



## Honest & Respectful Conversations: Guidelines for Creating a Safe Space

- We will respect the majority and minority opinions in our community. Our sages remind us of the importance of retaining multiple points of view, *Eilu v'elu divrei Elochim chayim*, as “both these and those are the words of the living God.”
- We will remember to embrace others in the room and to see the *B'tselem Elohim*, the unique face of G~d, in every person we encounter.
- We will listen and speak respectfully about controversial topics, helping grow our individual and community understanding. Our sages believed that disagreements that were conducted *L'shem Shamayim*, “for the sake of Heaven,” produced more constructive, richer solutions.
- We will listen with an open heart, recognizing that we are here to learn from each other.
- We are bound together by *ahavat Yisrael*, our love for our people and Israel. We have also inherited an appreciation of *machlochet*, or disagreement that has productive and lasting value.
- We will focus on our goal of building trust within the group and in our community, even as we acknowledge honest disagreements.
- When speaking and asking questions we will remember to recognize the space we take up and embrace *tzimtzum*, the idea of contracting to allow space for others, so all voices can be heard.
- We will maintain confidentiality - what's said here should stay here but what's learned here can leave here.
- We will speak from our own perspectives and understandings, and will not blame, attack, condemn, or speak for others in the room.
- When disagreeing with someone, we will express understanding of the values that are behind their opinions, and respect for the life experiences that have shaped their beliefs.
- If we feel too upset by something we have heard, we will aim to ask a clarifying question, or ask for help from the meeting leader. If we sense someone may have been “triggered” by something we said, we will reach out and offer them the opportunity to respond and ask questions or connect with the meeting leader after the meeting to ensure there is a resolution.
- Institutional members will clarify whether their viewpoints are personal or institutional.
- We will be present both physically and mentally and avoid multitasking, having side conversations, or looking at other screens during meetings so that we can be fully present and participate.
- We will be kind and understanding when participants have technology challenges and/or are distracted by life happening during our meeting.



## Utilizing the Guidelines for Honest and Respectful Conversation Effectively

This document pairs with the [Honest & Respectful Conversations: Guidelines for Creating a Safe Space document](#). We acknowledge that the guidelines are aspirational and we need to purposefully work towards them. With that in mind, we propose the following:

- We will begin each discussion with a reminder to keep the civil discourse guidelines in mind. When necessary the moderator will actively remind us about the guidelines during discussions.
- We acknowledge that practicing civil discourse can be challenging and we will dedicate a small chunk of time each meeting to practicing these skills.
- When speaking we will focus on and own our own views and feelings.
- We will keep the difference between intent and impact in mind and understand that even if we meant well our words can hurt others.
- When we are all together the Chair is responsible for acting as the moderator during discussions and they may enforce speaking time restrictions if necessary.
- We will keep in mind that each of us will have different comfort levels around what we're willing to discuss and with whom.
- We will consider how internalized antisemitism and history of Jewish trauma may manifest and make space and room for this.
- Outside of meetings. We will take time to get to know each other in order to understand who we are as complex individuals and build understanding when we disagree about an issue.