

Vanderbilt AWG URGE Pod Pod Guidelines

Ground Rules

- Listen actively -- respect others when they are talking.
- Step up and step back. Create space for everyone to participate and push yourself to participate if you have not. More voices are better!
- Allow for empty space in the conversation.
- All feelings are valid, there are no “wrong” feelings.
- Speak from your own experience instead of generalizing (“I” instead of “they,” “we,” “you”).
- 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. Remember, on the other side, that constructive disagreement is not always a personal attack.
- This is a constructive space to express agreement or disagreement.
- It’s ok to ask clarifying questions (respectfully).
- Being the “devil’s advocate” is not useful or productive to these discussions. Try to avoid! Sincerity is always a better option.
- Participate to the fullest of your ability -- community growth depends on the inclusion of every individual voice.
- Instead of invalidating somebody else's story with your own spin on their experience, share your own story and experience.
- The goal is not to always agree -- it is to gain a deeper understanding.
- Be conscious of body language and nonverbal responses -- they can be as disrespectful as words (even over Zoom!)
- Assume everyone’s good intentions but also acknowledge the impact of saying something that hurts someone else, even if it is unintended.
- 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.

Conversation Logistics

- Our meetings will start promptly at 3:05
- We will use the “raise hand” feature if someone wants to change the direction of the conversation or raise a new point
- Clarifying questions or direct responses can be signaled by raising a physical hand
- The chat is a good place for short affirmations or to express agreement (or Zoom reactions!)
- The chat should be an auxiliary mode, not primary mode of conversation. Avoid long comments or new ideas that can be distracting

Making decisions as a group

Any major decisions to be made by the group will be discussed and then decided by majority vote.

Pod member roles and responsibilities

Pod leaders are the main points of contact between URGE and the pods. Pod leaders submit files to the URGE website (e.g., sign up form, updates to pod membership, and deliverables). Pod leader will also be responsible for scheduling any meetings with department leadership.

Pod members will rotate leading discussions, developing the deliverables, and taking notes. This spreads out the job of facilitating meetings, moderating discussions, and finalizing edits, in addition to engaging all pod members and leveling any power dynamics. Each week's meeting will have a facilitator and a note taker.

Facilitator will:

- Schedule meetings / send reminders
- Read supplemental articles / materials for deliverables as needed
- Work with Pod leader(s) to draft deliverables and share with pod for review/edits/discussion at the pod meetings. Drafts do not need to be complete.
- Facilitators are not expected to spend more than one hour on prepping deliverables and an additional hour the following week to polish deliverables as needed (for internal use, not for submitting)

Note taker will:

- Take attendance (important for accountability)
- Take notes as needed, especially in discussions of deliverables