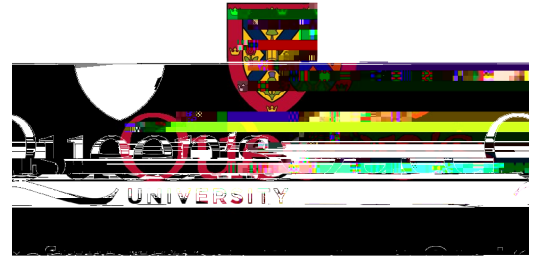




# Community Agreements in Your Classroom

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*“Creating community commitments is something we can all do in our classrooms, and other educative spaces, to construct an environment that promotes engaged, interactive learning, enriching students’ learning experience” (Bettez, 2020)*

Community agreements are norms shared between members of a group on how the group will work together by encouraging collaboration and growth. Designed to build a sense of community

- I will listen carefully and try not to interrupt—even when I am excited to respond!
- I will try not to generalize about groups (even groups with which I identify) and I won't ask another person to speak as a representative of a group.
- I will keep an open mind and look forward to learning about—and being challenged by—ideas, questions, and points of view that are different than my own.

## Developing Community Agreements

There are multiple approaches to creating a community agreement. It is important to remember that community agreements are established to facilitate discussion. They are different from course policies (course requirements, expectations, and procedures). It is recommended that you state their purpose and clearly distinguish between course policies and community agreements when introducing them.

Some suggested approaches to creating community agreements are:

- [Project Nia's Agency, Boundaries, and Credibility \(ABCs\) Framework](#)
- [Small Group Method](#)
- [Brookfield and Preskill's Method](#)
- [Acronym Method](#)

Despite the different names, the approaches are similar. This resource focuses on Project Nia's ABC framework, which is remixed below:

### Agency

Reflects on the opportunity for each learner to add their voice to the agreement. For small class sizes, the [Center for Teaching and Learning at Washington University in St. Louis](#) suggests an informal process to facilitate participation in co-creating the rules by students when class size is 35 students or less. This could simply be achieved by inviting students using statements such as *"In this course, I'd like our discussions to be informed, respectful, thoughtful, and engaged. What are the ground rules we should follow to make this happen?"*. The [Centre for Teaching Support and Innovation at University of Toronto](#) suggests using think-pair-share or individual writing prompts as active learning strategies to brainstorm ideas. For large lecture courses, students can be invited to add to already identified agreements at their own time. Students will feel empowered, not forced to accept the agreement and will have more buy-in when made part of the process. This guide from [Barnard College's Center for Engaged Pedagogy](#) provides models and recommendations for

using online applications such as Jamboard or Padlet to craft Community Agreements.

## Boundaries

Community Agreements allow the group to build a set of expectations, to respect the boundaries, and hold each other accountable. Below are some examples of boundaries to consider including in a community agreement adapted from [Boston](#)

# References

Berkeley Graduate Division. Creating Community Agreements.  
<https://gsi.berkeley.edu/gsi-guide-contents/discussion->