

Suggested Ground Rules For Family Meetings

Family meetings are enhanced in an atmosphere of safety, confidentiality, honesty and creativity but often behavior and poor communication gets in the way. Ground rules are agreements about expected behavior in meetings. In a group where trust is high and controversy low, you may not need formal ground rules to work well together. However, if issues are charged and/or if conflict is emerging, ground rules are a helpful tool to use to maintain a respectful and productive meeting environment.

- Active Listening: all voices will be heard and none will dominate
- Own your own views: use **"I"** messages regarding my views, my feelings; e.g., **"When this happens, I feel..."**, rather than **"When you do this, it makes me feel..."**
- Limit distractions such as TV, cell phones, etc.
- No interrupting
- No side conversations
- Minimize the use of the words **"but, always and never"**
- Be respectful in words, body language and action; no blaming, accusations
- Focus on the issues and best interests of the care receiver, not on personalities
- Stay in the present