

Working Agreements

What is the purpose of this activity?

Working agreements stimulate individuals and groups to think about their own roles and behaviors in a group and the roles and behaviors that they need from others in order to individually and collectively do their best work. It is a group contract that covers some of the general rules of operation and expectations for all group members and their leaders.

How do I do this activity?

Introduce Working Agreements by reviewing the Outcomes:

We will do our best work here.

We will support each other's work.

We will have our individual needs met.

Explain the directions. Refer participants to the handout on their table.

- ♥ Tell participants to individually think of 3 or 4 personal needs they have in order to do their best work here. For example, I need to have one person talking at a time or I need to have side conversations take place outside the room.
- ♥ Ask them to write their ideas on a slip of paper.
- ♥ Pair with the person next to you and share your needs. Keep add to or edit your list so that together you have 3 or 4 ideas.
- ♥ Share round robin (this means go around the group one person at a time) your individual and pair needs.
- ♥ Using a marker create a group list on a table tent or chart pad. Make sure everyone in your group agrees with the list when you make it. Write large enough for all in your group to easily see.

Hints:

Reinforce the idea that during think time quiet must be enforced. This is a real learning need for some people.

Teach participants "thumbs up" as a quick way to make sure everyone agrees. (see Common Ground Info Sheet)

What are some variations of this activity?

- ♥ Introduce by stating a group agreement agreement, one you would like to see adopted by the group. (ex. one person talking at a time.)
- ♥ Do for the whole group with a chart on the wall that they complete as they enter the room. Use this to help participants begin their conversations.
- ♥ In some cases you may want to have each group chose 3 or 4 that they would like the large group to use. Ask them to post it on a chart in the front of the room.
- ♥ Other names for this activity may be Best Working Conditions, Full Value Contract, Social Contract, Group Constitution or Group Contract. Used to be called rules or Robert's Rules of Order.
- ♥ Chart on wall during centering to start one's thinking. What do you need in order to do your best work today?

When would I use this activity?

- Entering Procedure
- Opener
- Icebreaker
- Team Builder
- Energizer
- Content
- Assessment/Evaluation
- Management
- Closing Activity

Time for set-up: none

Preparation: none

Performance: 20 minutes

Cleanup: none

Group size: any size

Material: handout (a few per table)
overhead (optional)

Room Set-up: varies

Notes/Questions to ponder: