

Northeastern University Marine Science Center (NUMSC) Pod 1 Week 1 Deliverable: Pod Guidelines

1) GROUND RULES

We will use the Ground Rules¹ below for all discussions.

This group is intended to be a forum for *discussion* of ideas and for learning about differing viewpoints, *not for debate*. In discussions around diversity, inclusion, and equity, it's important to understand that everyone sees and experiences the world differently - what seems "right" in your experience may not be so in someone else's. Everyone is asked to consider different perspectives, for the purpose of sensitivity, learning, and growth. To that end, there are some ground rules for participating in the group that we ask everyone to follow.

Please read and review these Ground Rules prior to each session.

- **Recognize:** We recognize that we must strive to overcome historical and divisive biases, such as racism and sexism, in our society.
- **Acknowledge:** We acknowledge that we are all systematically taught misinformation about our own group(s) and about members of other groups. This is true for everyone, regardless of our group(s).
- **No Blame:** We agree not to blame ourselves or others for the misinformation we have learned, but to accept responsibility for not repeating misinformation after we have learned otherwise.
- **Respect:** We agree to listen respectfully to each other without interruptions. Only one person speaks at a time. However, this does not mean we should ignore problematic statements. See information below on calling in and calling out. Both approaches are valid and can be done with care and respect, with the goal of helping each other learn. We acknowledge that we may be at different stages of learning on the content and discussion topics.
- **Listen:** We will listen to understand, not just respond. We value the unique perspectives of everyone in the group and acknowledge this by first listening to understand with the option to engage in discussion only after doing this.
- **Dialogue:** We will engage in dialogue, not debate. We have a shared goal to learn and understand, not to judge or be on the "winning" side; this is not a debate.
- **Individual Experience:** We agree that no one should be required or expected to speak for their whole race or gender and that this is impossible for anyone to do.
- **Trust:** Everyone has come to the table to learn, grow, and share. We will trust that people are doing the best they can; we all make mistakes and have bad days; when these occur, let's challenge and encourage each other to do better. We acknowledge once again that we may be at different stages of learning on the topic.
- **Share the Air:** Share responsibility for including all voices in the discussion. If you have a tendency to dominate discussions, take a step back and help the group invite others to speak. If you tend to stay quiet, challenge yourself to share ideas so others can learn from you. If you are exceedingly quiet, the facilitator will encourage you to participate when possible/appropriate.
- **Not Experts:** The facilitators are not experts. They are here to help facilitate the process. They and everyone in the group are here to learn. We also recognize that everyone has an opinion. Opinions, however, are not the same as informed knowledge backed up by research. Depending on the topic and context, both are valid to share but it's important to know the difference. To

¹ modified from Iowa State University Library (<https://instr.iastate.libguides.com/c.php?g=991417&p=7172640>) and University Corporation for Atmospheric Research (<https://www.ucar.edu/who-we-are/diversity-inclusion/community-resources/ground-rules-tools>)

engage in deep learning, we want to lean more toward informed knowledge and gain practice reflecting and speaking thoughtfully on difficult topics.

- **Ask for Help:** It's okay not to know. Keep in mind that we are all still learning and are bound to make mistakes when approaching a complex task or exploring new ideas. Be open to changing your mind, and make space for others to do so as well.
- **Equal Voices:** We acknowledge that real and perceived hierarchies exist within our workplace and academic community. However, we affirm that these hierarchies should not lend unequal weights to our voices within these discussions. All voices are powerful, needed, and appreciated because community growth depends on the inclusion of every individual voice.

Please also review the useful tools for discussion¹ below prior to participating in each discussion.

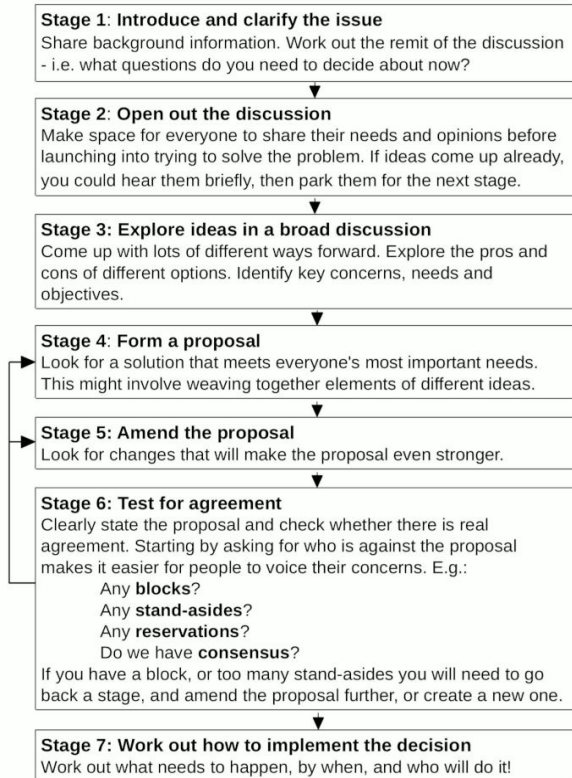
- **Calling Out/In:** Part of having these conversations is making mistakes. If you say something that is hurtful or problematic and you realize it, you can acknowledge it / call yourself out and then try again (also, see “How to Apologize” below). Alternatively, if someone else said something harmful or problematic then you can call someone in (as opposed to out) by 1) focusing on their words rather than their intent; 2) assuming that everyone wants to learn, grow, and do the right thing, and recognizing that we will all need help and support to get there at some point; 3) not posing it as a personal attack, but creating an opportunity for open and honest discussion.
- **Apologize Properly:** Remember that being called in is a gift from a very brave person, who was willing to put their own safety and comfort on the line to facilitate understanding and discussion. We all need to be willing to say “I was wrong and I am sorry” as opposed to getting defensive or giving non-apologies.
- **Everyone is Partially Right:** The goal is not to agree, but to gain deeper understanding. Remember that your experiences of how the world works and how society treats you are not the same as anyone else's.
- **Intent □ Impact:** When you say something harmful, it still hurts whether or not you meant it.
- **Disagree with Content, Not Tone:** Some of the topics we will be talking about are emotional issues for people who live these experiences every day. While some people in the room are able to talk about these things in a detached way, others are not, and should not be expected to. Disagreement with their points is fine, but be sure to disagree with the content of what people are saying, not the way in which they're saying it.
- **Intersectionality:** People have intersecting identities, but this does not mean that generalizations about shared identities apply to everyone included in that identity nor that these ideas encompass everyone that identifies with a certain group.

