

APPENDIX A

SUGGESTED GROUP GUIDELINES

These guidelines are designed to help create an atmosphere of safety and respect. Read through them as a group during your first meeting, and then discuss whether specific guidelines need to be amended, deleted, or added.

DON'T INTERRUPT

Allow each person time to finish speaking before responding.

SHARE THE AIR

Ensure everyone has the opportunity to participate by respecting the time available. The leader has permission to redirect the discussion if it gets off track.

CHOOSE WONDER

If you disagree with something shared, don't immediately give voice to criticism or rejection. Instead, ask yourself the following question: I wonder what led this person to these thoughts/beliefs? Make room for others to offer opposing views and diverse experiences.

RESPECT CONFIDENTIALITY

What is shared in the room stays in the room.*

DO NOT GIVE ADVICE

What works for you may not work for someone else. Respect the journeys, experiences, and processes of each group member, and do not attempt to fix, correct, or save anyone.

EXHIBIT SENSITIVITY

This course sometimes deals with difficult and painful subjects which can affect participants emotionally. Decide in advance how you will respond to one another in these sensitive moments. Some options include giving participants permission to take a break and step outside, asking participants what they need in the moment, and offering participants comfort items like tissues, a blanket, or a warm beverage.

You are encouraged to view the experiences, the pain, and the mental health journeys of your fellow participants as Holy Ground—a place to walk with gentleness, reverence, and respect. Please keep this perspective in mind when someone in your group shares about their own mental health.

***Note:** Participants' stories should not be shared outside the group. However, if a participant is a danger to themselves or others, emergency services should be contacted.