

Sample Community Agreements

Shalini Agrawal: These have been curated and adapted from many workshops that I have participated in. They are flexible and adjustable based on the needs of an engagement/workshop, the audience, and the purpose of creating these agreements. A version of these was used at CCA's Decolonial Unconference.

- **Stay engaged** - Remove distractions and access needs in order to be present.
- **Every voice is important** - Take space, make space. Regardless of experience, age, title, etc., we all have something to contribute.
- **Listen actively & compassionately** - Try to understand before being understood.
- **Make room for multiple perspectives at once** - Think beyond binaries.
- **Be willing to be messy and stay flexible** - Learning and growing can feel uncomfortable.
- **Throw glitter, not shade** - Invest in yourself, invest in each other.
- **Move at the speed of trust** - We are coming from different lived experiences.
- **Speak from the "I"** - Speak from your lived experiences.
- **Stories stay, lessons go** - Honor confidentiality
- [empty spaces for people to add others as needed]

Juan Carlos Rodriguez Rivera: I ask pairs of students to come up with some agreements together and present them to the class. Once everyone is on board, the students find GIFs to represent those agreements. The GIFs also open a conversation about cultural representation, appropriation, ableism, and digital black face.



Criticize the idea, not the person



Step back and listen

Elicia Cárdenas: “Norms for engaging in anti-racist work,” from [Becoming an Anti-Racist Educator: Where to Begin?](#)

1. **Practice Active Listening:** Be willing to be surprised and learn something new. In this case, silence is not complicity. Listening actively can be a way to learn.
2. **Try It On:** Be willing to “try on” new ideas or ways of doing things that might not be familiar or what you prefer.
3. **Practice Self-Focus:** Attend to and speak about your own experiences and responses. Do not speak for a whole group or express assumptions about the experience of others.
4. **Understand the Difference Between Intent and Impact:** Try to understand and acknowledge impact. Denying the impact of something said by focusing on intent is often more destructive than the initial interaction.
5. **Practice “Both / And”:** When speaking (or writing), substitute “and” for “but”. This practice acknowledges and honors multiple realities.
6. Refrain from Blaming or Shaming Self and Others: we are all on this journey.
7. **Move Up / Move Back:** If you tend to use your voice often, consider “moving back” and vice versa.

AnaLouise Keating: “Dialogue: Some of My Presuppositions,” from [Teaching Transformation: Transcultural Classroom Dialogues](#)

Here are some of the presuppositions for our class discussions:

1. *Social injustice exists.* People are not treated equitably. We live in an unjust society and an unfair world; the remarkable promises of democracy have yet to be fulfilled. Oppression (racism, classism, sexism, ableism, homophobia, etc.) exists on multiple

seen and unseen levels.

2. *Our educations have been biased.* The eurocentric educational systems, media outlets, and other institutions omit and distort information about our own groups and others. These hidden mechanisms sustain oppression, including an often invisible and normative 'white' supremacy. This 'white' supremacist thinking has affected all of us in various ways; we all have "blank spots," desconocimientos (Anzaldúa), and so forth.
3. *Blame is not useful, but accountability is.* It is nonproductive to blame ourselves and/or others for the misinformation we have learned in the past or for ways we have benefitted and continue benefitting from these unjust social systems. However, once we have been exposed to more accurate information, we are accountable! We should work to do something with this information—perhaps by working towards a more just future.
4. *"We are related to all that lives."¹* We are interconnected and interdependent in multiple ways, including economically, ecologically, linguistically, socially, and spiritually.
5. *Categories and labels shape our perception.* Categories and labels, although often necessary and sometimes useful, can prevent us from recognizing our interconnectedness with others. Categories can (a) distort our perceptions; (b) create arbitrary divisions among us; (c) support an oppositional "us-against-them" mentality that prevents us from recognizing potential commonalities; and (d) reinforce the unjust status quo. Relatedly, identity categories based on inflexible labels establish and police boundaries—boundaries that shut us in with those we've deemed "like" "us" and boundaries that shut us out from those whom we assume to be different.
6. *People have a basic goodness.* People (both the groups we study and class members) generally endeavor to do the best they can. We will all make mistakes, despite our best intentions. The point is to learn from our errors. In order to learn from our errors, we must be willing to listen and to speak (preferably, in this order!).

¹ Inés Hernández-Ávila. "An Open Letter to Chicanas: On the Power and Politics of Origin." *Reinventing the Enemy's Language: Contemporary Native Women's Writing of North America*. Ed. Joy Harjo and Gloria Bird. New York: W.W. Norton, 1997. 237–46