

Building Trust through Ground Rules



Learning circles are a useful setting for the creation of trust and relationships which are critical to the development of effective healthcare teams. Trust, however, cannot be created overnight. It develops naturally over time. Setting up your learning circle in a safe and respectful atmosphere helps to establish the conditions for trust to be built. An important foundation to the creation of trust between participants is the establishment of a set of ground rules written with participants to establish the learning circle as a safe and respectful space.

Setting up ground rules therefore should be one of your key priorities in the first session of your learning circles. Explain to the group that these should address issues such as confidentiality and how disagreements will be handled. You can suggest a few ground rules, before having the group add their ideas. The ground rules can then be posted so they can be referred to and adjusted if necessary for future sessions.

Examples of possible ground rules:

- o We are each supportive and responsible for ensuring our conversations are productive.
- o Everyone must be provided the space to share what they would like to say.
- o Disagreement is allowed but we must be prepared to back up statements and we must remain respectful.
- o What is discussed in the group must remain with the group unless everyone is in agreement that it can be shared.

