



Working Together

Identifying Group Values & Managing Differences

Community work can be messy, complex and fun. We encourage you to “embrace the messiness” and establish some simple processes for harmonizing your group across differences of perspective or opinion, guided by your shared values.

The following prompts can help you identify group values and manage differences and tensions. Write down your responses on a piece of paper.

Personal Reflection on Group Values

Please take a few minutes to reflect on and complete the following statements. When you are finished, we will come together as a group to share our responses and find common values.

- I feel open to contribute in groups when: [your answer]
- I learn best with others when: [your answer]
- I feel valued for my contributions when: [your answer]

Understanding Differences, Making Decisions, Managing Disagreements

As we work and make decisions together, our differences may lead us to moments of alignment and disagreement. This can happen when there are:

- different opinions related to task-specific decisions, or
- different interpersonal communication styles.

As an important first step in understanding different opinions and making decisions, discuss what kind of communication processes you wish to establish for voicing our differences and resolving our concerns.

In order for groups to function well, it can be helpful to agree on how decisions will be made and actions agreed on.

- How will your group make (task-related) decisions?
- Voting and majority rules?
- Consensus based (everyone must agree)?

How will we settle disagreements arising from different interpersonal communication styles?

- What could a process look like (for example, one-on-one conversation? Mediated discussion by an individual external to the group? Mediated discussion by a group member-facilitator)?
- If group members go against agreements (in either of the above contexts), how will your group handle this?