



BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS

Resource Guide

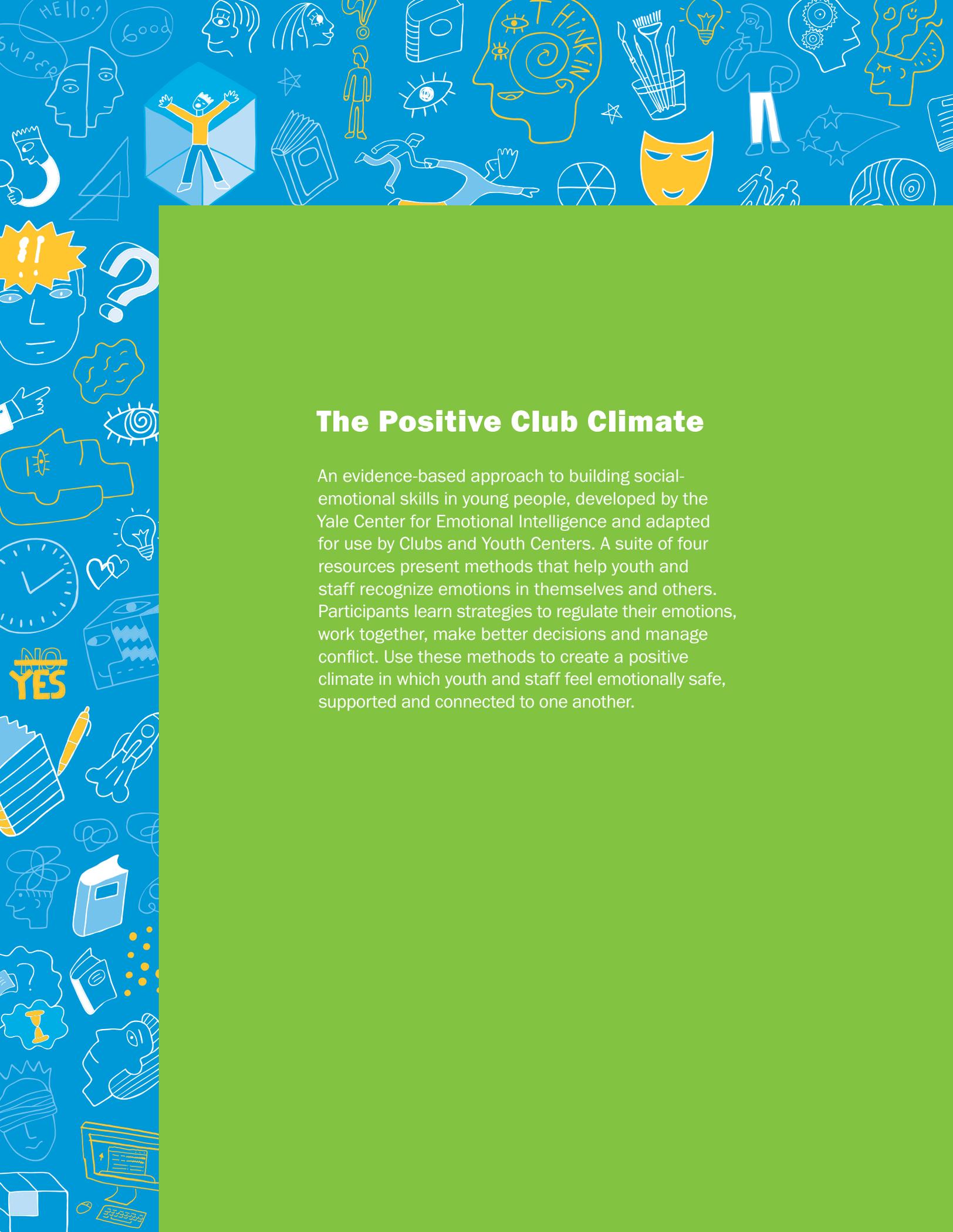
A Positive Club Climate guide to inclusive norm-setting, this resource includes both staff training and youth sessions on building Group Agreements.

Positive
Club
Climate

Group Agreements



THINKING



The Positive Club Climate

An evidence-based approach to building social-emotional skills in young people, developed by the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence and adapted for use by Clubs and Youth Centers. A suite of four resources present methods that help youth and staff recognize emotions in themselves and others. Participants learn strategies to regulate their emotions, work together, make better decisions and manage conflict. Use these methods to create a positive climate in which youth and staff feel emotionally safe, supported and connected to one another.

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Teaching Group Agreements to Youth

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Introduction

As youth development professionals, an essential part of our work is supporting young people's social-emotional development. The benefits of providing youth with opportunities to learn and practice social-emotional skills include improved academic performance, decreased emotional distress, decreased behavior problems, and increases in positive attitudes about both school and pro-social behavior.

That's why BGCA has partnered with the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence. The center's RULER method is an evidence-based approach focused on five skills for building emotional intelligence in young people:

- **R**ecognizing emotions in oneself and others
- **U**nderstanding the cause and consequences of emotions
- **L**abeling emotions with a nuanced vocabulary
- **E**xpressing emotions in accordance with cultural norms and social context
- **R**egulating emotions with helpful strategies

What Is the Positive Club Climate?

Using this approach in the Club or Youth Center can help you create a positive climate in which staff and youth feel connected and supported, respected and valued, inspired and excited, and emotionally safe and comfortable. When youth feel supported, respected and safe, they are more likely to engage in impactful Club activities and positive peer interactions.

