box UK Agile Games

Retros Against Humanity

Goal: increase team engagement during retrospectives

Timing?

The length of the session can vary, depending on number of rounds played

Players?

The game can be played with a team of any size

What do I need?

4x decks of 'prompt' cards, covering:

- Good points
- Bad points
- Improvements
- Sprint star (optional)

Multiple blank 'answer' cards/ post-its, to be filled in by participants

Prompt cards act as the black cards used in the original version of Cards Against Humanity (CAH), with the answer cards/post-its serving as the white CAH cards (no matter what their actual colour). Each prompt card should contain either a statement that needs to be completed or a question - a template containing ready-made cards for each deck can be **downloaded here**.

So how do you play?

1. The retrospective begins as usual, with participants writing relevant good, bad and improvement points on their blank cards/ post-its. Each player should aim for at least two answers in each category, or as many as they can think of if not.

2. To start, a prompt card is drawn from one of the decks and read out to all players

3. Each player then plays one of their answer cards to complete the statement or answer the question that's been given

4. While prompt cards are split into good/bad/improvement decks to encourage a range of answers, the answer cards given by the players don't necessarily need to match these; a 'good' answer can still work with a 'bad' prompt card, for example

5. Once all answer cards have been played for the prompt card, the answers are discussed and action points can be raised

6. This process is then repeated to cover two cards each from the good, bad and improvement decks

What do we learn?

Once the six prompt cards have been drawn the main sprint points will most likely have been played, helping prevent the repetition that can be found in more traditional retrospective formats. In these, participants typically take it in turns to read out all their points, at the same time as categorising them as good, bad or improvement. This usually results in the last participant having little or no new points to raise leading to disengagement with the process, and can also be an inefficient use of time as the same points are discussed multiple times.

Added extra: sprint star

At the end of the retrospective there is also an opportunity to vote for the 'star of the sprint':

1. Each team member is given three votes to share out. They can vote for the same person multiple times or share the votes between multiple people. They can even vote for themselves if they want.

2. Team members should give a brief rationale for each vote, to help recognise a job well done

3. All team members that receive nominations are congratulated for their efforts, with the person receiving the most nominations named star of the sprint

I want to shout it from the rooftops. I love ____.

I'll tell you what I want, what I really really want: ____.