

Group Agreements

Activities to Establish Community

ICEBREAKERS AND TEAM BUILDERS TO BUILD COMMUNITY

OBJECTIVES

- To create a group that is safe for all participants
- To practice listening
- To practice describing one's own needs

MATERIALS


- None

SETUP

- **NOTE TO FACILITATOR:** *Group agreements often work better after the group has had a few weeks to form relationships and participants have a sense of the group culture. There also can be classroom rules in place, bottom line expectations that ensure safety and comply with the expectations of the space/organization/school.*

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Explain that the group will participate in a process to **decide how they want to behave and interact with each other**.
2. **Ask** participants, "**How do you need others in this group to behave in order to feel safe to share, learn, and have fun?**"
3. **Distribute an index card and a pen** to each participant and ask each person to respond to the question by **writing one or two suggestions** for what they would like (i.e., *have fun, respect each other, be willing to try, etc.*). They should write **one suggestion per index card**.
4. Ask participants to **form small groups of three or four** and **share** what they wrote, **why these things are important to them**, and what their **experiences** have been in groups where these things weren't in place.
5. Ask each group to **rank** their cards in order of their priority, with the **most important thing on top**.

CONTINUED 

Group Agreements continued

6. Ask one volunteer from each group to **read** out their top card and **explain** why they chose it.
7. The facilitator (or a participant volunteer) can **chart** the top things from each group on the board.
8. After each group has shared their top things from the list, ask groups if there are **remaining items** in their sorted cards that were not covered by the items already on the board. (*It is likely that another group will have already shared their second or third cards.*)
9. Flesh out each agreement by **asking** the group:
 - **What will it look like to practice this agreement?**
 - **What would make someone not want to practice this agreement?**
 - **How will we, as a group, hold each other accountable to following these agreements that are important to all of us?**
10. **Explain** to the group that **when group agreements are followed, everyone can feel safe and included, which is why they are so important**.

DEBRIEF

- **Why is it important to make these agreements?**
- **Have you ever been in a group where agreements were made and someone was not following the agreements?**
- **What is the best way to remind each other of these agreements if we forget?**