

SAMPLE GROUND RULES

Feel free to highlight ones that will work with your group, write comments in the margins, or make up ground rules of your own.

1. Publicly test assumptions and inferences.
2. Share all relevant information.
3. Focus on interests, not positions.
4. Stay focused. Discuss the topic thoroughly so everyone has a common understanding.

5. Listen, don't interrupt

Don't talk more than your fair share of time

6. Be specific. Use examples to illustrate key ideas.
7. Agree on what important words mean.
8. Explain the reasons behind one's statements, questions, and actions.
9. Disagree openly with any member of the group.
10. Make statements, then invite questions and comments.

It's ok to ask for understanding ("What does that mean?")

11. Jointly design ways to test disagreements and solutions.
12. Discuss undiscussable issues.

Anything is discussible

13. Keep the discussion focused.
14. Do not take cheap shots or otherwise distract the group.

Respect each other, not necessarily each other's opinions

No put-downs

Don't attack someone personally

Challenge opinions you don't agree with without attacking the individual who expresses them.

15. All members are expected to participate in all phases of the process, and to identify and solve problems.
16. Exchange relevant information with non-group members.
17. Make decisions by consensus.

We all have to agree to make a decision

18. Do self-critique
19. Maintain a sense of humor.
20. It's OK to tell the facilitator she/he is doing something you don't like
21. When the facilitator paraphrases what you say incorrectly, it's OK to tell facilitator to get it right