Working with the Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence, BGCA adapted four tools for building a positive Club climate:

- **Emotional Check-Ins** are designed to help participants recognize emotions in themselves and others and develop strategies for regulating or managing emotions.
- **Group Agreements** are a shared vision created by participants in order to build an emotionally supportive environment.
- **The Meta-Moment** helps participants handle strong emotions to make better decisions for themselves and their community.
- **The Restorative Roadmap** helps participants manage conflicts and their aftermath.

Why the Positive Club Climate?

Clubs strive to provide **Five Key Elements for Positive Youth Development**.

When these elements are in place, they enable youth to participate meaningfully in their Club experience and help their boost positive outcomes:

1. A safe, positive environment
2. Fun
3. Supportive relationships
4. Opportunities and expectations
5. Recognition

The Five Key Elements lay the foundation for effective programming. When used, these elements help young people build core physical, cognitive and social-emotional skills.

The Positive Club Climate methods support important aspects of the Five Key Elements. They help youth development professionals and youth work to maintain a sense of emotional safety in the Club; using them creates opportunities for young people to learn and practice important social-emotional skills.

Group Agreements, for example, are based on input from youth, engaging them in the creation of behavioral **expectations** that promote positive peer relationships. **Supportive relationships** of all types – staff-to-staff, staff-to-youth and youth-to-youth – are facilitated through Emotional Check-Ins, Group Agreements, the Meta-Moment and the Restorative Roadmap.

This approach creates ongoing and consistent **opportunities** for participants to share what they are feeling. By using these methods, youth development professionals and youth work to build a culture of understanding, appreciation and support in all interactions.

Social-Emotional Skill Development

In addition to facilitating youth and adult connections, as well as inclusion, the Positive Club Climate tools were designed to promote the following social-emotional skills:

Self-Awareness	Recognizing one's feelings, needs, thoughts and influence on behavior
Empathy	Ability to understand and share the feelings of others
Perspective Taking	Ability to see things from others' point of view
Identifying Emotions	Recognizing and expressing feelings
Conflict Management	Responding to conflict
Conflict Resolution	Developing solutions to conflict
Communication	Communicating clearly verbally and non-verbally, listening well to others
Impulse Control	Controlling the desire to react immediately

Youth Development Professionals' Role in the Positive Club Climate

Club professionals are critical to developing a positive Club climate. Depending on their role in the Club, staff may:

- Train other staff members to use the Positive Club Climate tools
- Practice using the tools with each other
- Model the use of the tools in front of youth
- Teach young people to use the tools
- Incorporate the tools into daily routines with youth

Practice Positive Youth Development to Create Inclusive Clubs

Inclusion is another core component for building a safe, positive environment in your Club or Youth Center. Youth will feel physically and emotionally secure when everyone is focused on making sure ALL youth feel included. By creating inclusive environments at the Club, we improve the overall experience for all young people. When staff use positive youth development practices, they help ensure all youth:

- Feel represented
- Have a sense of belonging
- Can meaningfully participate in programming

Consider strategies that help youth feel affirmed, safe and engaged with Club experiences. For more information on building and sustaining an inclusive environment, download the Program Basics BLUEprint at [BGCA.net](https://www.bgca.net).

How to Use Positive Club Climate Resources

The Positive Club Climate tools are intended to create a cultural shift in your organization by building emotionally safe, inclusive and supportive environments for both youth and staff. The four guides to these tools are intended to be used sequentially, providing progressive learning and skill-development opportunities for participants.

Club professionals should learn and practice each Positive Club Climate tool as a team before using it with youth. The Emotional Check-Ins and Group Agreements guides include staff training resources. Consider holding learning sessions during weekly staff meetings or at a routine training event. Training content for the Meta-Moment and Restorative Roadmap can be accessed separately. For more information, see [BGCA.net/page/clubclimate](https://www.bgca.net/page/clubclimate).

Positive Club Climate Resources At-a-Glance		
	What is it?	How to use it:
Emotional Check-Ins	Emotional Check-Ins are designed to help participants learn to recognize emotions in ourselves and others, and to develop strategies for regulating or managing those emotions.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Use Emotional Check-Ins at staff meetings. 2. Use Emotional Check-Ins at the beginning and end of every program. 3. Use Emotional Check-Ins at various points throughout the Club day. 4. Use Emotional Check-Ins when working with youth who are feeling strong emotions.
Group Agreements	Group Agreements are a shared vision created by participants in order to build an emotionally supportive environment.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create Group Agreements with youth development professionals at a staff meeting; revisit them routinely to update them as needed. 2. Create Club-wide Group Agreements to showcase your Club vision. 3. Create Group Agreements with youth for specific program areas or when you begin a new program; revisit them daily and change them as needed.
Meta-Moment	The Meta-Moment helps participants handle strong emotions so they can make better decisions for themselves and their community.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Youth development professionals can take a Meta-Moment before approaching a tense situation with youth to prepare themselves to react calmly. 2. Youth can use the Meta-Moment to guide their interactions with staff and peers when they are feeling big emotions. 3. Staff can encourage youth to use the Meta-Moment as a way to positively guide behavior choices.
Restorative Roadmap	The Restorative Roadmap helps participants manage conflict effectively.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Youth development professionals can use the Restorative Roadmap for reflection with youth after a conflict occurs. 2. Club leaders can use the Restorative Roadmap for reflection with youth development professionals after a conflict occurs.

How to Use Group Agreements

Important Note About Safety:

Be an active listener during this process. Pay attention to red flags that could indicate safety issues. Be sure to follow your Club's policy for mandated reporting if a youth discloses anything related to abuse, neglect or threats to their personal safety while sharing.

