



Developing Committee Ground Rules

In order to conduct efficient committee meetings, each MHSOAC Committee will develop ground rules for meetings.

Purpose:

- Ground rules are statements of values and guidelines which a group establishes consciously to help individual members decide how to act.
- To be effective, ground rules must be clear, consistent, agreed-to and followed.
- Ground rules help keep a group focused and on track with the agenda.
- Ground rules give the chair, committee staff and committee members implied consent to intervene when these rules are not followed.

Developing Committee Ground Rules:

Each committee should spend time at its first meeting developing ground rules. This activity will help to ensure that the committee members agree with and have “buy-in” to abide by these rules.

The list of ground rules developed by each committee will be distributed to every committee member. In addition, an enlarged version will be posted at all committee meetings to serve as a reminder to help the chair, staff and committee members adhere to these standards.

Examples of Ground Rules:

1. Focus on the work process, issue or behavior, not on the person.
2. Maintain the self-confidence and self-esteem of others. All committee members and any ideas generated by committee members will be treated openly and with respect.
3. Open and honest communication. There are no hidden agendas.
4. Attendance and participation. Committee members are expected to attend and participate in meetings. Committee members will raise their hand and wait to be called upon by the chair or staff. Committee members will stay on the agenda and wait to discuss other items until they are at the right place on the agenda.
5. Active listening. Committee members will pay attention to what is being discussed so they can participate actively in discussions.
6. Limit side conversations. One person talks at a time. All questions, ideas and thoughts are shared by the entire committee.
7. Different opinions are welcome. Disagreement is an opportunity to learn more about an issue and ultimately make a wiser group decision