

Community agreements are shared visions, collectively created to support the procedures and relationships of a working group. They are important because critical conversations and decisions require vulnerability and trust. Having collaboratively created agreements that are applied fairly and with care allows participants to engage fully because they feel supported and safe.

Ideally, each school or classroom creates its own community agreements based on its specific needs. Often, educators use text, music or art as inspiration to generate ideas. There is no one way to create community agreements. The key is to generate and sustain a healthy community culture.

At CARE we find the following agreements to be essential to our work. They help deepen engagement in antiracist dialogue and enhance personal and professional growth.

## Come prepared

- Be open to participating.
- Set or reset your mental and emotional motives.
- Understand the reason for or purpose of the conversation.
- Take responsibility for your own pre- and post-learning.
- Recognize everyone comes with their own life experiences.

## Value the process

- Assume positive intent.
- Expect mental, emotional, or physical discomfort.
- Focus on growth as the outcome.
- Remember that trust takes time.

## Stay engaged

- Listen with empathy to learn.
- Embrace the tension. Be brave, Be courageous.
- Get curious. If you wonder, ask.
- Bring the conversation to an end.

**Finally, confidentiality is essential for building and maintaining the trust needed for continuous and frequent conversation. Always remember to take the lessons with you and to leave the details behind.**

*CARE's Community Agreements were inspired by the work of Maurianne Adams, Lee Anne Bell, Glenn Singleton and Learning for Justice. More information about community agreements can be found at the [National Equity Project](#).*

**Now that you have your community agreements, these helpful sentence stems and phrases can start and keep the conversation moving authentically.**

I'd like to discuss [x] with you, is that okay?  
I feel \_\_\_emotion\_\_\_ about [x] but I know I need and want to have this conversation with you.  
Do you think we can find time to discuss something that feels difficult? (Follow up and find the time)

I'm not sure if this will make sense, but...  
Please correct me if this comes off as insensitive, but...  
From my experience as [identity] ...

I have always heard or know [x] how do you feel about [x]?  
I'm trying to understand [x], can you help me?  
Can you tell me more about [x]?  
I'm hearing that we have different perspectives, can you tell me more about yours?  
I'm having a difficult time with this information; can you help me work through it?

I'm feeling a shift/tension in the room, anyone else? (Get to the why)  
I can see some people had a reaction to [x]. Let's pause before working through why.  
This conversation has transformed, let's break and come back to it.  
I think it's best if we break here and find another time to finish.