeing, growth, and support.

Research from Gallup suggests that employees who have consistent one-on-one meetings with their manager are almost three times more likely to be engaged than employees who don't. Emphasising that one-on-one meetings create space to discuss motivation, mental load, and foster psychological safety, HR can drive home the importance of consistent, well-structured meetings that truly support both individual and team success.

The one-on-one question library

The following sections include flexible question prompts designed to support a range of conversations across different teams, roles, and focus areas. Use them to guide meaningful one-on-ones that go beyond the surface.



Sonder insight

Consider the following questions a starting point. What inspiration can you draw from them to make them even more effective for your one-on-ones?

Focus areas



Performance and productivity

- What's been going well recently?
- Are there any blockers or delays we should look at together?
- What's taking up most of your time right now – and is it adding the right value?
- Do your current goals feel clear and achievable?
- What kind of feedback would be most valuable to you right now?
- Is there a process or tool that's slowing you down?
- What would you like to do more (or less) of?
- Are there any responsibilities you'd like to take on, or step away from?
- Do you feel your work is aligned with the team's goals?
- Are there any skills or capabilities you'd like to develop in the next 3–6 months?
- How confident are you in your decision-making at the moment?
- Is there anything you'd like to try, test or experiment with?



Wellbeing and psychosocial risk management

- How have you been feeling, in and outside of work?
- What's been energising or motivating you lately?
- Are you managing to switch off and recharge?
- Are there any signs of stress or burnout we should be aware of?
- Do you feel safe speaking up about concerns or mistakes?
- What does support look like for you right now?
- What's one thing we could change to make your day-to-day more manageable?
- Are you comfortable with your current workload and pace?
- Do you feel a sense of purpose in your role?
- Are there any environmental or interpersonal stressors affecting your experience?
- Is anything outside of work making it harder to focus or stay engaged?
- Do you feel recognised and valued by the team?



Growth and development

- What skills would you like to build or strengthen this year?
- Are there any areas of the business you'd like more exposure to?
- Do you feel like you're learning in your current role?
- Are there opportunities for growth or development you'd like to explore?
- What would help you feel more supported in your career development?
- Have you had a chance to work with or learn from someone you admire here?
- What are you curious about – inside or outside of your current role?
- Is there a stretch project or training program you'd like to pursue?
- Are you getting the kind of feedback that helps you grow?

Questions for different stages

Junior employees or new starters

Focus: Confidence, clarity, early support

- What's been easiest to pick up so far? What's been a little more difficult?
- Do you feel clear on what success looks like in this role?
- Who or what's been most helpful in getting settled in?
- Is anything still feeling unclear or overwhelming?
- What would help you feel more supported as you settle in?
- What is one area you'd like to upskill in?

Mid-level employees

Focus: Ownership, growth, development

- Which parts of your work feel most meaningful right now?
- Are you working at the right level of challenge?
- What feedback or recognition has been most useful recently?
- Are there opportunities you'd like to explore more formally?
- What's helping you stay motivated? What's getting in the way?
- Has anything surprised you in the past week?

Senior leaders

Focus: Strategy, decision-making, influence

- What's your view on how the broader strategy is playing out?
- Are there risks or opportunities we should be talking about more?
- Where are you feeling stretched? Where are you underutilised?
- What would help you lead more effectively right now?
- What's something you'd like to make a priority this quarter?
- Are there friction points within the team that could be reviewed?

Questions for different departments

HR and people teams

Focus: Culture, compliance, wellbeing strategy

- Are there any emerging themes in engagement, exit data or manager feedback?
- How are we tracking on our wellbeing goals or action plans?
- Are we seeing any gaps in psychosocial risk management?
- What challenges are managers raising most often?
- Are our current policies meeting both compliance and employee needs?

Sales and growth

Focus: Pipeline, conversion, market feedback

- Where are you seeing the most success in the funnel right now?
- What's slowing deals down or causing friction?
- What's changed in the market or buyer behaviour recently?
- How confident are you feeling about this quarter's targets?
- What kind of support or coaching would be most helpful right now?

