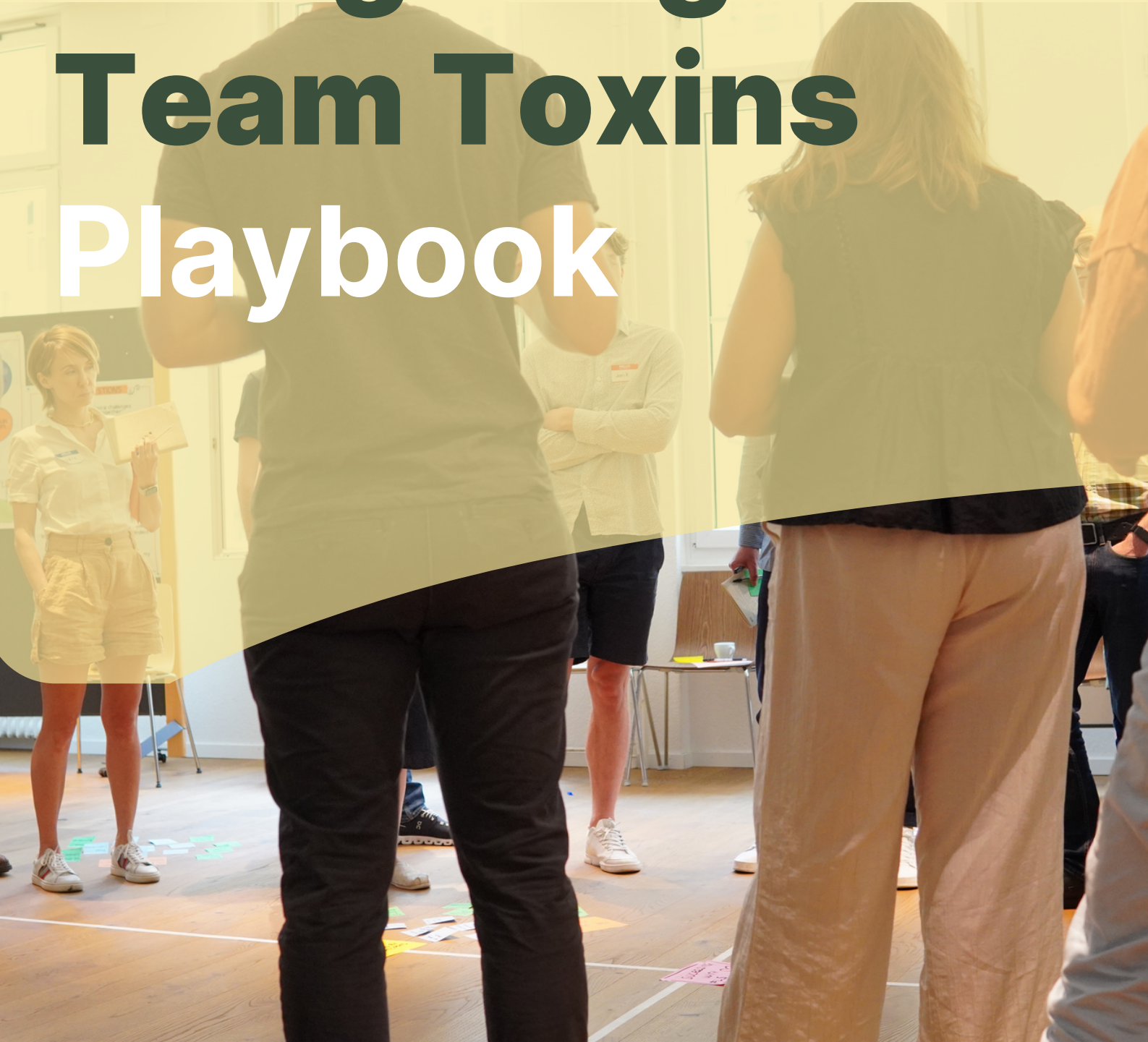




Navigating Team Toxins Playbook



Create awareness of toxic conflict behavior as a necessary first step to eliminate and replace it with healthy, productive communication patterns.

Purpose

This playbook aims to help teams and organizations identify and address the toxic behaviors and communication patterns that can damage relationships and hinder productivity.

