

Before you print

This file is a print-ready deck of 2.5 × 3.5 in cards. A handful of settings make the difference between cards that cut clean and cards that come out scaled, off-register, or with their colored edges trimmed away.



Don't print this page.

It's a guide, not part of the deck. In the print dialog, set the page range to **2-7** so the deck starts on the first card sheet.

PRINT SETTINGS

Margins → **None**. Borderless if your printer offers it.

Scale → **100% / Actual size**. Never “Fit to page” — it shrinks cards off their true size.

Paper → **US Letter (8.5 × 11 in)**.

DOUBLE-SIDED

Turn on two-sided and **flip on the long edge** so backs land behind their fronts.

Single-sided works too — every card is complete on its front.

PAPER & STOCK

110 lb cover / 250-300 gsm reads like a real card.

Matte avoids glare and is easier to read.

CUT & FINISH

Cut along the **crop ticks** with a guillotine or knife + steel ruler. Cards butt edge-to-edge, so each cut serves two.

Optional: a **2-3 mm corner rounder**, then poker sleeves or a deck box.

Patterns of Everyday Care

Designing online communities around the care that already happens in them.

WHAT'S INSIDE

23 pattern cards in 5 families, plus a legend and a how-to-use card.

EACH PATTERN CARD

Names a form of everyday care, where it shows up online, what to watch for, design questions, and a care-ethics question to hold onto.

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● SHARED HABITS

SH01

Lingering and Drift

Prolonged presence, meandering talk, exceeding task boundaries.

CARE FOREGROUNDED

Intimacy within unhurried, shared time; patience and continued presence.

DESIGN QUESTIONS

- ? How can platforms make lingering easier without overdesigning it (e.g., after-event prompts, "soft spaces")?
- ? How can platforms recognize habitual low-stakes presence as valuable time?

WATCH FOR

Overextension and fatigue

CARE-ETHICS QUESTION

Whose circumstances make unhurried lingering possible, and whose absence from it might be interpreted as uncaring?

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SH02

Gentle Idleness

Daily, low-stakes participation and rest that are treated as a legitimate form of being together.

CARE FOREGROUNDED

Quiet presence and shared silence as participation; validating rest and emotional pacing.

DESIGN QUESTIONS

- ? Can platforms intentionally design for collective silence or rest?
- ? How might idleness be recognized as participation rather than absence?

WATCH FOR

Quiet members may be overlooked

CARE-ETHICS QUESTION

Does treating quiet as restful presence actually attend to what a silent member needs, or does it spare the community from having to ask?

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SH03

Cyclic Gatherings

Reinforcing social continuity through recurring events and seasons.

CARE FOREGROUNDED

Creates continuity and a sense of "we still exist."

DESIGN QUESTIONS

- ? How can digital rituals encourage belonging through low-barrier participation?
- ? How can time-bound events create durable communal memory?

WATCH FOR

Ritual fatigue if participation feels obligatory

CARE-ETHICS QUESTION

Who carries the recurring labor of keeping the cycle going, and does its rhythm assume an availability not everyone shares?

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SH04

Rhythmic Maintenance

Routine tending and collective upkeep. Sustaining infrastructures, relationships, and norms through small, repeated actions that prevent breakdown.

CARE FOREGROUNDED

Routine tending as a form of collective care.

DESIGN QUESTIONS

- ? How might platforms make invisible maintenance work visible and appreciated?
- ? How can recurring upkeep feel communal rather than purely administrative?

WATCH FOR

Maintenance labor remains invisible or undervalued

CARE-ETHICS QUESTION

Who is exempt from the upkeep that keeps this place alive, and what supports the people who perform that labor?

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◆ ATMOSPHERIC

AQ01

Cozy Cohesion

Atmosphere of warmth through shared comfort, silence, or gentle humor.

CARE FOREGROUNDED

Psychological safety and emotional generosity.

DESIGN QUESTIONS

- ? How can platforms recognize atmosphere as part of community health?
- ? How might platforms foster conviviality without forcing it?

WATCH FOR

Comfort might suppress critique

CARE-ETHICS QUESTION

Is the warmth attuned to how a newcomer actually experiences the room, or the comfort of those already at ease assuming everyone shares it?

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AQ02

Hospitable Opening

Making space for newcomers and for informal, cross- or off-topic talk.

CARE FOREGROUNDED

Lowers thresholds for participation and encourages informality.

DESIGN QUESTIONS

- ? How might designated hospitality zones invite care and informality without overwhelming hosts or regulars?

WATCH FOR

Hospitality can become performative

CARE-ETHICS QUESTION

Is the welcome shaped around what newcomers actually need, or around what already feels natural to the regulars?

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◆ ATMOSPHERIC

AQ03

Reflective Continuity

Opportunities for acknowledging a community's history and celebrating change, loss, and endurance.

CARE FOREGROUNDED

Affirms mutual history and resilience.

DESIGN QUESTIONS

- ? How might platforms archive and curate collective memory to sustain bonds?
- ? How can endurance feel communal rather than isolating?

