

Working Together: 10 Ground Rules for Successful Meetings

Once adopted, these are the ground rules that the Working Group will adhere to and help enforce. It is optimal if the group itself enforces the ground rules. The Convener will enforce the ground rules if the group is hesitant to do so.

1. **Everyone responsible for success:** Everyone is responsible for the success of the meeting and will support the convener in doing their job.
2. **Disagreement is to be expected, but must be done respectfully:** Use common conversational courtesy; listen respectfully; refrain from interrupting or having side conversations. Avoid maligning the motivations or perspectives of others, including those not in the room. Avoid sarcasm and blame.
3. **All ideas and points of view have value.** Your job is to fully *understand* what the other person is saying, *not necessarily agree* with them. No one has the corner on truth.
4. **Share the air space so everyone has the opportunity to participate:** Stay on subject; be concise. If you agree with a point, no need to re-state in detail. If you have already spoken on a subject, give those who have not yet spoken an opportunity to contribute.
5. **Speaking:** Please turn your placard on its end if you want to speak.
6. **“Threaded Discussions”** Occasionally, it may be necessary to temporarily “suspend” the existing speakers’ list, if the group hits a particular sub-topic that requires a more intensive discussion. In these cases, as determined by the convener, the existing speakers list may be put on hold to allow the specific sub-discussion to come to a conclusion.
7. **Interests not Positions:** Look beyond expressed demands and concerns to the *underlying reasons* behind those concerns. Differing perspectives, even strongly held ones are part of the process. Explain and ask for the “why” behind statements and opinions.
8. **Evidence-Based Problem Solving:** Share all relevant information. Agree on what important words mean. Seek out objective evidence for yours and others perspectives, assumptions and inferences. Acknowledge and fill, if possible, data gaps when they occur.
9. **Humor is welcome,** but not at anyone’s expense
10. **Turn off or silence cell phones:** We need your full attention. Please refrain from reviewing/ sending emails and texts while we are meeting.

