

Voices through Water

The Creative and Activist Methodologies Toolkit

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Group Agreement

Activist



This activity invites all participants to co-create a group agreement at the start of a shared project, experience or when living in a temporary community. It sets the tone for collaboration, respect, and inclusivity by collecting shared values and expectations. Everyone contributes equally, including coordinators, facilitators, and participants.



Target group

A group of people any age participating in a group process (e.g. workshop week, youth exchange, political or artistic project)

Min. 3 – max. 40 (can be adapted to group size)



Time needed

Approximately 1 hour or more depending on group size



Environment

A room or a space big enough for all the participants



Materials

- Post-its in various colours
- Pens or markers
- Large flipchart paper or wall space for group agreement
- Tape

Objective/aim

To create a safer, brave and participatory space by forming a shared agreement on how the group wants to work and live together, including expectations, needs and responsibilities.

Step by step instructions

Step 1

Briefly introduce the concept

5 minutes

"This activity helps us define how we want to work together this week. It's about building a safer space—not perfect, but intentional.

Everyone is part of this: participants, coordinators, creative facilitators." Lay out post-its and pens in the room.

Step 2

Ask participants 1-3 questions, such as:

- What is important for you in working together?
- What helps you feel safe, included and able to participate fully?
- What can you do to make this a safer, brave and participatory space for all?

Provide paper for participants to take notes.

Initially you could also ask participants to tune in with closed eyes in a comfortable position.

Step 3

Individual reflection

5 minutes

Each person writes notes for themselves regarding the questions.

Step 4

Small group work

15 minutes

Participants form groups of four, share their ideas and write shared key points on post-its.

Step 5

Plenary presentation

20–30 minutes but depending on group size

Each group presents their ideas but only new contributions (3 minutes per group).

If something has already been said, they add their post-its to the similar topic but don't repeat it verbally

After each group presentation, ask:

- "Is everyone okay with what has been added?"
- "Anything you would like to clarify or build on?"

This ensures collective affirmation and adjustment before moving on.

Step 6

Final confirmation and summary

10 minutes

Display the agreement visibly. Stick the post-its on a poster or wall after all groups have presented, let participants know:

"This is how we have decided to work together this week. These agreements reflect what we need to feel safe, included, and strong as a group. This is our common ground."

Ask for a volunteer (or assign someone in advance) to read out and briefly summarise the key points of the agreement, using the collected post-its.

Then ask:

- "Is everyone okay with this agreement as it stands now?"
- "Is there anything you feel is missing or unclear?"

Give space for final additions or comments before closing the session.

Step 7

Thank everyone for their contributions and say as a final remark:

- The agreement is not fixed – we can change things and add to it.
- If something feels missing or violated, you can raise it at a group check-in or with facilitators.
- We will return to this regularly to remind ourselves of what we agreed on.
- Let participants know where the agreement will be put up and have it at a place that is visible during the whole group process for everyone to read.



Tips for the trainer

- Emphasise that “safe” spaces are never guaranteed, but we can all work together toward safer and braver ones.
- Encourage participants to revisit the agreement if issues arise or parts of the agreement need to change.
- If time is tight, you can cluster similar ideas and summarise with the group’s consent.



Alternative

For smaller groups, facilitate one joint discussion instead of breakout groups. For online or hybrid formats, use digital whiteboards like Jamboard, Miro or Padlet.



Comment

Including a short confirmation moment after each presentation helped participants feel heard and more responsible for the collective agreement. A crucial part of this exercise is to keep the group agreement alive, have it visible throughout the group process and use it as a tool when issues arise. If there has been a longer break and a follow-up workshop is planned, begin by revisiting the agreement—remind everyone of what was decided and, if needed, update or adapt it together.



Source

Co-developed within the My Elections – My EU! project based on participatory group facilitation and safer space practices by Maria Hammer and Maruša Vertacnik.