WATCH FOR

Nostalgia can accidentally inhibit growth

CARE-ETHICS QUESTION

Whose history and losses get incorporated into the shared memory, and whose are left out of the story the community tells about itself?

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◆ ATMOSPHERIC

AQ04

Playful Inversion

Temporary relaxing or reversing of norms (or safely breaking rules).

CARE FOREGROUNDED

Renews energy and bonds through shared laughter and risk.

DESIGN QUESTIONS

- ? How might platforms allow sanctioned rule-bending events without undermining norms overall?

WATCH FOR

Boundary confusion if not clearly bounded

CARE-ETHICS QUESTION

When norms are suspended for play, who is safe to be the target of the joke, and who absorbs the cost of 'it's just fun'?

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SH02



SHARED HABITS & ROUTINES

Patterns of Everyday Care

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SH01



SHARED HABITS & ROUTINES

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AQ01



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SH04



SHARED HABITS & ROUTINES

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SH03



SHARED HABITS & ROUTINES

Patterns of Everyday Care

CC BY

AQ04



ATMOSPHERIC QUALITIES

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AQ03



ATMOSPHERIC QUALITIES

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AQ02



ATMOSPHERIC QUALITIES

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◆ ATMOSPHERIC

AQ05

Respectful Stillness

Care through withholding, rather than creating, energy.

CARE FOREGROUNDED

Acknowledges that not every situation needs words; shared silence can honor emotion, privacy, or concentration.

DESIGN QUESTIONS

- ? How can digital systems signal when quiet is valued without enforcing silence?
- ? What might respectful stillness look like online beyond an absence of posts?

WATCH FOR

Silence may look like apathy or avoidance

CARE-ETHICS QUESTION

When is collective silence an attentive form of care, and when does it let real need pass unnoticed under cover of 'respect'?

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▲ COLLECTIVE

CI01

Harmonic Balance

Group equilibrium through attunement to atmosphere and rhythm.

CARE FOREGROUNDED

Shared rhythm supports equilibrium and collective responsiveness.

DESIGN QUESTIONS

- ? How can community rhythm (when to speak, rest, or listen) be made visible or accessible to participants?
- ? How can silence, low posting, or mood shifts be treated as signals of pacing rather than decline?

WATCH FOR

Pressure to conform

CARE-ETHICS QUESTION

Who does the constant work of reading the room to keep the peace, and whose comfort does that attunement serve?

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▲ COLLECTIVE

CI02

Relational Reciprocity

Self is constituted through mutual recognition and exchange.

CARE FOREGROUNDED

Mutual recognition and ongoing exchange of support.

DESIGN QUESTIONS

- ? How can digital systems translate mutual acknowledgment into social value?
- ? How might platforms encourage cyclical generosity without making it transactional?

WATCH FOR

Reciprocity may become transactional or coercive

CARE-ETHICS QUESTION

Does this community recognize care that can never be paid back as fully care, or only the kind that returns?

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CI03

Stewardship and Kinship

"We" extends to land, ancestors, and future generations.

CARE FOREGROUNDED

Extends belonging across time, place, and sometimes species.

DESIGN QUESTIONS

- ? How can systems make care for place, memory, and future participants part of community governance?
- ? How might digital communities inherit from past members and preserve knowledge?

WATCH FOR

Can become moralizing or romanticized

CARE-ETHICS QUESTION

Are the absent parties stewardship claims to serve (newcomers, future members, the departed) actually given a say, or only spoken for?

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FR01

Guides and Wayfarers

Care expressed through expert guidance and teaching.

CARE FOREGROUNDED

Transfer of know-how and encouragement.

DESIGN QUESTIONS

- ? How might platforms support or reward mentoring roles without overburdening those who take them on?

WATCH FOR

Burnout and over-reliance on a small group of guides

CARE-ETHICS QUESTION

Is the guidance actually wanted and useful to the newcomer, or shaped by what the guide enjoys giving?

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FR02

Hosts and Conveners

Social cohesion comes from creating occasions and atmosphere.

CARE FOREGROUNDED

Creating shared time and mood; inviting others into community life.

DESIGN QUESTIONS

- ? How can platforms recognize and support conversation starters?
- ? How can hosting be easier and more visible as a communal contribution?

WATCH FOR

Invisible labor and dependency on a few "always hosting" members

CARE-ETHICS QUESTION

Who enjoys the occasions without ever making them, and is hosting freely chosen or expected of the same few?

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FR03

Custodians and Gatekeepers

Boundary work necessary to protect norms, mediate conflict, and manage rules.

CARE FOREGROUNDED

Holding and enforcing boundaries for safety and fairness.

DESIGN QUESTIONS

- ? How can care and protection be framed positively rather than punitively?

WATCH FOR

Drifting into punitive control or authoritarian gatekeeping

CARE-ETHICS QUESTION

Who gets to decide whose presence counts as a threat, and does the person kept out have any standing in that judgment?

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FR04

Rotational Labor

Responsibilities and expertise circulate through shared or alternating roles for fair, collective ownership.

