

A Sampler of Ground Rules for Working through Conflicts

Ground Rules for personal respect and Assertiveness -

Examples

- No interrupting
- No labeling or name calling
- No personalizing of issues
- Say how you are feeling, not how you feel about others.
- Debate problems or issues, rather than judge persons as being right or wrong, good or bad, wise or stupid
- Repeat what you heard another say, before responding to what they said.
- Offer information about where you're coming from, rather than just where you are = understanding between parties.
- State what you want or seek, rather than what you don't want.

Ground rules for securing accountability of information and perceptions between parties - examples

- State perceptions of facts, not perceptions as facts.
- Test hearsay, gossip, or differing understandings by gathering information, e.g. random sampling of opinion, anonymous surveys, fact finding inquiries, verifying fact basis of assertions
- Account for sources of information, go to the source with objective observer or witness.

Ground rules for exploring or unpacking differences - examples

- Say first what your needs are, not what your wants are
- Say first what you see the problem to be, not what you want its solution to be
- Agree on what the problems(s) is before discovering what its solution (s) might be
- Explore dimensions of problems before seeking to find solutions to problems.
- Brainstorm and then winnow options, rather than debating the merits or demerits of just one solution.

Ground rules for certifying outcomes of conflicts - examples

- Write down and verify for the public record
 - agreed solutions
 - agreements over how to live without solutions
 - agreements over how differences will be arbitrated.
- Determine specific ways agreements may be renegotiated, stating time-frames, parties and procedures for such renegotiations.