2) GROUP DECISION-MAKING

In this pod, we'll use consensus decision-making (as opposed to majority vote), with the goal of creating an equitable environment that removes real and perceived academic hierarchies. We'll work to build a community that facilitates the active participation of everyone to achieve a common goal of learning together and making informed decisions based on the diverse viewpoints and experiences of all group members.

As a general rule, we'll use the following flowchart² to frame our discussion and decision-making.

² <https://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/shortconsensus>



Before starting to form a proposal (Stage 4), we'll reflect on answers to the following questions in Stages 1-3 to inform our goals, priorities, and actions:

- What did we learn?
- So what?
- Now what do we do?

In striving to achieve consensus, we acknowledge the following types of agreement and disagreement²:

- **Agreement:** 'I support the proposal/decision/action and I am willing to help implement it.'
- **Reservations:** I am willing to proceed, but I would like the group to know that I (still) have reservations. I may help implement it if/once my concerns have been acknowledged.
- **Stand aside:** I would like to object, but I do not want to block the proposal. This means I won't help to implement the decision, but I am willing for the group to proceed. The group may accept the stand aside and proceed, or we may work on a new proposal. A critical question is whether the proposal requires everyone to implement it.
- **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". The group can start work on a new proposal or look for amendments to overcome the objection.

3) POD ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Pod Leader: Torrie Hanley (t.hanley@northeastern.edu)

Recurring Tasks:

1. Schedule meetings - We will meet Tuesdays 3-4 pm weekly to biweekly starting January 26th.

2. Take attendance (important for accountability) - We will use a shared Google Sheet to keep track of attendance.
3. Take notes as needed, especially in discussions of deliverables - This task will rotate among people in the group, with the person taking notes being different from the leader(s) each week. The notes will be available to all pod participants via a shared Google Doc, and written notes will not include any personal information (e.g., statements made by group members will be recorded anonymously and all group members have the option to request that something not be recorded in the shared notes).
4. Upload deliverables to the URGE website - Torrie Hanley
5. Schedule meetings with organization/institution leadership (Week 5) - Randall Hughes
6. Read supplemental articles / materials for deliverables as needed (for example, the asset mapping deliverable will be accompanied by a short paper about the purpose of creating community asset maps and how to generate your own) - This task will rotate among people in the group as necessary, with everyone always having the option to read and discuss supplemental material.
7. Draft deliverables and share with pod for review/edit/discussion at the pod meetings - This task will rotate among people in the group, with everyone having the opportunity to (co-)lead at least one session and if planning to lead a session, agreeing to sign up at least one week in advance (e.g., sign up to lead Week 2 Discussion on 2/9 by 2/2). If no one signs up, the pod leader will take responsibility for the deliverable(s) that week.

Session	Topic	Deliverable	Inclusivity Tip	Leader(s)	Notetaker
1 (1/26)	Racism and Definitions	Group Norms and Pod Agreements	Finding Your Voice	Torrie Hanley	Rachele Spadafore
2 (2/9)	Racism and Individuals	Policy for Dealing with Complaints	Why Pronouns		
3 (2/23)	Racism and History	Statistical Analyses of Program and its History	Finding Your Community		
4 (3/9)	Racism and Justice	Policies for Working with Communities of Color	Land Grab Acknowledgment		
5 (3/23)	Racism and Accessibility	Admissions and Hiring Policies	Letters of Recommendations	Lianne Allen-Jacobson	
6 (4/6)	Racism and Inclusivity	Lab and Field Code of Conduct	Nominations for Awards		
7 (4/20)	Racism and Self Care	Asset Map of Resources to Support People of Color	Self Care, Mental Health, and Emails		
8 (5/4)	Racism and Accountability	Policy Booklet with Summary	Staying Resilient		