Group Agreements are a shared vision that youth and youth development professionals create to build an emotionally supportive and safe environment at your Club or Youth Center. Group Agreements answer three main questions to create the shared vision:

Question 1 **How do we want to feel at the Club?**

Question 2 **What will we do to feel this way every day?**

Question 3 **What will we do when conflict happens?**

Clubs can create and use Group Agreements to identify an ideal version of how a group of people want to feel when they interact with each other and the behaviors that can make that happen. Creating Group Agreements allows youth and youth development professionals to make a commitment to honor that vision and engage in those behaviors. It is a tool that can bridge the gap between how people in a Club are feeling and how they want to feel.

Creating Group Agreements builds social-emotional skills in both adults and youth. Group Agreements can improve adult and youth connections by intentionally incorporating youth opinion and ideas into a shared product, which may lead to an increased sense of belonging and feelings of inclusion. Additionally, Group Agreements have the potential to build empathy skills in both adults and youth by providing a space to honor each other's emotions and needs.

Keep Group Agreements relevant by referring to them at the beginning of each session, club meeting or programming block. Allow youth to recommit to their vision and make changes to the Agreements. When you need to redirect youth behavior, refer to the Group Agreements as examples of behaviors that create a positive Club environment for everyone.

Meeting Agenda: Group Agreements

Total time: 1 hour

1 Welcome (5 minutes)

- **Take** this time to introduce any new members to your team.
- **Provide** space for employee recognition through shout-outs for a job well done.

2 Introduction (5 minutes)

Topic/Meeting Purpose:

Youth development professionals will learn about Group Agreements, how to use them and create a group agreement for their team.

Why:

- To create a set of shared expectations for the ways youth development professionals work together.
- To provide youth development professionals with a voice and choice to create shared expectations.
- To create an emotionally safe and supportive workplace culture.
- To learn how to create Group Agreements with youth.

3 Icebreaker/Teambuilding (10 minutes)

- **Option 1: A Simple Reminder**

- › **Ask** youth development professionals to reflect on the following questions and write their thoughts on a piece of paper:

- What positive qualities do you have when you are at the top of your game?
- What are you like when you are your best self?
- How do others see you?
- How do you see yourself?

- › **Ask** youth development professionals to reflect on the following questions: How did this make you feel? What is a simple reminder you could take from this activity and use in the future?

- **Option 2: Gratitude Expression**

- › **Ask** youth development professionals to think of a person in their lives who they are grateful for.

- › **Tell** staff to write a note, send a text or give a quick call to express their gratitude.

- › **Ask** staff to reflect on how this activity made them feel and how they might use this gratitude exercise in the future.

4

Meeting Content (25 minutes)

- **Main Points:** What are Group Agreements?
 - › **Pass** out the Building Group Agreements worksheet to guide this discussion.
 - › Group Agreements are a shared vision that youth and staff create to build an emotionally supportive and safe environment at the Club.
 - › Group Agreements answer three main questions to create the shared vision:
 - **Question 1:** How do we want to feel at the Club?
 - **Question 2:** What will we do to feel this way every day?
 - **Question 3:** What will we do when conflict happens?
 - › Clubs can create and use Group Agreements to identify an ideal version of how a group of people want to feel when they interact with each other.
 - › Creating Group Agreements allows youth and staff to make a commitment to engage in those ways.
 - › Group Agreements are a tool that can bridge the gap between how people in a Club are feeling and how they want to feel.
 - › Creating Group Agreements builds social-emotional skills in both staff and youth.
 - › Group Agreements can improve adult and youth connections by intentionally incorporating youth opinion and ideas into a shared product, which may lead to an increased sense of belonging and feelings of inclusion.
 - › Group Agreements have the potential to build empathy skills in both staff and youth by providing a space to honor each other's emotions and needs to create a positive Club climate.
- **Ask** youth development professionals to share your Club or Youth Center's rules.
- **Explain** that most rules are meant to keep everyone at the Club physically safe. Group Agreements are designed to make everyone feel emotionally safe and build a positive and supportive Club environment. Group Agreements focus on feelings and our behaviors that help create those feelings.

Practice Activities: Practice Creating Group Agreements

- **Question 1:** How do we want to feel while we are at the Club?
 - › **Pass** out Post-It notes.
 - › **Ask** youth development professionals to reflect on the following questions:
 - How do you feel at work?
 - How do you want to feel at work?
 - › **Tell** them to use the Building Group Agreements worksheet to write down their top five feelings.
 - › **Ask** them to write each of their feeling words on one Post-it note.
 - › **Collect** the Post-it notes and read them aloud.
 - › **Determine** the top five feeling words for the group. Ask participants to record them on the Building Group Agreements worksheet.

