Group Agreements (activity)

Our teachers: We have adapted this activity from the School Reform Initiative and the work of adrienne maree brown.

Time: 30 minutes

What it’s good for: When group agreements are established and made transparent, we can commit to collective responsibility for welcoming each other into dialogue and action.

How it works: Break into small groups of 3–5 and have each group focus on one of the four general agreements below.

1. Show up (or choose to be present).

2. Pay attention (to heart and meaning).

3. Tell the truth (without blame or judgment).

4. Be open to outcome (not attached to outcome).

Make Space, Take Space

We all come with relative societal privileges and oppressions based, in part, on our experience with race, gender, class, ability, nationality, sexuality, health, citizenship-status, etc. Let’s be aware of how this affects what we say and how we act.

For their general agreement (i.e., “show up”) ask the group to modify or add to the agreement, and then give examples of what that agreement looks like in practice.

Have each group present their modified agreements and examples to the whole group. Take time after each proposal to see if anyone has strong objections or if you are in general agreement. Write the new agreements in a place that everyone can see and has access to, and return to it throughout the semester or the time you are together.

Be open to learning
Self care and community care—pay attention to your bladder, pay attention to your neighbors.

Confidentiality — take the lessons, leave the details

Engage tension, don’t indulge drama

Assume best intent, attend to impact

Confidentiality — take the lessons, leave the details

Value process as much as, if not more than, you value the outcomes

