

Facilitator's Guide: Creating a Communal Space

(excerpt from the RESULTS [Facilitator's Guide to Equitable Spaces](#))

What Is an Equitable Space?

A space where **all people feel welcome, safe, comfortable, and able** to fully participate in the conversation.

Establishing Community Agreements or Norms

Establishing community agreements or norms at the beginning of the session gives the facilitator the tools needed to keep the group focused and a reference point when an issue arises. Have the group come up with community agreements to encourage ownership of them; the facilitator can suggest ideas but should not force them on the group. Consider publicly displaying the agreements to create a guiding visual aid.

As a RESULTS facilitator, it is important to set the tone and space for a meeting. That's where community agreements or norms come into play. Facilitators should read aloud to the group, or have the group read aloud the RESULTS anti-oppression values statement, from the section [Why are Equitable Spaces Important?](#) (page 3).

Examples of community agreements a group might set:

- One voice at a time: respect the speaker without interruptions.
- Everyone stumbles over their words sometimes: speak without fear of judgement.
- Know where you're going when you start speaking: think it through before speaking.
- Be aware of time: when speaking, remember others have thoughts to share, too.
- Know the difference between intent and impact: just because you didn't mean to offend, doesn't mean you didn't.

Suggestions for facilitators:

- Make sure everyone can see the agenda with the time allotted for each section.
- Have a "parking lot" where you can put related-but-off-topic issues that come up to be discussed later should time allow.

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Be Prepared to Name Oppression or Power Imbalances

Below are some tips for addressing oppression and power imbalances.

Keep an eye out for oppression or a power dynamic imbalance (such as age, gender, race, religion, or the experience level within the group), and **name it as it is happening**. For example:

- "I'm noticing..."
- "Does anyone else feel..."
- "Sorry for interrupting, but is there any pushback to that?"
- Or, more directly, "That's hurtful." Allow people to respond on their own behalf.

Ask questions to support self-inquiry:

- "What makes you say that?"
- "Where did you hear that?"
- "What do you mean?"
- "Can you expand on that?"

How to Make a Meeting Space Equitable

When facilitating a meeting where attendees are gathering **in person**, there are many things you can do to help ensure the environment is comfortable for everyone. Some things to consider are as follows:

- Try to meet at a location that can accommodate persons with a physical disability.
- Ask the host to point out the bathrooms and to provide water for attendees.
- For extended meetings, include breaks in your agenda, so attendees can use the bathroom, refresh their water, stretch, or check their phones without missing part of the meeting.
- Check in by asking, "Does everyone have what they need?"
- For larger events, moderate the Q&A part of the discussion either by collecting written comments/questions throughout the session and selecting the most pertinent to be posed by the moderator or by bringing the microphone to participants versus having them line up behind a microphone in the aisle. These tactics reduce the barriers to asking questions by people who are more reserved and/or may struggle physically.



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- Reserve seating for people with disabilities.

When facilitating a **mixed virtual and in-person meeting**, there are many things you can do to help create an equitable virtual space for attendees. Keep in mind the experience of the person connecting virtually; they might be experiencing challenges such as difficulty hearing or not knowing when to contribute to the conversation. A few ways you can help:

- Share the agenda and any materials ahead of time.
- If possible, use your webcam to show who is in the room and encourage remote participants to do the same, displaying their video on-screen for in-person participants.
- Start the meeting by allowing all attendees to introduce themselves. (If you have too many attendees to quickly see this done, consider a modification of this tactic.)
- Ask remote participants to mute themselves when they are not speaking. Explain how attendees can unmute or use the chat box to contribute.
- Remind everyone in the room that someone is joining by phone or webinar. This may need to be re-iterated throughout the meeting and may require a "group norm" to address it. Encourage people to speak loudly and clearly and to avoid distracting noises such as side conversations, banging of glasses, crinkling of wrappers.
- Check in regularly to make sure remote participants can hear and see.
- It can be difficult to get a word in during a dynamic conversation when you are not physically in the room. The facilitator can help by creating space for the phone and webinar participant to contribute. Ask the remote participants directly, "Do you have any questions or comments to add?"
- Be patient. Technological quirks and mishaps are common in these scenarios no matter how much you prepare.



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Responding to Oppressive Behavior

Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide tools to define how to respond to oppressive behavior in spaces in which RESULTS engages and operates. This document aims to provide general guidelines and tools to help address oppressive behavior. We believe every member of this community is integral and should have the opportunity to learn.

Oppressive behavior often reinforces historical hierarchies of power and belittles the experiences, emotions, and thoughts of historically marginalized communities. Oppressive behavior holds us back individually and collectively from reaching our full potential. Oppressive systems breed poverty, and by working to undermine oppressive systems in our daily life, we strengthen our work towards the end of poverty.

Our Anti-Oppression Values

RESULTS is a movement of passionate, committed everyday people. Together we use our voices to influence political decisions that will bring an end to poverty. Poverty cannot end as long as oppression exists. We commit to opposing all forms of oppression, including racism, classism, colonialism, white saviorism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, ableism, xenophobia, and religious discrimination.

At RESULTS we pledge to create space for all voices, including those of us who are currently experiencing poverty. We will address oppressive behavior in our interactions, families, communities, work, and world. Our strength is rooted in our diversity of experiences, not in our assumptions.

With unearned privilege comes the responsibility to act so the burden to educate and change doesn't fall solely on those experiencing oppression. When we miss the mark on our values, we will acknowledge our mistake, seek forgiveness, learn, and work together as a community to pursue equity.

There are no saviors — only partners, advocates, and allies. We agree to help make the RESULTS movement a respectful, inclusive space.

Anti-Oppression



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Methods of responding to oppressive behavior

In the social justice community, there is talk about two primary methods of responding to oppressive behavior: **call-ins and call-outs**. These are not the only methods of responding to oppressive behavior, but tools which the RESULTS community can use to address oppressive behavior in spaces within which RESULTS operates. We hope that these methods are conversation starters, not conversation enders.

For more resources on methods of responding to oppressive behavior, view our [call in - call out guide](#) or the [Affirm Counter Transform](#) approach Developed by Center for Social Inclusion.