

Sample Group Operation Guidelines

The following guidelines are adapted from [Families and Friends of Louisiana's Incarcerated Children](#) (FFLIC), a non-profit organization made up of families and community in Louisiana.

Respect for Everyone: We all come from different experiences and walks of life. We all have our areas of knowledge and unawareness. For meaningful work to be done in this group, we need to respect the strengths and weaknesses of all.

Open Minds Only: You never know what you might learn from someone else's experience or what someone could learn from you. Let's be open to listening and sharing with each other.

Oppression Exists—We Fight against It Here: Since we all live in a world where racism, sexism, classism, ageism, and homophobia exist, it also exists within our group. As an organization fighting the injustices and oppression of the juvenile justice system, we must also actively confront and challenge oppression in all forms wherever it exists—especially among ourselves.

Use the “WHOA”: We all learn together. If there is anything that doesn't quite make sense, or if we're moving too fast, just say “WHOA!” We'll back up and explain/slow down so that we can all move forward as a group.

Step Up/Step Back: If you are someone who feels comfortable speaking in groups and making comments, we ask that you “step back” and make room for others to do the same. If you're not so comfortable speaking out, we invite you to “step up” and share your ideas with us in this supportive group setting.

This is a Place for Solidarity: We are all here because we believe in fighting for justice, though we have many differences. We cannot let those differences be used to “divide and conquer.” We are much stronger as a whole.

Be Aware of Time: There is always lots to talk about and get done whenever we come together. Let's all be aware of time and try to monitor ourselves so that we can be sure to cover everything. If there are issues that come up that we don't have time to talk about, we can always put it in the “Parking Lot” to talk about later.

One Microphone: So that everyone can hear and be heard, only one speaker at a time. If there is noise in the background where you are located, please mute your microphone when you are not speaking.

Default to Trust and Mine for Understanding: If and when someone says something that offends you, take the time to ask clarifying questions and trust that they meant no harm to you. Use the opportunity to help others grow as we all have.