

Sample Ground Rules

How to Set Ground Rules (Group Agreements)

- Remind the group they are there to discuss, not debate or argue.
- Provide a beginner set of rules or agreements you see work in other facilitations.
- Have the beginner rules in writing and read them allowed.
- Ensure the facilitator clarifies which rules are the facilitators that will not be changed (such as staying on time).
- Ask the group if they have anything to add, change, modify, or create, to fit their dynamic. This opportunity increases buy-in by the group to follow them.
- Remind the participants that whatever rules or agreements the group puts into place, the facilitator will agree to uphold them.

Ground Rules to Consider*

- Keep an open mind. Be open to learning something new today.
- One person will talk at a time.
- Everyone will have the chance to participate.
- Raise your hand to be called on.
- Explain the use of a talking object if you decide to have one (an object that allows only the person holding it to speak).
- Listen to others.
- No mocking or attacking.
- Be on time, end on time.
- Respect each other.
- Know when to agree to disagree.
- Give constructive feedback.
- Be open to constructive feedback.
- Ask questions when you want to understand an issue/comment further.
- Be present and authentic.
- Phones and distractions put away to bring all of yourself to the conversation.
- Know we all have different lived experiences, and trust everyone's lived experience.

Additional Grounds Rules to Consider when Facilitating Virtually*

- Stay muted unless speaking.
- Use the raise hand feature to be called on.
- Decide if and how you will use breakout rooms for small group discussions.
- No multi-tasking (no checking email, phone, etc.).
- Know how to use the tool (explain how to use the chat, reactions, or other tools you will use).
- Decide on video rules – On all the time? On when talking only? Not on at all?
- Do not drive during the facilitation.
- Consider shorter facilitations if being conducted virtually, which may create a ground rule of commitment to show up for the follow-up session.

* You do not need to use all of these ground rules. These are for your consideration, and rules will depend on who is at the table and will possibly change with each facilitation.