



SET GROUP AGREEMENTS AND CREATE A LEARNING COMMUNITY

A Tip Sheet for Sexuality Educators

When teaching about a potentially sensitive topic like sexuality education, it is important to create a learning environment that fosters growth, curiosity, and engagement, regardless of the students' identities, backgrounds, or value systems. Setting group agreements can help set the tone and expectation of inclusion and respect in your classroom.

Group Agreements can be formed in a number of ways but are a collection of standards of behavior that promote a safe and caring learning environment. Whether the group agreements used in your classroom are pre-written in the curriculum or the students in your class come up with their own, it is important to make sure everyone understands and agrees to uphold each group agreement.

Tips for Setting Group Agreements

- Introduce the idea of group agreements. Define what a group agreement is and give an example of when it has been important to have established group agreements.
- Group agreements in a sexuality education classroom require special attention and specific agreements in order to help people feel safe and brave. One of those agreements is to respect confidentiality. Explain and define confidentiality. Encourage your students to share factual information outside of class, but not personal stories or details. Disclose your responsibility to report disclosures of harm despite your dedication to confidentiality.
- One criticism of group agreements is that it can be challenging for educators to react appropriately when an agreement is not upheld. Ever been in a class with a "one mic" agreement but people keep talking over you and the facilitator does nothing? When setting group agreements, include a discussion about how the group agreements will be upheld, how you will respond should an agreement be broken, and enlist the help of the class to hold each other accountable for adhering to the group agreements.

Are your students developing the group agreements?	Are you using group agreements listed in your curriculum?	Are you adapting school or class rules to be group agreements?
<p>Provide a few examples of group agreements</p> <p>Ask what agreements have helped them feel safe in past classes/group settings</p> <p>Ask learners to explain why the suggested group agreement is important</p> <p>Offer reframes that include positive language</p> <p>Ask learners to clarify and elaborate on suggested agreements</p>	<p>Explain each group agreement listed in the curriculum</p> <p>Adapt a list to suit the group's needs</p> <p>Add new agreements if necessary</p> <p>Encourage buy-in by having learners share when those group agreements have helped in the past</p>	<p>State how sex ed class is different than regular class</p> <p>Ask the class to identify existing agreements that are key to the safety of this class</p> <p>Explain how the group agreements apply specifically to sex ed class</p> <p>Identify group agreements that are not applicable to this sex ed class</p> <p>Add additional agreements if necessary</p>

Tips for Setting Group Agreements [continued]

- After you have created your list of group agreements, make sure that everyone in your class understands them. Invite questions. Use scenarios or examples to illustrate the group agreements and to gauge your students' understanding. Your students may not feel comfortable asking questions yet so offer them other ways to ask questions or connect with you [e.g anonymous question box]. Once you feel confident that your students understand the group agreements, ask them to verbally agree to upholding them.
- Though out the class, it is important to adhere to the group agreements. Should a student not uphold an agreement, redirect the unwanted behavior. Name that behavior, either as it happens or shortly after. Remind the class why that agreement which was broken is important. Praise students when they do uphold the agreement and act in a way that is in accordance with the group agreements.

Trauma-Informed Group Agreement to Foster a Safe Space

A trauma-informed classroom should include a group agreement to promote a safe learning environment. Acknowledge the range of experiences people in the classroom might have had with traumatic events. Make conscious language choices. Emphasize your goal to create a safe learning environment and your intent to be trustworthy and transparent. Remind your students of the resources available to them.

For additional training and tip on using trauma-informed skills, check out SkillFlix's Use Trauma-Informed Strategies skillset. To learn more about managing personal disclosures, including those that necessitate a mandated report, go to skillFlix's Manage Personal Disclosures skillset.

Respect for Diversity Group Agreement to be Inclusive of Sexual, Gender, and Intersecting Identities

Set the expectation for respect for diversity early in the class by including a group agreement about it. Explain and discuss what diversity means and that it included sexual and gender diversity. Acknowledge the intersectionality of identities and the impact that that has on our sexual health and romantic lives.

To learn more about how to be inclusive of LGBTQI people, go to SkillFlix's *Be Inclusive on LGBTQ Folks* skillset and to learn about promoting racial justice, see the skillset Promote Racial Justice.



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