



AIDS Bereavement and Resiliency
Program of Ontario
Presence. Compassion. Change.



Group Agreements and Accountability: Connecting Process and Group

Group Agreements are created at the beginning of a group gathering to discuss and document basic ground rules to guide the time together. This practice contributes to creating a sense of safety and mutual respect among participants. All group members, including the Facilitators, are accountable to the group agreements.

Some examples of Group Agreements are:

- Address the ideas, not the person. Personalize statements. Use “I” in dialogue and “we” when formally representing a group. See disagreement as an opportunity to learn.
- Listen when others are taking a turn to talk. No side conversations.
- Recognize the role of perspective. Remember that we all have different experiences. Honor our and others’ experiences as unique, important, and special, but not universal.
- Respect confidentiality. Please don’t name names here or repeat names outside of this room.

In order to generate a positive atmosphere within the group of mutual respect and care, the Co-facilitator should:

- Gather input from group members about what Group Agreements are important to them.
- When someone breaks the agreed on Group Agreements, bring attention to it in the moment, immediate repair is necessary.
- Summarize from a participant’s comments when necessary
- Point out connections between values.
- Help to find the common language where people can agree.

Group Agreements anchor the actual interactive process of an event. A poster or other written information help to broadcast the purpose or identify the group’s outcomes and to give other important logistical information, it is these very personal words that are shared at the beginning of an event that really set the tone for what is going happen at an experiential level between people. Through these initial interactions, group members get a sense of each other and of who they are within the group process.

As well, it is essential that you are holding yourself to a high standard of behaviours that is consistent with the Group Agreements.