

Establishing Meeting Ground Rules for Effective Communication

Consider the following approach in support of productive dialogue within staff, faculty, department and college level meetings.

Topics to consider discussing to promote effective communication and establish meeting ground rules.

1. When we have a strong reaction to what is said in our group, we _____.

- Say “Ouch” or “Wow”
- Don’t go on the attack
- Use “I” statements
- Take a deep breath
- Ask questions
- Don’t shut down

2. To make sure that the voices of all people in our group are heard _____.

- Don't Interrupt
- Ask people to comment/participate
- Speak up for others
- Maintain confidentiality

3. We make sure that people get equal “space” in our group by _____.

- Parking all job titles at the door
- Checking in before leaving a topic
- Sticking to the agenda/discussing departures from the agenda as a group
- Scheduling appropriate meetings (operational vs. strategic vs. emotional support)
- Sending pre-meeting documents and comments on these (for complex topics)
- Have a timekeeper for each meeting
- Share responsibility for sticking to the agenda

4. To help each other to follow the ground rules we _____.

- Provide positive feedback and constructive criticism
- Call “time-out” with a T-sign when rules are not followed
- Review and revise these rules on a regular basis

Non-negotiable Ideas

- Confidentiality
- Be mindful of others experiences that aren't yours.
- Speak one at a time; Listen and do not interrupt. Make space for others.
- No laptops open and all phones on silent
- Activities will be fast-paced, with short time frames and required quick transitions!

Ground Rules for Student Teams

- Attention Matters: Put laptops and phones away
- Confidentiality is Key (Chatham House Rule)
When a meeting, or part thereof, is held under the Chatham House Rule, participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the speaker(s), nor that of any other participant, may be revealed
- All Ideas Are Welcomed: Let's reserve judgment

Establishing Ground Rules for Your Table

- A. Take a Minute to Think... about the types of behavior that would make working together at your table a better experience
- B. Prepare to Have a Discussion...
- Remember to speak one at a time; listen and do not interrupt.
 - Be mindful of what others may have experienced or witnessed.
 - As you listen, consider "How does this apply to me?"
- C. Take 10 minutes to discuss possible ground rules at your table.
- What guidelines will encourage everyone to participate?
 - What guidelines will foster contribution of a variety of ideas and viewpoints?
 - If there are disagreements, how will you reach consensus?
- D. Agree on at least three ground rules that your table will abide by for this session.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

- E. Putting the ground rules to work.
- Post the ground rules in a visible place during each team meeting.
 - At any time, a team member can remind others about the rules that they agreed to follow.
 - Revisit the rules periodically to determine if additions or changes would be helpful.
 - Each team member initials below to indicate agreement to abide by these rules:
