

# Guidelines for Respectful Discussion

Having a set of agreements will help ensure that your meetings are respectful and provide a safe place for everyone.

## **One mic, one voice.**

Only one person should speak at a time.

## **Step up, step back.**

Participants should be aware of how much they are speaking. If they feel they are speaking a lot, they should let others speak, and if they find themselves not talking, they should try to contribute some comments, ideas or suggestions.

## **Use “I” statements.**

Everyone should speak from his/her/hir own experiences.

## **Avoid making generalizations.**

Don't make blanket statements about any groups of people. (In addition to members of the LGBT community, this also includes political parties, religious groups, socioeconomic classes, age ranges, etc.) If you're not sure that something you want to say is factually correct, phrase it as a question.

## **No assumptions — except for best intentions.**

People should not assume other people's experiences or anything else. The only assumption people should make is that when other participants speak, they are speaking with the best intentions and do not mean to offend anyone.

## **Correct gently, but do correct.**

If participants say something that is incorrect or offensive, politely call them on that. Letting comments slip by only makes the space less safe and increases the difficulty of building successful partnerships.

## **Respect confidentiality.**

Assume that stories and comments shared at meetings should remain private. If you would like to share someone's story or comment, please ask them first.

## **Don't “yuck my yum.”**

Diverse groups have lots to offer, and that includes different tastes. When group members share their likes and dislikes, respect their personal opinions and preferences.

## **Lean into discomfort.**

Meetings and topics can sometimes be challenging. Be willing to experience some discomfort in discussions, and learn from it as a team!

## **Uphold commitments.**

The key to a safe and successful team is honoring your commitments to the group. If you cannot go through with a commitment, make sure to let people know and find someone to take your place.

## **Personalize these agreements!**

Have one of the first meetings of the year be focused on creating a list like this or adding to this list to set your group's agreements for the year.

