

7 Norms of Collaboration

1. Promoting a spirit of inquiry

“I would like to know more about your idea/ position.” “Tell me more about...”
(Seek first to understand before advocating for your own idea.)

2. Pausing . . .

“I am waiting a minute to allow time to think first.”
(Pausing before responding and/or asking a question allows for think time for yourself and others.)

3. Paraphrasing

“So...” “As you are...” “You’re thinking...” “You’re wondering...” “The intention seems to be...”
(Efficient paraphrases help all members hear and understand the ideas being presented.)

4. Probing for specificity

“Please say more...” “I’m curious about...” “I’d like to hear more about...”
“Then, you are saying...” “Do you mean everyone?” “Specifically what...”
(Asking questions to increase clarity and understanding as well as the precision of the group’s thinking.)

5. Putting ideas on the table

Label the intention of your comments: “Here is one idea...” “One thought I have is...” “Here is a possible approach...” “Here is one idea...” “Another consideration might be...”

6. Paying attention to self & others

How am I reacting to what is being said? How am I feeling? How are others reacting to what I am saying?
Have I used possible charged language unintentionally?
(Watch for body language and check perceptions by paraphrasing and probing for specificity.)

7. Presuming positive intentions

“I know we are trying to learn more about all angles so let me share...” “Knowing that we would like to make a decision that works for all of us, let’s...”
(Thinking in your head thoughts like: “I am sure she didn’t mean to sound charged when she said that.”)