



GROUND RULES FOR HEALTHY GROUPS

- **DON'T FIX:** Try to hear what people are sharing without trying to “fix” them. If they want your advice, they'll ask for it. If people think that as soon as they share a problem or issue everyone is going to immediately try to fix them (offer advice/solutions), often they simply won't share at all.
- **LISTEN:** Let's value one another during the discussions by really listening to what is being shared. Don't be thinking about what you are going to say next or how you are going to respond. Really listen.
- **PAUSE:** After someone shares, give a pause to allow the group to feel the weight of what was just shared and to fully consider it before the next person shares. This also provides the person sharing with the opportunity to continue with their thought without feeling rushed. Often people will only share what's above the waterline, but if given the opportunity (and encouragement), they might share the deeper things.
- **SILENCE:** This is much like the pause, but used in a broader and more deliberate way. Silence is used to wait for someone to share next without trying to fill the void with talk. Silence can create tension in a group, but tension isn't a bad thing if used wisely.
- **NO “CROSS-TALK”:** Be considerate of others as they are sharing. No side conversations.
- **DON'T RESCUE:** When people are sharing something deeply personal and/or painful, there can be a tendency to try to make them feel better about himself or herself or the situation. Often this will cause people to stop sharing and results in their not going as deep as they might have gone. Resist the temptation to rescue people.
- **USE “I” STATEMENTS:** It's easy to talk about the issues of others, but for our purposes, we want you to put yourself on the table. Try to use “I” statements rather than “them,” “the church,” “us,” “we,” etc.
- **BE SELF-AWARE:** Be aware of how you are personally affecting the environment with your words, actions and non-verbal communication. Consider how these areas you portray will affect others in the group as a whole.
- **THINK BEYOND:** See individuals beyond your group. Think of individuals beyond your group that you can include. Think of ways your group can impact the community, on or off campus. Think, ponder and pray about God birthing a new group out of your group.