

GROUND RULES FOR WORKING IN A GROUP

Ground rules are designed to make sure that the group runs smoothly. Even though you may feel they are unnecessary, having them in place is a safeguard in case any problems arise. Ground rules are also good evidence of your group working, which is sometimes required if the group work is assessed

At the first meeting of the group, you should decide whether or not you will set ground rules. The whole group should input into the process of setting the ground rules, so that every group member feels they have ownership of the rules, and that they are not being imposed.

Here are some examples of ground rules; you may like to use all or some of these, or you may set others, with your group.

PRACTICAL GROUND RULES

Agree the aims of the group between you

This makes sure that that you are all working towards the same thing. Read any guidance you have been given, and follow it.

Arrange meetings and venues well in advance

If you do this, group members can put the dates into their diary, so that they have no excuse for missing a meeting!

Start and end meetings on time

All group members will be busy, so this ground rule will help them to make the best use of their limited time.

Agree the agenda (list of tasks) for each meeting, and stick to it

This will make sure that you get the work done; that you keep on the right track; and that you do not get side tracked into socialising.

“INTERPERSONAL” GROUND RULES

Agree between you, a limit on speaking time for individuals

This will help to ensure that all group members have a chance to give their opinions, and that no one member dominates the discussion.

Do not interrupt others whilst they are speaking

It can be very demoralising if you are interrupted when you are trying to contribute to your group discussion – it is also rude!

Do not put others down - criticise the idea, not the person

This is also a demoralising and rude thing to do, and it should not be tolerated within your group. It is acceptable to criticise an idea, but it is not acceptable to criticise the person putting forward that idea.

Respect confidentiality (where relevant)

If your discussion centres around sensitive subjects, your ground rules can say that nothing which is said in the discussion will be mentioned outside of that discussion. This should encourage group members to speak honestly and from the heart.