

Community Agreements for Guiding Conversations Among Diverse Participants

Office of Respectful Environments, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (REDI)

Why Do We Have This Document?

This document was created in response to a request for support with facilitating respectful conversations about topics that could bring up strong feelings. The information is adapted from a [resource about radical inclusivity practices](#) from East Bay Meditation Center.

Facilitators should review them with participants before and throughout important discussions. Feel free to adapt or add additional statements for the audience or situation.

We can...

- **“Try on Someone Else’s Shoes:”** Be willing to view the world from someone else’s perspective or try things that might not be what you prefer or are familiar with.
- **Practice Self Focus:** Speak about only your own experiences and responses. Do not speak for whole groups or express assumptions about others’ experiences.
- **See Power Dynamics:** Be mindful of the power differences between participants, especially the ways you hold power in the group. Use your power to bring others into the conversation.
- **Engage in “Both / And” Thinking:** Use the word “and” instead of “but.” This practice acknowledges and honours that multiple versions of reality can be true at the same time.
- **Refrain From Blaming or Shaming Yourself & Others:** Withhold judgment. Practice giving feedback that recognizes we all play a role in creating our struggles and growth.
- **Move Up / Move Back:** Encourage full participation by all who are present. Take note of who is speaking and who is not. If you tend to speak often, consider “moving back” and vice versa.
- **Practice Mindful Listening:** Try to avoid planning what you’ll say as you listen to others. Be willing to be surprised, to learn something new. Listen with your whole self.
- **Remember Where We Are:** This is a group educational space, not an individual therapy session. While being brave is important for our learning, having some restraint will ensure the conversation does not become triggering or too personal.
- **Respect Confidentiality:** Take home learnings, but don’t identify anyone other than yourself, now or later. If you want to follow up with anyone regarding something they said during a discussion, ask them first and respect their wishes.
- **Exercise Our Right To Pass:** You can say “I pass” if you don’t wish to speak or if you believe that speaking will take you outside of your zone of tolerance.

