

COMMUNITY GUIDELINES - SAMPLE

Developed by [Dr. Terry Nance Center for Dialogue](#), Villanova University
Dialogue-based course, applicable to discussion-based courses

Modifiable to reflect learning goals and learning activities / experiences of particular course.

Remain present

- Commit to listening, tune into other(s). Consider closing open applications on your devices.

Listen openly and fully for understanding, not reacting

- We will listen to each other and not talk at each other.

Maintain confidentiality about individual stories and experiences.

- *“What’s learned here leaves here, what’s shared here stays here.”* We want to create an environment where everyone can contribute to the space with the knowledge that what they say will stay in the space.

Lean into discomfort

- Discomfort is a learning edge, a place where growth and change can occur. Tune into emotions and triggers of others as well as your own.

Differences may present opportunities for growth and learning

- We acknowledge differences among us in backgrounds, skills, interests, and values. It is these very differences that can increase our awareness and advance our work.

Own your own perspective

- Use “I” statements when sharing your opinion or personal experiences. Avoid unsubstantiated generalizations about groups of people.

Challenge the idea, not the person

- We will not demean, devalue, or “put down” people for their experiences, lack of experiences, or difference in interpretation of those experiences. Be mindful of body language or tone of voice.

Ask questions rather than making declarations

- Think about what’s behind the question you’re asking or being asked.

Suspend Judgment

- Respect the person and where they are. We will trust that people are always doing the best they can. Be open and open-minded.

People and opinions are not frozen in time

- We are all a work in progress. Allow your own growth. Don’t “should” on yourself.

Help “facilitate” group process

- Ask questions, notice others’ nonverbal reactions and speak on it, and take risks to share.

Monitor Your Airtime (do self-checks)

- Be mindful of taking up much more space than others. On the same note, empower yourself to speak up when others are dominating the conversation.

Okay to take a Pass if not ready to speak

- If you are having a reaction, not sure what it is, want to think about it, you can ask for time, e.g., “Give me a minute.”

Expect and accept a lack of closure

- This session is meant to start a conversation, encourage us to reflect on and challenge some of our assumptions, and push ourselves in ways we may not be used to. We may not come to any “solutions” or “conclusions” in the day’s session, but instead hope you continue thinking about the topics and concepts that come up.

Additional guidelines for online facilitation

- Do not use Private Chat in order to stay present.
- Silence device notifications.
- Please keep camera on and face visible as much as possible. Let the group know if something comes up that you must go off camera more than momentarily.