CARE FOREGROUNDED

Fair distribution of care work.

DESIGN QUESTIONS

- ? How might moderation or hosting be rotated to spread responsibility and avoid burnout?
- ? How might "chore-chart" metaphors inspire participation?

WATCH FOR

Dilution of expertise

CARE-ETHICS QUESTION

Does rotating roles respect that people differ in what they can give, or treat care as an interchangeable chore to be evenly assigned?

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FR05

Professionalized Facilitation

Social and emotional facilitation as recognized or compensated service.

CARE FOREGROUNDED

Performed empathy and presence are still forms of care.

DESIGN QUESTIONS

- ? What forms of compensated facilitation already exist online?
- ? How might systems support transparency and consent around paid facilitation?

WATCH FOR

Commodification and exploitation

CARE-ETHICS QUESTION

When facilitation is paid for, does the community still owe the facilitator care, or does payment cancel the relationship's reciprocity?

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CI02

CI01

AQ05



COLLECTIVE IDENTITY



COLLECTIVE IDENTITY



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Distinct Personalities and Catalysts

Charismatic, idiosyncratic, or high-visibility individuals whose presence shapes tone, rhythm, and participation; not necessarily formal leaders.

CARE FOREGROUND

Charismatic figures keep the social heart beating; their enthusiasm invites participation and warmth.

DESIGN QUESTIONS

- ? How might platforms recognize and support catalytic members without over-amplifying them?
- ? How can charisma and eccentricity be valued as assets rather than disruption?

WATCH FOR

Over-reliance on individuals

CARE-ETHICS QUESTION

Is the catalyst's warmth part of a mutual relationship, or something the community consumes from them without caring back?

Welcoming Thresholds

Crossing a boundary as an opportunity for greeting and initiating hospitality.

CARE FOREGROUND

Entry as relational gesture; acknowledging newcomers as guests entering a shared home.

DESIGN QUESTIONS

- ? How might threshold rituals be designed to feel welcoming rather than bureaucratic?
- ? How can entry requirements double as hospitality rather than friction?

WATCH FOR

Rituals can feel forced or awkward

CARE-ETHICS QUESTION

Does the threshold welcome newcomers as guests, or screen them for fit with whoever is already here?

Initiations and Commitments

Belonging solidified through shared vows, self-presentation, or role assumption.

CARE FOREGROUND

Mutual recognition and accountability; transforms joining into collaboration on community norms.

DESIGN QUESTIONS

- ? How might entry processes create meaningful belonging rather than gatekeeping?
- ? How might entry rituals reinforce belonging through mutual acknowledgment?

WATCH FOR

Can slide into gatekeeping

CARE-ETHICS QUESTION

Does the ritual obligate existing members to recognize the newcomer, or only obligate the newcomer to prove themselves?

Binding Relations

Strengthening continuity by allowing symbolic pairings or affiliations that mark mutual care.

CARE FOREGROUND

Affirms intimacy, loyalty, and mutual care between individuals or subgroups.

DESIGN QUESTIONS

- ? How can digital platforms support symbolic relational contracts that mark care and commitment?

WATCH FOR

Cliques, perceived exclusivity, reproduction of offline popularity hierarchies

CARE-ETHICS QUESTION

Does marking some relationships as special honor the particularity of care, or convert intimacy into a status others are measured against?

Ritual Containers

Creating protected, meaningful, or "sacred" space (including temporary spaces) to signal modes or norm shifts.

CARE FOREGROUND

Acknowledges needs for safety, focus, and shared meaning around particular topics or events.

DESIGN QUESTIONS

- ? How might platforms support designated "sacred" or safe zones without isolating them?
- ? Could platforms scaffold roles that anchor atmosphere without formal hierarchy?

WATCH FOR

Over-formalization

CARE-ETHICS QUESTION

Who is granted entry to these protected spaces, and does drawing a boundary shelter the vulnerable or fence them out?

Departures and Protections

Exiting and/or exclusion as part of community health and caring for boundaries.

CARE FOREGROUND

Allows communities to signal an "end" with dignity and preserve safety while maintaining continuity.

DESIGN QUESTIONS

- ? How can exclusionary tools be reframed as protective care?
- ? How can departures be acknowledged as part of community continuity?

WATCH FOR

Can moralize exclusion

CARE-ETHICS QUESTION

Does the community owe any care to the person leaving or being removed, or does 'protecting us' end its obligations to them?

THE COLLECTION AT A GLANCE

Five families

- SH** Shared Habits and Routines #3B82F6
- AQ** Atmospheric Qualities #8B5CF6
- CI** Collective Identity #22C55E
- FR** Facilitation Roles #F59E0B
- BP** Boundary Practices #EF4444

HOW TO USE THESE

Reading a pattern

MAKE THE ROOM

Design for the care; don't run the conversation. Most of it is implicit and easily crushed by over-design.

ASK WHO CARRIES IT

For every pattern: whose labor sustains it, and who might it leave out?

CITE THIS WORK

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BP02

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FR06



BOUNDARY PRACTICES



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