- **Question 2:** What will we do in order to feel this way every day?
 - › **Divide** youth development professionals into five small groups or pairs and assign one feeling word per group.
 - › **Ask** them to identify at least two possible strategies that would help them feel the emotion word they have been assigned.
 - For example, if the feeling word is “valued,” the behavior could be, “We thank our coworkers for helping us every day.”
 - › **Explain** that the strategies should be very specific so they’re easy to put into practice and easily observed in others’ behavior.
 - For example, if the feeling word is “valued,” the behavior could be, “We thank our coworkers for helping us every day.”
 - › **Ask** one person from each group to share their ideas with the large group, and then together decide which five strategies to add to the Building Group Agreements worksheet.
- **Question 3:** What will we do when conflict arises?
 - › **Divide** youth development professionals into two groups and provide each group with a large piece of paper and a marker.
 - › **Ask** them to reflect on what helps them feel better when there is conflict and to write down as many ideas as they can think of in two minutes.
 - For example, ask one person per group to write and then pass the marker to the next person.
 - › After time is up, **ask** a volunteer from each group to read their ideas.
 - › **Instruct** each group to choose three ideas from their list and make them specific, actionable strategies.
 - For example, instead of “Take deep breaths,” the behavior could be, “I will take a deep breath and count to 10 before I say or do anything else.”
 - › **Ask** a volunteer from each group to share their three final strategies with the large group.
 - › **Write** both groups’ strategies (for a total of six) on the Building Group Agreements worksheet.
- **Create** the product.
 - › **Ask** for volunteers to become part of a Group Agreements Committee that will take the results from the Building Group Agreements worksheet and create a product for the entire group to sign.
 - › **Display** the Group Agreements in a visible space that all staff can see (e.g., behind the front desk, in a shared office space, in the workroom, etc.).

5**Planning for Action** (10 minutes)

- Keeping Group Agreements fluid
 - › The Group Agreements can be edited or changed as we hire new staff or whenever staff decide it needs updating.
 - › To keep the Group Agreements fluid, we will review them during staff meetings and make revisions to them at least twice a year.
 - › How can we incorporate our Group Agreements into our daily Club culture?
- Using Group Agreements with youth
 - › How can we use this with youth?
 - › Who should do what and when?
 - › What support is needed?

6**Reflection** (5 minutes)

Ask staff to evaluate the effectiveness of the meeting and their ability to apply the information they learned.

Meeting Handout: Building Group Agreements Worksheet

1. How do we want to feel at the Club each day?

Top five feelings for YOU

Top five feelings for the GROUP

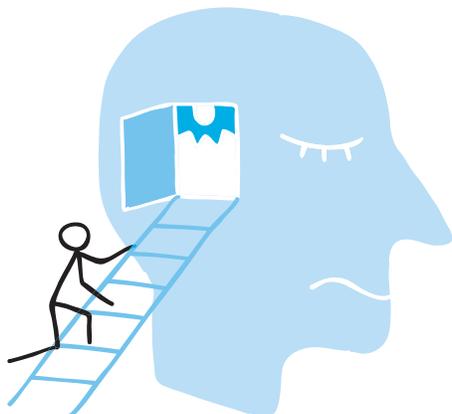
1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

2. What will we do to have these feelings every day?

Write down five specific strategies (one for each feeling).

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____



Meeting Handout: Building Group Agreements Worksheet

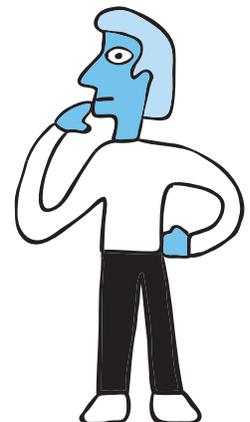
3. What do we do when we have conflict?

Write down six specific strategies.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Once all three questions are answered, write them on this worksheet and ask everyone in the group to sign. Post the Group Agreements somewhere visible so they can be referred to and revisited for amendments as needed.

SIGNATURES:





Teaching Group Agreements to Youth

This section contains three age-appropriate sessions for creating Group Agreements with youth. Use them:

- As the first session of a targeted program, to establish norms for program meetings and activities
- As a stand-alone activity to establish Group Agreements for the whole Club or Youth Center
- With a group of youth who typically rotate or share program time together
- In a meeting of a small-group club

Session 1: Building Our Group Agreements



TIME
45 minutes



SIZE
20



HANDOUTS
None

Session Objective: Youth will create Group Agreements.

Preparation

Have supplies laid out and available for youth to use and create a space for youth to work.

Facilitator Guidance for the Group Agreements Session

- Group Agreements are a shared vision created by a group to build an emotionally supportive environment. The Group Agreements focus on feelings and behaviors that help to create the expectations for how everyone will treat each other.
- It is a tool that can bridge the gap between how youth are feeling and how they want to feel. Agreements allow youth to define what feeling emotionally safe means to them and how they can support each other.
- It's important for youth who work together within a program area to complete Group Agreements as a way to build a safe, positive emotional climate and bolster group connection within the program.
- Be ready to review with youth how Group Agreements differ from rules:
 - › Most rules are meant to keep everyone physically safe. While physical safety is incredibly important, it is also necessary that everyone feels emotionally safe while at the Club or Youth Center.

1

Warm Welcome (2 minutes)

Greet youth by name as they enter your program area. **Engage** in meaningful conversation.

2

Community Builder: Movement Circle (10 minutes)

- **Ask** youth to stand in a circle.
- **Instruct** one youth at a time to step forward while saying their name and performing a brief movement of choice – for example, clapping or jumping in place.
 - › The group repeats the name and movement together.
- **Ask** the group to repeat each name and movement in order as a test of their memory skills.
 - › Ex: Kathleen (wave), Jayvion (jump), Mariella (peace sign)

Supplies Needed

- Paper (1 per youth)
- Writing utensils (1 per youth)
- Markers/crayons/colored pencils
- Sticky notes
- Dry erase board/chalkboard or flipchart paper
- Poster board/flipchart paper

Links to Resources

- YDToolbox: ydtoolbox.goodbarber.com (or download from the Apple Store or Google Play)
- BGCA.net/page/clubclimate

Social-Emotional Skills

- Youth Connections
- Adult Connections
- Identifying Emotions
- Communication

Key Terms

None

Group Agreements

Ages 6-9

17

3

Main Activity: Building Our Group Agreements*(35 minutes)***Introduce Youth to the Activity**