During the workshop, participants learn about the various types of toxic behavior that can arise in a team setting, such as defensiveness, blaming, contempt, and stonewalling. They also learn strategies for recognizing and addressing these behaviors and techniques for improving communication and building more robust, productive relationships.

The workshop is designed to help teams and organizations foster a culture of respect, openness, and collaboration and minimize toxic behavior's harmful effects on team dynamics and overall performance. By addressing these issues proactively, teams can improve their ability to work together effectively, communicate clearly, and achieve their goals.

The concept of "team toxins" is based on the work of [Dr. John Gottman](#) [1], a psychologist, and researcher who has spent decades studying relationships and communication patterns.

This workshop's inspiration comes from [Organization and Relationship Systems Coaching \(ORSC\)](#) [2]. [Barry Overeem](#) [3] helped me to make it even more engaging and impactful using [Liberating Structures](#) [4][5].

With the steps in this guide, you can run this workshop independently. But if you need help, do not hesitate to contact me at christian@hofstetter-coaching.com or reach out to me on [LinkedIn](#).

Let me know how it went!

Christian Hofstetter



Flow

Total duration

 **150 min**

1 Hello Round

 **15 min**

2 Introducing Team Toxins

 **10 min**

3 Getting Familiar With Team Toxins

 **15 min**

4 How Are Team Toxins Trying to Be Helpful?

 **30 min**

5 Replacing Ineffective Behaviour

 **30 min**

6 Crafting Our Team Conflict Protocol

 **30 min**

7 Debrief & Closing

 **20 min**



Introducing Team Toxins

DOMINATING

BLAMING



STONEWALLING



DISENGAGING

SARCASM

BEING RUDE

CONTEMPT



DEFENSIVENESS



PLAYING THE VICTIM


NOT OPEN TO INFLUENCE

Introducing the concept of team toxins aims to help team members recognize negative behaviours and communication patterns that can harm team performance and provide them with tools to address and reduce these toxic behaviours to improve team collaboration and productivity.

In this step, you educate the participants about the four team toxins and the symptoms that help you spot and identify them.

Steps

1. Lay a quadrant on the floor with a space for each of the four team toxins. Label each quadrant with the name of the toxins. This also works perfectly fine on a virtual whiteboard.

 1min 2. Explain that this exercise is designed to help teams understand and take responsibility for their toxic communication patterns. Before starting the activity, it is essential to educate the team about the team toxins and familiarize them with the research on the harmful team toxins and the importance of creating a positive work environment. Put down the cards with the symptoms one by one.

 5min 3. Introduce the four team toxins and their symptoms using the cards.

Facilitation Tips

- Keep this teaching block short, as you want the participants to move into action right after. Refrain from over-explain.







Crafting Our Team Conflict Protocol

A team conflict protocol aims to provide a framework for managing conflicts constructively and productively, with the ultimate goal of improving team dynamics and performance. It can create a more harmonious and productive team environment where conflicts are managed effectively and positively.

Invitation

- "Think about your ideal team: how would that team handle conflict and disagreements?"
- "What behaviors do you want to have to happen when conflict occurs?"
- "What are some behaviors you do not want to have to happen when conflict occurs?"
- "It takes 6-9 months to change behavior. How will you hold each other accountable for following these agreements? What will you do if someone breaks an agreement?"
- "Write down the dos for handling conflict within our team."
- "Write down the don'ts for handling conflict within our team."
- "What is the one thing we must focus on as a team?"

Steps

1. Invite everyone to get out a blank sheet of paper and a pen.
-  10min 2. Answer the prompts individually (approx. 1 minute per prompt)
-  5min 3. In pairs, share your answers, and decide on three dos and don'ts for handling conflict in the team
-  5min 4. In groups of four, share your answers, and decide on three dos and don'ts for handling conflict in the team
-  10min 5. As a team, agree on three dos and don'ts for handling conflict in the team

Facilitation Tips

- The three dos and don'ts for handling conflict in the team can be added to the team's working agreements.
- As an alternative to the prompts from above you can also use the [Team Conflict Protocol template](#). [10]




About me



Christian Hofstetter

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I create space for curious leaders and teams who want to develop. I stand for connection, purpose, and sustainability.

My focus is on providing teams and organizations with tools and structures so they can drive change from within and act independently.

