

GETTING

Establishing Some Ground Rules



This story is not about safety in the true sense, however it leads to safe environments when we all get along!

Everyone is an individual and has their own perspective. Working together and getting along can often come down to some basics in good communication and mutual respect. Each organization, working group, committee and individual should take the time to set some basic ground rules and ensure the rules are followed and respected by all. Ground rules can be drawn up by the group or be part of an evolving working document.

Some ground rules to consider include:

- Be respectful of each others' time - activities should start on time and finish promptly, leaving time for socializing at the end. This enables those who can only commit a small amount of time to leave once the activity is finished.
- Be very aware of non-verbal and body language this will often speak louder than words. Body language (both positive and negative) can have a huge impact on all in the room.
- Listen! Too often we are more interested in what we have to say and subsequently forget to really and truly listen to what others are trying to say. This also relates back to our body language. Ensure you give the speaker your full attention and show it in your non-verbal language.
- Be conscious of the language used while talking. Too often people speak in terms of "we", "you" or "our" instead of saying "I". Speak about what you know and from your experience - be careful not to make general comments. This can over-simplify an issue and lead to confusion or misunderstandings.



**Girl Guides
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ALONG

Tolerance and Diversity Share our similarities, Celebrate our differences!

- Ask questions - don't be afraid to ask questions or ask for clarification. Questioning and clarifying can often go a long way to resolving any issues that might develop down the road. Just be careful that questions are asked in a respectful manner about the issue and are not personal.
- It is not always about agreeing - remember we do not always have to agree but we can seek to understand different perspectives and ideas. Value each comment, idea or suggestion and explore the possibilities. You never know where the ideas might take you!

In any group situation there are always individuals that are comfortable expressing their thoughts. Ensure that in any group, you allow all individuals the opportunity to be involved. Break into smaller discussion groups to allow each participant to share, allow questions or comments to be written down and then shared and give individuals the opportunity to communicate one-on-one. This will give everyone an equal voice no matter their comfort level.

By respecting each individual during discussion, whether in a formal or informal setting, we can work together to build stronger organizations for all to share and enjoy.

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