

Community Agreements for Stakeholder Engagement

As participants in the Los Angeles County Department of Mental Health (DMH) stakeholder process, we commit to creating a safe, inclusive, and respectful space where all voices, especially those from underserved and marginalized communities, are heard, valued, and protected. These agreements are designed to foster meaningful engagement, minimize harm, and uphold our shared responsibility for promoting equity, healing, and justice.

We agree to:

- **Uphold a culture of respect and dignity** for all participants, across race, gender, disability, class, sexual orientation, immigration status, language, and other identities.
- **Speak and act in ways that are anti-racist and inclusive**, recognizing the harm caused by the oppression, including anti-Blackness and racism against other communities, xenophobia, and other forms of oppression.
- **Be mindful of language** and avoid microaggressions, assumptions, or coded speech that may marginalize or hurt others.
- **Take accountability if we cause harm**, whether intentional or unintentional, and remain open to feedback with humility and a willingness to repair.
- **Center the voices of those most impacted** by systemic inequities, particularly Black and African Heritage communities and others historically excluded from mental health policy and service decisions.
- **Critique ideas, not individuals**, and engage in disagreement with curiosity rather than blame.
- **Avoid dominating conversations**, making space for others to share and contribute fully.
- **Listen with care and intent**, especially when someone shares an experience of harm, exclusion, or trauma.
- **Stay engaged and grounded**, even during discomfort, knowing that growth and healing often require difficult conversations.
- **Support facilitators in upholding these agreements** and co-create a space where harm is addressed and equity is actively practiced.

Unacceptable Behaviors

To uphold these agreements, we commit to collectively interrupt and not tolerate:

- Racist, anti-Black, or otherwise discriminatory remarks (whether direct, indirect, or coded)
- Dismissal or invalidation of another's lived experience
- Personal attacks or targeted disrespect
- Disruptive or intimidating behavior
- Repeated interruptions or disregard for the three-minute speaking limit
- Harmful generalizations or unfounded accusations

Accountability

We recognize that harm can occur even in shared spaces rooted in good intentions. If harm is caused or witnessed:

- Participants are encouraged to name the issue with respect and courage.
- Facilitators may pause the conversation, acknowledge the harm, and invite repair or redirection.
- Repeated or serious violations may lead to removal from this space or further follow-up by DMH.

These agreements are living and will be revisited and refined as needed by the community. By showing up with integrity and care, we support collective healing and justice in mental health work.