

Ground Rules for Anti-Racism Discussions

All congregational discussions engaging anti-racism should begin with the group covenanting together around some basic ground rules.

Facilitator(s) should share the following ground rules and ask participants to think of any others that are important to them. Ask all participants to consent to the ground rules before beginning the conversation and be prepared to gently but firmly remind participants of the rules they agreed to if they are not being followed during the discussion.

- Listen actively -- respect others when they are talking.
- Speak from your own experience instead of generalizing ("I" instead of "they," "we," and "you").
- Participate to the fullest of your ability -- community growth depends on the inclusion of every individual voice.
- The goal is not to agree -- it is to gain a deeper understanding.
- Although no one experience or example will prove accurate 100% of the time, we will try to hear the truth in what is said instead of looking for exceptions to the case.
- Assume everyone's good intentions but also acknowledge the impact of saying something that hurts someone else, even if it is unintended.
- Maintain confidentiality. All stories shared in this space stay in this space unless explicit permission is given by the person sharing the story that it can be shared in another setting.