

## Suggested Ground Rules for IdeaScale Engagements

Based on leading and example sets of ground rules for dialogue, the following short set of ground rules are suggested for use by government agencies when conducting IdeaScale public engagements:

### Suggested Ground Rules

1. Openly share your ideas, comments and perspectives.
2. Show respect for other people and use appropriate language in your ideas and comments.
3. Comment on, make suggestions to, and challenge ideas that are posted here, not about the individuals who post them.
4. Keep your ideas and comments on topic.
5. Keep an open mind when reading others' points of view
6. Moderators will do their best to keep this a constructive and productive space for ideas.

Please refer to our [terms of participation](#) for additional information.

### EXAMPLES OF OTHER GROUND RULES

#### National Coalition for Dialogue and Deliberation (NCDD)

Also called “agreements,” ground rules are an important part of most [dialogue and deliberation] processes. Ground rules such as “listen carefully and with respect,” “one person speaks at a time,” “speak for yourself, not for a group,” and “seek to understand rather than persuade” create a safe space for people with very different views and experiences. Adhering to ground rules that foster civility, honesty and respect is what makes D&D so different from adversarial debate and back-and-forth discussion.

You may choose to either present a set of ground rules to participants and ask for their changes, additions, and approval, or you may ask participants to come up with agreements that will make them feel safe and productive.

#### National Issues Forums Institute (from its public deliberation Issuebooks)

1. Rules exist to allow the dialogue to be productive. Moderators find it useful to ratify rules rather than just announce them.
2. Everyone is encouraged to participate and no one should dominate.
3. Listening is as important as talking.
4. Participants should speak to each other, not just to the moderator.
5. Moderators exist to keep the conversation on track.
6. Participants must fairly consider every option.

National Center for Media Engagement

<http://mediaengage.org/engage/communityDialogue/groundRules.cfm>

1. Have a "kitchen table" conversation
  - Everyone participates; no one dominates.
2. There are no "right answers"
  - Draw on your own experiences, views and beliefs — you do not need to be an expert.
3. Keep an open mind
  - Listen carefully and try hard to understand the views of those who disagree with you.
4. Help keep the discussion on track
  - Stick to the questions: try not to ramble.
5. It is okay to disagree, but don't be disagreeable
  - Respond to others how you want to be responded to.
6. Have fun!

Ascentum

1. Keep an open mind
2. Respect other people's views
3. Encourage everyone in the room to join the conversation
4. Think about and try to understand suggestions from other people
5. Treat everyone as equals
6. In conversations, try to keep your points short and avoid "hogging the airwaves"
7. Try to find some common ground with others that you agree on

AmericaSpeaks

1. Speak openly and honestly
2. Keep comments brief and to the point
3. Listen carefully and respectfully to what other's have to say
4. Stay on task

Minnesota Department of Health: Community Engagement: Cross-cultural Dialogue Ground Rules

<http://www.health.state.mn.us/communityeng/multicultural/cross.html>

1. We will engage with each other as a circle of individuals with thoughts, ideas, feelings, and experiences--we will recognize that we are more than just the job we do every day.
2. We will respect the right to disagree- respectfully.
3. We will express our real concerns as they relate to our own perspective.
4. We will look for common goals and interests.
5. We will open ourselves to different points of view.
6. We will listen carefully to the ideas of others-one person talking at a time.
7. We will ask for clarification instead of making assumptions.
8. We will allow the facilitator to keep the discussion moving. We will respect the timelines of the agenda.
9. We will try to stay on the theme of discussion.
10. We will be sensitive to the diversity in communication styles-understand some are linear conversationalists and some are storytellers. We will remain patient!

### Viewpoint Learning

1. The purpose of dialogue is to understand and learn from one another. (You cannot "win" a dialogue.)
2. All dialogue participants speak for themselves, not as representatives of groups or special interests.
3. Treat everyone in a dialogue as an equal: leave role, status and stereotypes at the door.
4. Be open and listen to others even when you disagree, and suspend judgment. (Try not to rush to judgment).
5. Search for assumptions (especially your own).
6. Listen with empathy to the views of others: acknowledge you have heard the other especially when you disagree.
7. Look for common ground.
8. Express disagreement in terms of ideas, not personality or motives.
9. Keep dialogue and decision-making as separate activities. (Dialogue should always come before decision-making.)
10. All points of view deserve respect and all will be recorded (without attribution).

### US Army (Facebook Ground Rules)

1. While this is an open forum, it's also a family friendly one, so please keep your comments and wall posts clean. In addition to keeping it family friendly, we ask that you follow our posting guidelines here. If you don't comply, your message will be removed:
2. We do not allow graphic, obscene, explicit or racial comments or submissions nor do we allow comments that are abusive, hateful or intended to defame anyone or any organization.
3. We do not allow solicitations or advertisements. This includes promotion or endorsement of any financial, commercial or non-governmental agency. Similarly, we do not allow attempts to defame or defraud any financial, commercial or non-governmental agency.
4. We do not allow comments that suggest or encourage illegal activity.
5. You participate at your own risk, taking personal responsibility for your comments, your username and any information provided.
6. Also, the appearance of external links on this site does not constitute official endorsement on behalf of the U.S. Army or Department of Defense.