

GROUP PROCESS AGREEMENTS

*Authentic dialogue and relationship building requires a sense of “**confident humility**” – the self-awareness that we all have wisdom and other assets and we will always have more to learn. With both confidence and humility, we can approach each challenge, including conflicts and failures, with intentionality as an opportunity for creativity and change. The following can help us practice confident humility.*

1. **Speak your truth** – Share stories, experiences, and thoughts from a personal perspective. Help create a safe space for everyone to speak their truth by respecting different forms of expression, honoring boundaries, and maintaining confidentiality.
2. **Lean into discomfort and lean into each other** – By design, authentic dialogue challenges participants. Discomfort signals that you are being challenged and perhaps even growing from the experience. The process can be useful and meaningful only with everyone’s full participation. Support each other to participate fully. Step up if you tend to be reserved or quiet. Step back and practice listening if you tend to be talkative.
3. **Expect and accept non-closure** – Embrace the process as the task. While this process might be designed to resolve an immediate question, it will raise far more questions than answers about the larger issues uncovered through the dialogue. Engaging in the dialogue and process of working together will reap far greater rewards than simply making a decision about what “to do.”
4. **Embrace paradox** – Either-or thinking can stymie dialogue, learning, and change. All of us, individually and collectively, embody paradox – identities, beliefs, and experiences that seem to contradict each other. Listen to your intuition, as well as your intellect, to make sense of and hold ideas that appear contradictory.
5. **Seek intentionality, not perfection** – Change does not happen through a linear, discrete process of moving from “not knowing” to “knowing.” Instead, periods of deep and intentional inquiry will lead to breakthroughs of discovery...that set the stage for deeper inquiry and further discovery...and so on. Mistakes and failures will occur along the way. But if we are intentional – about learning and growing, showing up for each other, and staying in relationship – we can make progress in our change efforts. This focus on intentionality contrasts with the dominant US culture’s obsession with “perfection,” which is unrealistic, unachievable, and even undesirable. It distracts us from engaging in the lifelong work of making sustainable social change.