

# Hopes, Fears, and Community Agreements Protocol

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**Purpose:** At the outset of important work, give all team members—students and adults alike—the opportunity to get expectations and concerns out in the open. From here, the team can establish a group commitment to address the hopes and fears that are present. Through this process, the community can work to maximize hopes and minimize fears. This activity is usually done prior to setting group agreements or when revisiting those agreements.

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**Time:** ~35-60 minutes for Hopes, Fears, and Community Agreements

**Materials:** Sticky notes, chart paper and markers or virtual equivalent, such as Jamboard

**Context:** This protocol can be used in a one-time meeting, virtually or in person. It is often used at the beginning of longer engagements.

**Group size:** Varies

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## Hopes and Fears

### Introduce the activity (1 min.):

*We begin this experience by sharing our hopes and fears as a way to begin expressing our truth with each other. By naming these we can then think about what “agreements” are needed in the group in order to maximize hopes and minimize fears. These agreements will help us move towards a space of care.*

- *What do we need to agree on as a team?*
- *What ways should we show up and contribute to this space?*
- *What customs or traditions should we have?*
- *How should we hold each other accountable for these agreements?*

### Brainstorm (4 min.\*):

1. Individually, ask participants to write down their greatest hope for this space on a sticky note.
  - a. You might offer the simple sentence stem, “I hope that we \_\_\_.” Or, “I hope that I \_\_\_.”
2. Then, ask them to write down their greatest fear for this space.
  - a. You might offer the simple sentence stem, “I fear \_\_\_.” Or, “I worry \_\_\_.”

Note: While group members are working, write “Fears” on the top of one piece of chart paper and “Hopes” at the top of another.

### Group Share (10 min.):

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1. Participants read their hopes post-it note and post them on the chart paper (or already on Jamboard). This is done without discussion, editing, commenting, or judgment.
2. Next, participants read their fears and post them on the chart paper. Again, there is no discussion, editing, commenting, or judgment.
3. Optional: Ask participants to move the sticky notes into categories as you discuss what is common about hopes and fears. Notice what sticky notes are unique but might still need attention.

Transition to your community agreements activity (building agreements or revisiting your agreements) now by asking questions such as, “In order to maximize our hopes and minimize our fears, what agreements will we need (or do we need to revise)?”

At points throughout the process, revisit the questions:

- Are we on our way towards meeting the hopes of the group?
- Are any of our fears coming true? How might we pause/pivot/do things differently?

## Community Agreements

### Overview (2 min.):

Share information about why groups might need agreements.

- Agreements help youth and adults participate equally on a team
- Agreements name specific behaviors the team commits to uphold in order to achieve the goals
- Agreements help build trust and clarify group expectations
- Agreements support the team in achieving hopes and minimizing fears
- Agreements build trust and establish points of “reflection” during the process

### Review an example of team agreements (1 min.):

Have these written out on chart paper or a shared electronic file, like Jamboard.

- We take care of each other
- We identify and interrupt power dynamics
- We listen from a place of love
- We honor the stories, experiences, and emotions people share with us
- We are patient with technology, take breaks, and take care of ourselves

### Brainstorm This Team’s Agreements (12 min.):

“How” will we work together to achieve our goals?

1. 2 min: **Think time**
  - a. On an individual level, what do I need to work well on a team?
  - b. Based on the example, what community agreements do I want the group to use or revise?
2. 6 min: **Share out and chart**
  - a. Personal need and/or adopt from example
3. 4 min: **Whole group discussion**
  - a. What's missing?
  - b. Do we need any additional community agreements, specific to our team to achieve our goal?

**Building a shared understanding of the community agreements (~5 min.):**

This can be expanded into a separate activity to really dig into what each community agreement looks, sounds, and feels like for further clarity and understanding.

- a. Pick one norm
- b. Brainstorm individually: If this norm was being followed what would it look like? Sound like? And feel like?
- c. Share out and chart

\*All times are suggestions and should be altered to meet the size and needs of the group.