

Grounding

Inclusion

PROCESS

- Form groups of six to eight.
- Explain that the purpose is to set a norm for respectful listening, to get everyone's voice in the room in a manner that is not confrontational, to allow people to connect with one another, to allow for the expressions of hopes and apprehensions, to value thinking and feeling, and to elicit agendas that might not otherwise be heard.
- Explain the procedure:
 - Members take turns talking.
 - When one member talks, all others are silent.
 - Full nonverbal attention is given to the speaker.
 - After everyone has talked, the first speaker will summarize what was said.
 - When the members indicate that they understand the process, the facilitator names the first speaker.
- Post on a flip chart what members are to talk about:
 - My name is . . .

- My name is . . .
- My relationship to this topic is . . .
- My expectations are . . .
- How I feel about being here is . . .
- When all groups are finished, the facilitator calls on the first speaker in each group to give a summary statement to the full assembly.

ALTERNATIVE

- With 12–16 group members, the grounding can be done with the full group.

TIPS

- Since this activity's primary purpose is to provide participants with an opportunity to be heard, this activity doesn't operate on clock time.
- Use this strategy when a meeting is going to address hard-to-talk-about topics. The harder the topic is to talk about, the more valuable the full-group grounding is.
- With a group size of 40–50 people, this activity might take as long as 45 minutes.
- “My relationship to this topic” is purposefully vague. Do not explain it.