


GROUND RULES*

▶ ABOUT THIS ACTIVITY

 **Time:** 10 minutes

 **Objectives:** By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

- Create and agree upon ground rules (group norms) under which the training will operate.
- Set the foundation of trust among workshop members.
- Build an atmosphere where everyone is valued.

In This Activity You Will...

- Generate ground rules for the training (8 minutes).
- Ask participants to sign confidentiality forms (2 minutes).

Materials:

- Flip chart
- Handout – Ground Rules

Preparation:

- Print handout

Instructions

1. Introduce activity as a way to create a safe learning environment.

Now we need to think of ways to make talking and sharing in a group more comfortable. This is our group, so we should come up with our own group ground rules.

Ground rules (also called group norms) are guidelines developed by the participants to be used within the workshop setting. Ground rules help create a safe environment and enable tasks to be accomplished efficiently.

2. Ask the group to generate rules for the group norms flip chart.

How should we conduct ourselves today to make our time together as comfortable as possible?

3. Responses and additions to the brainstormed list of ground rules should include the following: Trainer should elaborate if necessary.

- Start on time. We all have to do our best to make sure we begin and end each activity on time. To get the full benefit of all the information we have to cover, we must stay within the time frames.
- Place pagers and cell phones on vibrate or turn them off. If you need to make a call or answer a call please do so outside of the room so you do not disrupt the training.
- Allow each person time to talk and don't interrupt.
- Keep personal comments said during the workshop confidential. If at anytime you feel you cannot follow the rules of confidentiality you may excuse yourself from the room.
- Stay on the topic. We have A LOT of things to do today and we need to stay on task. That is why we have the parking lot, and there are just some things we WILL NOT be able to get to today.

* This module comes from Duke University, Partners in Caring: Center for Creative Education, 2006.

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- Be open-minded. There are different people in the room. We should try to use the word partner instead of husband-wife/girlfriend.
 - Don't be afraid of mistakes and ask for help. If you need assistance with ANYTHING please ask for it from a trainer or your neighbor. That is why we are here today - to help each other.
 - Give positive feedback.
 - Listen. It is hard to hear if the trainers or participants are talking. We need to respect what each person has to say.
 - Value each person's unique opinions and experiences. We all have had experiences that may be different and we all need to value each others experiences.
 - Discuss ideas, not individuals.
 - No comment or question is stupid.
 - It's okay to disagree, but do so respectfully. If you are disagreed with, don't take it personally. We are all different and we may not see things the same way. That is okay. That does not mean I don't agree with YOU as a person.
 - Speak for yourself, not other people ("I" statements rather than "everybody" or "other people").
 - Each person is in charge of his/her own learning (i.e., take breaks, ask for clarification, have the right to pass).
4. It is important that the ground rules be clearly written and visibly posted throughout the workshop. Gain consensus by asking participants

if they can agree to follow and help others follow the ground rules. Inform participants that similar rules are listed in their manuals.

You all created these rules because you believe that if they are followed we can have a safe and fun training time together. By a show of hands, who can agree to follow these rules today? By a show of hands, who can agree to help others follow these rules with small and gentle reminders? You can find these rules and others similar in your manuals.

5. Ask participants to sign confidentiality forms.

We should mention that there may be people in this group whom you recognize or who you may know but didn't know that they were HIV+. As a peer educator you are sure to run into folks you recognize who are coming to you for services or information. Just as your HIV infection is private, we must all promise to keep any information that we receive during this training and later in your role as peer educators in the strictest confidence.

This means that we will not talk about anything or anyone we come in contact with as peer educators to anyone outside of this group, and we will not seek any additional information about those we serve unless specifically requested to do so by that person. Therefore, we will need each of you to sign this confidentiality form.

Summary

Wrap up with key points:

- People learn better when they feel safe around the other learners.
- Structure, in the form of group agreements, helps people feel safer.

*This module is part of the online toolkit Building Blocks to Peer Success. For more information, visit http://www.hdwg.org/peer_center/training_toolkit. This module comes from Duke University, Partners in Caring; Center for Creative Education, 2006.

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SESSION HANDOUT

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- Be open-minded
- Don't be afraid of mistakes and ask for help
- Give positive feedback
- Listen
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