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## Tools

### Ground Norms

#### *Agreeing on Ground Norms*

#### **Background**

Ground norms are guidelines to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of meetings.

#### **When to Use**

- When a shared understanding of guidelines is needed
- When a clear understanding can avoid conflict and increase participant satisfaction
- When participants need guidelines for shaping and elevating behavior

#### **How to Use**

1. Draft three or four norms and write them on chart paper.
2. At the beginning of the meeting...
  - ...explain the rationale for ground norms,
  - ...share the drafted norms,
  - ...invite participants to delete or revise pre-determined, ground norms and add others, and
  - ...post ground norms so all can see.Note: Save norms and post them at subsequent meetings.
3. When appropriate, walk to the norm chart and point to the norm being violated. This is a silent reminder for the group.

#### **Caution**

All groups violate ground norms on occasion. If norms are repeatedly broken, decide whether or not it is a problem. If so, talk with the norm breaker. If the problem persists, discuss the issue with the group. Change the norm, if necessary.

#### **Variations**

- A. As groups/teams develop, ground norms can be revisited and upgraded to encourage higher levels of thinking and action.
- B. When a meeting has the potential of being stressful or emotional, pre-draft ground norms to establish an expectation for elevated thinking and action.

#### **How Does It Look**

##### Basic Norms

##### Ground Norms

- Begin and end on time.
- One person speaks at a time.
- If you think it, share it.
- Respect the opinions of others.

##### Advanced Norms

##### Ground Norms

- Link learning to your daily work.
- Analyze and synthesize ideas for improved application.
- Remain open for way to share learning with others.

#### **Next Steps**

Do a quick assessment of a group's level of development. Pre-draft a few norms to be used at an upcoming meeting or training session.

