



## Reflection

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Think back to the first week of your experience and what it was like to get started on the new project with new people. It is very likely that the way you interact with your team and what you know about your project has developed quite a bit over the past weeks. Here, we will explore the practice of communal reflection as a way to pay attention to the ongoing development and thriving of your team.

Communal reflection provides opportunities for teams to thoughtfully consider both the history and trajectory of their community, to recognize the growth that has occurred and the goals that have been achieved and to think together about new objectives. Individuals who practice gratitude are better equipped to reflect on the strengths and growth within a team that has occurred over time. Communal reflection is a time for celebration and gratitude. It is also a time for refocusing.

The goals of teams often change over time as initial questions are answered and new ones arise. At the same time, members of teams can also change significantly. It is important for teams to periodically reflect on the “story” of their research team and help members to understand their unique and valuable role in the community’s larger narrative.

*Reflection may include:*

- Review of a research team’s vision statement. Occasionally, the statement may need to be revised to better reflect the current projects and team members that define the community.
- Intentional recollection and celebration of community’s achievements (both historic and current).
- Expression of gratitude for team members (past and present), collaborators, community members, and donors.
- Sharing stories – successes and failures (a.k.a. ‘learning opportunities’), joys and laments

*Benefits of reflection:*

- Recommitment of individual team members to the larger goals of the community.
- Opportunity to think carefully and refocus community goals.
- Relieves tension and provides re-energizing and renewal.
- Opportunity to recognize accomplishments of the community as a whole and the contributions of individual community members.