

GROUND RULES

| Opening Activities | Duration | No. of participants | Short Description | Preparation | Materials |
|----------------------|-----------|---------------------|--|--|-----------------------------------|
| Learning Environment | 10-15 min | 10-25 | Participants jointly define rules for the learning environment | Ask yourself what is needed to facilitate the learning environment | Flipchart paper and large markers |

ACTIVITY AIM:

Activity Type: Group Discussion

- To ensure an environment conducive to learning
- To make the participants mutually accountable for the success of the course by using participatory methods
- To establish rules that can be referred to by the facilitator, presenters and participants throughout the course

HOW:

1. INTRODUCTION:

Tell participants that in order to ensure that everyone gets the most out of the course you should agree on some ground rules. These are not the trainer's rules, but rules to be agreed on by participants, for the participants' benefit, and are for both participants and trainers to follow.

Rules are not just for children; indeed human rights should be regarded as a set of rules and we also need rules for the learning environment. We bring in different backgrounds, experiences and expectations, and we need to form a common ground.

2. LIST GROUND RULES:

Ask participants: 'What do we need to agree on in order to create a good learning environment?' Try to involve as many participants as possible – 'What do you think?' Let the participants talk. Allow for silence if they need time to think, before you assist. Ask participants for help to get the right formulation. If need be, you can suggest things: 'What about...?' 'What if...?' Add your own points at the end, and ask if they can agree to them.

Examples of rules might include: respecting each other, valuing differences, listening,

participating, turning off mobiles/putting them on silent, being punctual, confidentiality (e.g. invoking the Chatham House Rule), closing laptops when not in use in the session, etc.

3. REFLECTION & SUMMING UP

Sum up the contents of the list or its main elements. Remind participants that they have all agreed to abide by rules, and that you will encourage them to use them and refer to them if needed. Tell them that these rules also apply to the trainers.

You might choose to mention that these rules are a practical example of the human rights-based approach known as principle of accountability – by making ground rules we are being mutually accountable.

Place the ground rules in the training venue and display them throughout the course/ training. Refer to them when needed.

TIP:

You can replace the written ground rules list with drawings made by participants on post-its. This will allow for a slower process where participants have more time to think, and will ensure everyone contributes.