- **Say**, “Today, we’re going to start creating our Group Agreements.”
- **Say**, “Everyone take a minute to think about the rules in our Club or Youth Center. What are some Club rules you can think of? Some common rules are ‘Don’t run inside’ or ‘No fighting.’”
- **Say**, “Rules are created by staff to keep you safe. Group Agreements are like a promise we make to each other in front of our fellow Club members to make sure that everyone feels comfortable while here.”
- **Ask** youth to share some promises they have made to friends or family members.
- **Say**, “The Group Agreements describe how we all want to feel in the program and what we can promise to do to make sure everyone has these feelings.”
- **Say**, “Today we will share how we want to feel and create promises for how everyone will treat each other in our group.”
- **Say**, “We are going to answer the following three questions:
 - › How do we want to feel during our time together?
 - › What can we do to have these feelings every day?
 - › What can we do if someone’s feelings are hurt?”

Step-by-Step Directions (20 minutes)**Step 1:** Identify feelings.

- **Ask** youth what feelings they would like to have at the Club or Youth Center.
- **List** each feeling on the dry erase board/chalkboard or flipchart paper.
- **Use** the Feeling Faces cards if it would be helpful for youth to see an image of a feeling to help guide them.
- **Guide** youth in narrowing down their top five feelings by providing language to name feelings, even if youth don’t yet have the vocabulary. Each feeling should be unique.
 - › For example, sometimes youth will know they want to feel a particular way (e.g., “part of a group”) but do not have the vocabulary to describe the actual feeling (e.g., “accepted” or “belonging”). If this is the case, provide youth with the feeling word that best describes their experiences.
- After you have the top five feelings, **continue** to the next step.

Group Agreements

Ages 6-9

Step 2: Name behaviors.

- **Ask**, “What can we do in order to have these feelings every day?”
- **Explain** to youth that you want them to think about what they can do each day to make sure everyone feels the top feelings (e.g., safe, kind, happy). Discuss each feeling one at a time. Below are some examples:
 - › Happy = smile when we are in program together
 - › Kind = share your materials, paper, computers, etc.
- **Guide** youth in naming one behavior per feeling.
 - › For example, both feeling liked and kind may involve smiling and being helpful. Help youth come up with one specific behavior for each feeling.
- **Have** youth choose one of the five feeling words that is most important to them.
- **Instruct** each youth to write down the feeling word they chose on a piece of paper, along with one thing they can do to help others feel that way, and then draw a picture showing that behavior.
- After youth finish their drawings, **have** them sign their papers. Then hang all of their commitments on a wall in the program area.
- **Remind** youth of the commitments they made throughout the program by referencing back to the pictures on the wall.
- **Display** the Group Agreements in the program area so they are easily visible to all youth. It is important that all youth see the Group Agreements daily to make sure they are being followed, so they can hold themselves and each other accountable, and so they can make any updates as needed.

Step 3: Use behaviors.

- **Ask**, “What can we do if someone’s feelings are hurt?” Encourage youth to be as specific as possible. Below are a few examples:
 - › Ask, “Can I help you?”
 - › Tell a staff member.
 - › Offer to sit with them for a while if they would like to talk with a friend.
- **Allow** youth to respond and thank them for sharing.
- **Decide** on a final list together of about 3-5 behaviors that will be included in your Group Agreements to address how youth will handle hurt feelings.
- **Assign** youth the task of drawing a picture that represents one of the five behaviors.
- **Add** drawn behaviors to the wall along with their commitment worksheets from Step 2.

Group Agreements

Ages 6-9

19

4 Reflection (5 minutes)

Facilitator Note: “**What**” questions ask about what happened during the activity; “**So What**” questions ask why the learnings from the activity were important; “**Now What**” questions ask how to apply the learnings of the activity to “real life.”

- **What?** – What did you learn about how others want to feel when they are in this group?
- **So What?** – What are you going to do to make sure you help others feel this way every day in our group?
- **Now What?** – How can you do this in other areas of the Club or Youth Center? What would it look like in the gym or at school?

5 Recognition (5 minutes)

- **Ask** youth to stand in a circle.
- **Say**, “At the end of each of our sessions together, we will recognize and celebrate each other by offering a quick ‘PET,’ which stands for ‘Positive Affirmation, Encouragement or Thankfulness.’ PETS are quick ways we can acknowledge each person for something they brought to our session together!”
- **Define** the components of a PET as the following:
 - › Positive Affirmation: A positive comment for someone else that makes them feel good. For example, “You are such a smart person to have in our group!”
 - › Encouragement: A word of support to someone who may be feeling low. For example, “Even though you are feeling sad during the session, it helped me feel better when you shared your emotions.”
 - › Thankfulness: Saying thank you to someone for a way they helped you today. For example, “Thank you for helping keep score during our game about emotions today.”
- **Ask** a volunteer to go first by offering another person in the circle one of the three kinds of PETS.
 - › Youth can choose if they want to share a Positive Affirmation, Encouragement or Thankfulness with another youth; they should not do all three.

Group Agreements

Ages 6-9

20

- **Ask** the person who received the PET to offer a PET to another youth, and then be seated to indicate they have received the PET.
 - › Only those youth who remain standing are eligible to receive a PET as the activity goes on so that everyone has a chance to receive one.
 - › Make sure this activity moves quickly; PETs should take no more than 15 seconds per youth.
- After each youth has had a chance to receive a PET, **thank** the group as a whole.

6**Closing and Transition** (*2 minutes*)

- **Ask** youth to clean up the space and be sure to put all the materials in designated spaces.
- **Provide** youth with clear instructions for the transition to their next program area or activity.

