

Basic Agreements¹

The following agreements may be made with participants of any group at the outset of a facilitated activity in order to build respect, trust, and solidarity. By using these agreements we establish a safe space and a circle characterized by listening.

1. Confidentiality

This means that I don't repeat what someone says in the group outside of the group without getting permission from that person. It also means that I don't talk to that person outside the group about what they said in the group without getting their permission.

2. Amnesty.

As a companion to confidentiality, everyone agrees not to treat others differently, blame them, or hold or use what they say in the group against them after the group ends.

3. Put-Ups, Not Put-Downs

Everyone agrees not to put down, make fun of, minimize, or attack other people in the group or themselves.

4. Right to Pass

Each person has the right not to talk in the group when they don't want to.

5. No Cross-Talk, No Piggy-Backing

Each person has a chance to say what they want without having it debated, denied, or attacked, or agreed with or supported. The statement gets to stand on its own, without being taken over by someone else.

6. Feelings

Feeling is part of the healing process. Each person agrees to respect and allow expression of those feelings, including her or his own.

7. Respect/Listening

Each person agrees to listen to others and to expect that they will be listened to. This means that one person talks at a time. It also means listening without interrupting or judging.

8. I-Statements

People agree to speak for themselves and their own experiences when talking and not to speak for others unless asked to. This means using "I" in place of the words "you," "we," or "they." Much of what we have to unlearn, after all, is misinformation about "them."

9. Try On The Process

Everyone agrees to try on the process. No one is required to agree with it or accept it.

¹ Adapted in part from *Helping Teens Stop Violence* by Allan Creighton and Paul Kivel