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## GROUND RULES FOR EFFECTIVE GROUPS<sup>1</sup>

### **Ground Rule #1: TEST ALL ASSUMPTIONS AND INFERENCES**

Explicitly check to be sure that others mean what you think that they mean by their words, attitudes, and behavior.

### **Ground Rule #2: SHARE RELEVANT INFORMATION**

Each group member shares all information they possess including that which may not support their own position.

### **Ground Rule #3: USE SPECIFIC EXAMPLES AND AGREE ON WHAT IMPORTANT WORDS MEAN**

Generate valid data by sharing specific stories including who, what, where, etc. Make sure that everyone understands how important words are being used.

### **Ground Rule #4: EXPLAIN YOUR REASONING AND INTENT**

Your Reasoning is what led you to take action; your Intent is your purpose for taking that action.

### **Ground Rule #5: FOCUS ON INTERESTS, NOT POSITIONS**

Interests are the needs, desires, and concerns that members have regarding the situation. Positions are how the member wants to achieve his or her interests.

### **Ground Rule #6: COMBINE ADVOCACY AND INQUIRY**

Explain your point of view, ask others about their point of view, and invite questions about your point of view.

### **Ground Rule #7: JOINTLY DESIGN NEXT STEPS AND WAYS TO TEST DISAGREEMENTS**

The group decides together what, when, and how to discuss topics and determines the process for making a decision.

### **Ground Rule #8: DISCUSS UNDISCUSSABLE ISSUES**

Raise issues left ignored or deemed too difficult to discuss. Do so with respect and gentleness.

### **Ground Rule #9: USE A DECISION-MAKING RULE THAT GENERATES THE LEVEL OF COMMITMENT NEEDED**

Use informed free choice in order to increase internal commitment by determining how the group will make its decision.

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<sup>1</sup> Schwarz, R. M. (2002). The Skilled Facilitator: A Comprehensive Resource for Consultants, Facilitators, Managers, Trainers, and Coaches. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.