A Little Help from My Friends

Teams has a lot of moving parts.

When you're hosting a departmental meeting or a larger conference, there's a conversation to guide, a chat to follow, people arriving, and perhaps smaller conversations happening in breakout rooms.

That's a lot for one person to keep track of. Fortunately, hosting a meeting doesn't have to be a one-person job.

🎯 You don't have to be the person doing everything to be the person bringing it all together.

When I was a paramedic and CPR instructor, we taught people to be specific when asking for help.

Calling out to a crowd could leave everyone waiting for someone else to respond. Making eye contact with one person and saying, "You, call 911!" gave that person a clear responsibility.

That lesson has stayed with me—even when the stakes are simply a well-run meeting.

"Could somebody help?" leaves a lot unanswered.

Asking someone directly, before the meeting, gives them a clear way to contribute. Someone can keep an eye on the chat while another helps with breakout rooms. A third person might welcome participants and help them get settled.

Once someone has agreed to help, make sure their meeting role allows them to do what you've asked.

But people also need to understand what that responsibility looks like in practice.

🧰 Before your next meeting, give one person one clear assignment.

Ask them directly. Describe the task and agree on when they should step in. Make sure they're comfortable with it.

For someone watching chat, that might sound like:

"Would you keep an eye out for questions in the chat? At the end of each section, I'll pause and check with you so we can bring those questions into the discussion."

Now they know what to watch for, when to speak, and that you've made room for their contribution.

It’s also a manageable way for someone to gain experience. One clear responsibility today can build confidence for the next meeting.

⚓ Sharing the work begins with making the responsibility clear.

The host has more room to guide the conversation, and participants’ questions have a clearer path into it.

Sometimes, we all get by with a little help from our friends.

#AllSuttonedUp