My Group Agreement

1. I want to help others feel more:

Accepted.

2. I will do this by:

Inviting other kids to play with me and my friends.

3.



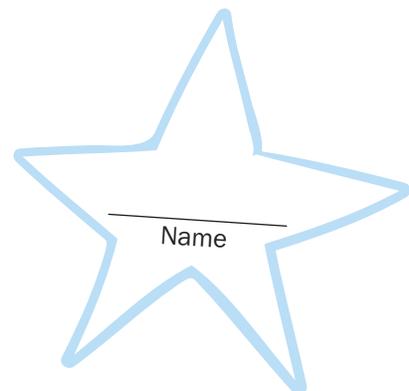
Session 1 Handout

My Group Agreement

1. I want to help others feel more:

2. I will do this by:

3. It will look like this:



**TIME**

50 minutes

**SIZE**

5-25

**HANDOUTS**

None

Supplies Needed

- Paper
- Writing utensils (1 per youth)
- Markers/crayons/colored pencils
- Sticky notes
- Poster board/flipchart paper
- Stickers, glitter, glue (optional)

Links to Resources

- YDToolbox: ydtoolbox.goodbarber.com (or download from the Apple Store or Google Play)
- BGCA.net/page/clubclimate

Social-Emotional Skills

- Youth Connections
- Adult Connections
- Identifying Emotions
- Communication

Key Terms

None

Session 1: Building Our Group Agreements

Session Objective: Youth will create Group Agreements.

Preparation

Have supplies ready and easily accessible for youth to use and create a space for youth to work.

Facilitator Guidance for Group Agreements Session

- Group Agreements are a shared vision created by a group to build an emotionally supportive environment. The Group Agreements focus on feelings and behaviors that help to create the expectations for how everyone will treat each other.
- It is a tool that can bridge the gap between how youth are feeling and how they want to feel. Agreements allow youth to define what feeling emotionally safe means to them and how they can support each other.
- It's important for youth who work together within a program area to complete Group Agreements as a way to build a safe, positive emotional climate and bolster group connection within the program.
- Be ready to review with youth how Group Agreements differ from rules:
 - › Most rules are meant to keep everyone physically safe. While physical safety is incredibly important, it is also necessary that everyone feels emotionally safe while at the Club or Youth Center.

1

Warm Welcome (2 minutes)

Greet youth by name as they enter your program area. **Engage** in meaningful conversation.

2

Community Builder: Movement Circle (10 minutes)

- **Ask** youth to stand in a circle.
- **Instruct** one youth at a time to step forward while saying their name and performing a brief movement of choice – for example, clapping or jumping in place.
 - › The group repeats the name and movement together.
- **Ask** the group to repeat each name and movement in order as a test of their memory skills.
 - › Ex: Kathleen (wave), Jayvion (jump), Mariella (peace sign)

Group Agreements

Ages 10-12

24

3

Main Activity: Building Our Group Agreements*(35 minutes)***Introduce Youth to the Activity**

- **Say**, “For this next activity we are going to talk about how we want to feel and treat one another in our group to make sure it is a safe space to share and do activities with each other.”
- **Say**, “Everyone take a minute to think about the rules in our Club or Youth Center. What are some Club rules you can think of?”
- **Allow** youth time to respond and thank them for participating.
Examples:
 - › Don’t run inside.
 - › No fighting.
- **Say**, “Most rules are meant to keep everyone in the Club or Youth Center physically safe. While physical safety is incredibly important, it is also necessary that everyone feels emotionally safe while here.”
- **Say**, “We are going to create Group Agreements to help us define what it means for us all to feel emotionally safe. We will share how we want to feel and create expectations for how everyone will treat each other in our group.”
- **Say**, “We are going to answer the following three questions:
 - › How do we want to feel during our time together?
 - › What will we do in order to feel this way?
 - › What will we do when there is conflict?”

Step-by-Step Directions (25 minutes)**Step 1:** How do we want to feel during our time together?

- **Ask**, “How do we want to feel during our time together?”
- **Instruct** youth to take a few moments to personally reflect on how they are CURRENTLY feeling while they are at the Club or Youth Center.
- **Have** youth write a T-chart on a piece of paper and write “How I currently feel at the Club” on the top left-hand side of the chart.
- **Tell** youth to write down 3-5 words that describe how they currently feel in the left column.
- **Give** youth a few moments to personally reflect on how they WANT to feel when they are at the Club or Youth Center in their group.

Group Agreements

Ages 10-12

25

Important Note About Emotional Safety:

Be an active listener during this activity and listen for cues that could be red flags for safety concerns. Be sure to follow your Club or Youth Center’s policy for mandated reporting if a youth discloses anything related to abuse, neglect or their personal safety while sharing.

- **Tell** youth to write “How I want to feel in my group” on the top right-hand side of the T-chart.
 - › Tell youth to think about how they want to feel, especially when sharing their thoughts in group discussions.
 - › If youth have a positive feeling on the “Current” side of their chart, encourage them to also write that feeling in the “Want” column.
 - › If youth have a negative feeling in their “Current” column, encourage them to think about what feeling would help them counter their current emotion.

- **See** example below:

How I currently feel at the Club	How I want to feel in my group
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sad • Disrespected • Left Out 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Happy • Respected • Included

- **Distribute** five sticky notes to each youth.
- **Have** youth transfer the words for how they want to feel in this group from the right column of the T-chart onto separate sticky notes.
- **Write** the heading “How We Want to Feel in Our Group” on a dry erase board/chalkboard or flipchart paper.
- **Instruct** youth to post the feeling words they came up with on the dry erase board/chalkboard or flipchart paper.
- **Review** the sticky notes as a large group and collectively narrow down the top five feelings that your group shares.
- **Write** these five shared group feelings down on a poster board or flipchart paper.

