

HPL URGE Pod Guidelines

Education is essential, but **action** is also imperative for achieving the objectives of URGE.

This deliverable is a set of agreed upon guidelines and group norms for the HPL pod, to lay a strong foundation as a group so that all members of the pod can participate and learn. The goal is to ensure a safe, inclusive environment to discuss difficult and potentially controversial issues.

Ground Rules:

1. Listen actively -- respect others when they are talking.
2. Speak from your own experience instead of generalizing ("I" instead of "they," "we," "you").
3. Do not be afraid to respectfully challenge one another by asking questions, but refrain from personal attacks -- focus on ideas and problems rather than people.
4. Participate to the fullest of your ability -- community growth depends on the inclusion of every individual voice.
5. Instead of invalidating somebody else's story with your own spin on their experience, share your own story and experience.
6. The goal is not to always agree -- it is to gain a deeper understanding.
7. Be conscious of body language and nonverbal responses -- they can be as disrespectful as words (even over Zoom!)
8. Assume everyone's good intentions and also acknowledge the impact of saying something that hurts someone else, even if it is unintended.
9. Maintain confidentiality. All stories shared in this space stay in this space unless explicit permission is given by the person sharing the story that it can be shared in another setting.

Making decisions as a group:

The HPL pod will use a group consensus (<https://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/shortconsensus>) approach for decision making. Described below (paraphrased from their words).

Group Roles:

1. Schedule meetings: Victoria Coles
2. Take notes and upload to google drive: Jamie Pierson
3. Upload deliverables: Victoria Coles
4. Schedule meetings with leadership: Victoria Coles
5. Draft deliverables: All
6. Lead Discussions: Rotate

Consensus process: Mostly verbatim from seedsforchange.org.uk

1. **Introduce and clarify the issue.** This ensures that everyone has the relevant background information and the group is clear about the point of the discussion and key questions to resolve.
2. **Open the discussion** to allow everyone to share their feelings, needs and opinions, *before* trying to find a solution. Recognising all the different things that are going on for people first is essential for finding a solution that suits everyone. Resist the temptation to make proposals at this stage. If ideas arise, hear them briefly and then park them for the next stage.
3. Explore **all the ideas** for moving forward. Looking at the pros and cons of different ideas helps the group with really understanding everyone's key needs and concerns.

4. Combine all the useful bits into a **proposal**.
5. **Test for agreement** by clearly stating the final proposal and asking people to signal whether they agree or disagree. This stage is important to check if there are concerns that haven't been heard. If you don't have consensus go back to an appropriate earlier stage in the process. Note the final consensus.
6. **Implement** the decision. Making sure group decisions are acted on is essential for building trust in your meetings.

Consensus options:

Agreement with the proposal: 'I support the proposal and am willing to help implement it.'

Reservations: You are willing to let the proposal go ahead but want to make the group aware you aren't happy with it. You may put energy into implementing it once your concerns have been acknowledged.

Stand aside: You want to object, but not block the proposal. This means you won't help to implement the decision, but you are willing for the group to go ahead with it. You might stand aside because you disagree with the proposal, or you might like the decision but be unable to support it because you don't have the time or energy.

Block: A block always stops a proposal from going ahead. It expresses a fundamental objection. It isn't "I don't really like it," or "I liked the other idea better." Some groups say the block means "I'll need to leave the group if this goes ahead". The group can either start work on a new proposal, or look for amendments to overcome the objection. In cases where the block stems from a fundamental disagreement with the aims of the group it might be more appropriate for the individual to leave.