Engineering and product

Focus: Delivery, blockers, collaboration

- What's the most significant technical or delivery challenge right now?
- Are we making space for quality and innovation?
- How are handovers and collaboration across teams going?
- Is there anything causing unnecessary complexity or delay?
- What's something we should simplify or automate?

Marketing and creative

Focus: Priorities, creative energy, performance

- Which campaigns or content are having the most significant impact?
- Are you clear on what's most important this quarter?
- Are you getting the right feedback at the right time?
- How are you tracking on goals or KPIs?
- What would help you feel more creatively energised or unblocked?

Legal, risk and compliance

Focus: Governance, policies, clarity

- Are current policies clear and easy to follow?
- Where do you see the biggest risk or ambiguity in our operations?
- Are you looped in early enough on decisions that have legal implications?
- What's one thing we could improve in our compliance processes?
- Is the current volume or type of work sustainable?

Finance and commercial

Focus: Resourcing, strategic insight, accountability

- Are you getting timely access to the data and inputs you need?
- What's one area in which we could be more efficient or cost-conscious?
- Are budget cycles or reporting requirements working well for you?
- How well are teams collaborating around commercial decisions?
- Where could we improve forecasting or scenario planning?



Education and learning teams

Focus: Delivery, learner experience, impact

- Are programmes landing well with learners or stakeholders?
- What's something we could improve in how we measure success?
- Are you seeing any themes in feedback or engagement?
- How are you managing workloads across peak periods?
- What would help improve impact or uptake?



Frontline and customer-facing teams

Focus: Safety, service delivery, support

- How are you finding your current workload and pace?
- Are there any situations where you've felt unsafe or unsupported?
- What types of customer interactions have been most challenging lately?
- Do you feel you have the right tools and training to do your job well?
- Are breaks, shift patterns or rostering working for you?
- What can we improve to make your day-to-day work experience more manageable?
- Have there been any incidents or near misses we haven't discussed yet?
- What's something your team does well that others could learn from?

General one-on-one meeting template (45–60 mins)



Frequency: Weekly or fortnightly



Ideal for: Managers across any team



Purpose: Build connection, surface blockers, support wellbeing, track progress, and encourage growth

1. Opening check-in (5–10 mins)

Build rapport, encourage openness

- How are you feeling today?
- What's been a highlight or win since we last spoke?
- Anything on your mind you'd like to talk through?

2. Progress and priorities (10–15 mins)

Review workload, clarify focus

- How are your current goals or tasks tracking?
- Is anything taking longer than expected?
- What's the top priority between now and our next check-in?

3. Challenges and blockers (10–15 mins)

Uncover friction points or unmet needs

- What's been frustrating or slowing you down recently?
- Are there any decisions or dependencies you're waiting on?
- Do you have what you need to do your best work?

4. Wellbeing and support (5–10 mins)

Check in on stress, energy and psychological safety

- How's your energy and stress level been this week?
- Are you getting enough downtime or support?
- Is there anything outside of work that might impact how you're feeling?
- When did you last engage with the Sonder app?

5. Growth and feedback (5–10 mins)

Encourage development and self-reflection

- What's something you've learned or improved on recently?
- Is there a skill or area you'd like to grow in?
- What kind of feedback would be most helpful for you right now?

6. Wrap-up and next steps (5 mins)

Confirm takeaways and accountability

- What are your key actions or next steps?
- Is there anything I can follow up on or help move forward?
- How are you feeling about today's conversation?



Final tips for managers

Make 1:1 meetings a priority – just like any good coach or mentor, consistency matters.

Be present – no multitasking.

Focus on listening more than talking.

Allow for flexibility. Your one-on-ones don't have to be the same questions each time, consider changing up focus depending on business seasons or major projects.

Allow for personalisation. Every person is different, approach your one-on-ones with a focus on the individual.

Take notes and follow through on actions.

One-on-ones should be confidential to foster trust, however exceptions can be made with consent or if there is potential for harm.

Focus on connection over outcomes.

you are not a counsellor, but you should connect distressed employees with appropriate care.

Escalate early if someone needs more support (Sonder can help).