Step 2: What will we do in order to feel this way?

- **Ask**, “What will we do in order to feel this way?”
- **Divide** youth into small groups or pairs and assign each group one of the five feelings words.
- **Instruct** each group or pair to come up with at least two positive behaviors that would help the group feel this way.
 - › For example: If the feeling word is “Respected” the behavior could be, “We make sure everyone has a chance to be heard by taking turns.”

Group Agreements

Ages 10-12

- **Give** the groups or pairs 2-3 minutes to come up with their responses.
- **Bring** the whole group back together and discuss the behaviors their small group created.
- **Write** these behaviors down on the poster board or flipchart paper.
- **Create** specific and realistic behaviors for the Agreements that are easy to measure against to make sure youth stay on track.
 - › For example: Instead of “Be nice to everyone,” a more specific behavior could be: “Take time to talk to someone in the group if you notice they are having a bad day.”

Step 3: What will we do when there is conflict?

- **Ask**, “What will we do when there is conflict?”
- **Instruct** youth to take a few moments for individual reflection and brainstorming to think about what makes them feel better when there is conflict or when they are not feeling the way they want to feel.
- **Bring** everyone back together once they had time to think and come back with at least three specific behaviors that help with conflict resolution.
- **Share** an example:
 - › The behavior for what to do when you are not feeling respected could be “I talk to the person who made me feel disrespected to let them know how I feel and seek to find a solution together” or “I seek out a trusted adult to tell them how I am feeling.”
- **Write** down the three main conflict resolution behaviors, once the group decides, on the poster board or flipchart paper.

Step 4: Formalize the Group Agreements.

- **Say**, “Now that you have answered the three questions, you are on the last step of the Group Agreements process!”
- **Divide** youth into three different groups.
- **Assign** each group one of the Group Agreements questions:
 - › How do we want to feel during our time together?
 - › What will we do in order to feel this way?
 - › What will we do when there is conflict?
- **Instruct** each small group to review the answers from their assigned question and create a final product that represents the responses for that question that the entire large group will sign.

Group Agreements

Ages 10-12

- **Encourage** groups to be creative! Their Group Agreements could be a poster, an interactive wall, a bulletin board, a video or anything else they can think of.
- **Inform** youth that they do not have to write down everything they came up with while answering the three questions for this final product. They can choose what works best for their group.
- **Tell** groups they will have five minutes to create their product.
- After the Group Agreements have been created, **tell** each group to add their product to the written Group Agreements.
- **Explain** to youth that they are all a part of this group now. To symbolize that, they all have the opportunity to choose a symbol to represent themselves in the group.
- **Have** all youth sign each product to show they are agreeing to the Group Agreements and display all of the products together as the Group Agreements within your program area.
- **Remind** youth they will see the Group Agreements every time the program is run to make sure that they are being followed.
- **Tell** youth the Group Agreements will help them hold themselves and each other accountable, and they can also make updates as needed. If a new young person joins the group they can add to it.

4

Reflection (5 minutes)

Facilitator Note: *“What” questions ask about what happened during the activity; “So What” questions ask why the learnings from the activity were important; “Now What” questions ask how to apply the learnings of the activity to “real life.”*

- **What?** – What did you learn about how people want to feel when they are in this group?
- **So What?** – Why do you think that it is important to express how we want to feel? Why is it important to create expectations for how everyone will treat each other in this group?
- **Now What?** – How might hearing how people want to be treated in this group affect the way you treat people throughout the whole Club or Youth Center?

Group Agreements

Ages 10-12

5

Recognition (5 minutes)

- **Ask** youth to stand in a circle.
- **Say**, “At the end of each of our sessions together, we will recognize and celebrate each other by offering a quick ‘PET,’ which stands for ‘Positive Affirmation, Encouragement or Thankfulness.’ PETs are quick ways we can acknowledge each person for something they brought to our session together!”
- **Define** the components of a PET as the following:
 - › Positive Affirmation: A positive comment for someone else that makes them feel good. For example, “You are such a smart person to have in our group!”
 - › Encouragement: A word of support to someone who may be feeling low. For example, “Even though you are feeling sad during the session, it helped me feel better when you shared your emotions.”
 - › Thankfulness: Saying thank you to someone for a way they helped you today. For example, “Thank you for helping keep score during our game about emotions today.”
- **Ask** a volunteer to go first by offering another youth in the circle one of the three kinds of PETs.
 - › Youth can choose if they want to share a Positive Affirmation, Encouragement or Thankfulness with another youth; they should not do all three.
- **Ask** the person who received the PET to offer a PET to another youth, and then be seated to indicate they have received the PET.
 - › Only those youth who remain standing are eligible to receive a PET as the activity goes on so that everyone has a chance to receive one.
 - › Make sure this activity moves quickly; PETs should take no more than 15 seconds per youth.
- After each youth has had a chance to receive a PET, **thank** the group as a whole.

6

Closing and Transition (2 minutes)

- **Ask** youth to clean up the space and be sure to put all the materials in designated spaces.
- **Provide** youth with clear instructions for the transition to their next program area or activity.

