# Proposed Collaborative Norms

1. **Give and receive welcome.** People learn best in hospitable spaces. We support each other’s learning by giving and receiving hospitality.
2. **Trust and learn from the silence.**Silence is a gift in our noisy world, and a way of knowing in itself. Treat silence as a member of the group. After someone has spoken, take time to reflect without immediately filling the space with words.
3. **Be present as fully as possible.** Be here with your doubts, fears and failings as well as your convictions, joys and successes, your compassionate listening as well as your compassionate speaking. Expect that you will not always be comfortable, and that discomfort is an invitation to stay present, rather than retreat or withdraw.
4. **What is offered in the circle is by invitation, not demand.** This is not a “share or die” event! Share your experiences and perspectives when it feels right to you, and practicing inviting your peers who may normally be silenced by dominant cultural norms to share their experiences and perspectives as well. At the same time, understand that while personal experience can successfully illustrate a point, it should be used as the basis for generalizations. In addition, pay attention to how often you speak, how often you listen, and how often you make space for silence.
5. **Speak your truth in ways that respect other people’s truth.**Our views of reality may differ, but speaking one’s truth does not mean interpreting, correcting or debating what others say.
6. **When the going gets rough, turn to wonder**. Turn from reaction and judgment to wonder and compassionate inquiry. Ask yourself, “I wonder why they feel/think this way?” or “I wonder what my reaction teaches me about myself?” Set aside judgment to listen to others—and to yourself—more deeply.
7. **Learn to respond to others with honest, open questions.** Do not respond with counsel or corrections. Using honest, open questions helps us “hear each other into deeper speech.”
8. **Make space for other’s inner teacher:** No “fixing,” saving, advising or correcting each other.This is one of the hardest guidelines for those of us who like to “help.” But when you appreciate the complexity of everyone’s identity and ask questions, you make space for their inner teacher to speak . . . and for them to listen.
9. **Attend to your own inner teacher.**We learn from others, of course. But as we explore stories, questions and silence, we have a special opportunity to learn from within. Be willing to have your thinking and beliefs questioned. Expect to have emotional reactions, and acknowledge and study these feelings. When you pay close attention to your own reactions and responses, you tune into your most important teacher.
10. **Observe deep (double) confidentiality.**Safety is built when we can trust that our words and stories will remain with the people with whom we choose to share, and are not repeated to others without our permission.
11. **Know that it’s possible**to leave this event with whatever it was that you needed when you arrived, and that the seeds planted here can keep growing in the days ahead. We will not reach closure on all discussion and topics, and that’ ok, because the work is on-going, iterative, and always-evolving . . .as are we!

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