**TIME**

60 minutes

**SIZE**

5-25

**HANDOUTS**

None

Supplies Needed

- Paper
- Writing utensils (1 per youth)
- Markers/crayons/colored pencils
- Sticky notes
- Poster board/flipchart paper
- Stickers, glitter, glue (optional)

Links to Resources

- YDToolbox: ydtoolbox.goodbarber.com (or download from the Apple Store or Google Play)
- BGCA.net/page/clubclimate

Social-Emotional Skills

- Youth Connections
- Adult Connections
- Identifying Emotions
- Communication

Key Terms

None

Session 1: Building Our Group Agreements

Session Objective: Youth will create Group Agreements.

Preparation

Have supplies laid out and available for youth to use and create a space for youth to work.

Facilitator Guidance for Group Agreements Session

- Group Agreements are a shared vision created by a group to build an emotionally supportive environment. The Group Agreements focus on feelings and behaviors that help to create the expectations for how everyone will treat each other.
- It is a tool that can bridge the gap between how youth are feeling and how they want to feel. Agreements allow youth to define what feeling emotionally safe means to them and how they can support each other.
- It's important for youth who work together within a program area to complete Group Agreements as a way to build a safe, positive emotional climate and bolster group connection within the program.
- Be ready to review with youth how agreements differ from rules:
 - › Most rules are meant to keep everyone in the Club or Youth Center physically safe. While physical safety is incredibly important, it is also necessary that everyone feels emotionally safe while at the Club or Youth Center.

1

Warm Welcome (2 minutes)

Greet youth by name as they enter your program area. **Engage** in meaningful conversation.

2

Community Builder: Movement Circle (10 minutes)

- **Ask** youth to stand in a circle.
- **Instruct** one youth at a time to step forward while saying their name and performing a brief movement of choice – for example, clapping or jumping in place.
 - › The group repeats the name and movement together.
- **Ask** the group to repeat each name and movement in order as a test of their memory skills.
 - › Ex: Kathleen (wave), Jayvion (jump), Mariella (peace sign)

Group Agreements

Ages 13-18

30

3

Main Activity: Building Our Group Agreements*(35 minutes)***Introduce Youth to the Activity**

- **Say**, “For this next activity we are going to talk about how we want to feel and treat one another in our group in order to make sure that it is a safe space to share and do activities with each other.”
- **Say**, “Everyone take a minute to think about the rules in our Club. What are some Club rules you can think of?”
- **Allow** youth time to respond and thank them for participating. Examples:
 - › Don’t run inside.
 - › No fighting.
- **Say**, “Most rules are meant to keep everyone in the Club or Youth Center physically safe. While physical safety is incredibly important, it is also necessary that everyone feels emotionally safe while here.”
- **Say**, “We are going to create a Group Agreement that helps us define what it means for us all to feel emotionally safe. We will share how we want to feel and create expectations for how everyone will treat each other in our group.”
- **Say**, “We are going to answer the following three questions:
 - › How do we want to feel during our time together?
 - › What will we do in order to feel this way?
 - › What will we do when there is conflict?”

Step-by-Step Directions (25 minutes)**Step 1:** How do we want to feel during our time together?

- **Ask**, “How do we want to feel during our time together?”
- **Instruct** youth to take a few moments to personally reflect on how they are CURRENTLY feeling while they are at the Club or Youth Center.
- **Have** youth write a T-chart on a piece of paper and write “How I currently feel at the Club” on the top left-hand side of the chart.
- **Tell** youth to write down 3-5 words that describe how they currently feel in the left column.
- **Give** youth a few moments to personally reflect on how they WANT to feel when they are at the Club or Youth Center in their group.

Important Note About Emotional Safety:

Be an active listener during this activity and listen for cues that could be red flags for safety concerns. Be sure to follow your Club or Youth Center’s policy for mandated reporting if a youth discloses anything related to abuse, neglect or their personal safety while sharing.

Group Agreements

Ages 13-18

- **Tell** youth to write “How I want to feel in my group” on the top right-hand side of the T-chart.
 - › Tell youth to think about how they want to feel, especially when sharing their thoughts in group discussions.
 - › If youth have a positive feeling in their “Current” column, encourage them to write that feeling in their “Want” column, too.
 - › If youth have a negative feeling in their “Current” column, encourage them to think about what feeling would help them counter their current emotion.

- **See** example below:

How I currently feel at the Club	How I want to feel in my group
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- **Instruct** youth to post the feeling words they came up with on the dry erase board/chalkboard or flipchart paper.
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 - › For example: If the feeling word is “Respected” the behavior could be, “We make sure everyone has a chance to be heard by taking turns.”
- **Give** the groups or pairs 2-3 minutes to come up with their responses.
- **Bring** the whole group back together and discuss the behaviors that their small group created.
- **Write** these behaviors down on the poster board or flipchart paper.

Group Agreements

Ages 13-18

32

- **Create** specific and realistic behaviors for the Agreements that are easy to measure against to make sure youth stay on track.
 - › For example: Instead of “Be nice to everyone,” a more specific behavior could be “Take time to talk to someone in the group if you notice they are having a bad day.”

Step 3: What will we do when there is conflict?

- **Ask**, “What will we do when there is conflict?”
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- **Instruct** youth that they will have five minutes to create their product.

Group Agreements

Ages 13-18

- After the new Group Agreements product has been created, **tell** each group to add their product to the written Group Agreements.
- **Have** all youth sign each product to show that they are agreeing to the Group Agreements and display all of the products together as the Group Agreements within your program area.
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Group Agreements

Ages 13-18

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6**Closing and Transition** (2 minutes)

- **Ask** youth to clean up the space and be sure to put all the materials in designated spaces.
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Yale *Center for Emotional Intelligence*

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National Headquarters
1275 Peachtree Street NE
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