



Code of Conduct Facilitation Guide

Version 06_2024.

Using a Values-Based Group Activity to Build a Code of Conduct

Development of a code of conduct should be formally facilitated. Groups can facilitate within their own team – no need to hire this out unless your group composition suggests it would be wise, and if you have the budget. The facilitator doesn't have to be the principal investigator or a field team leader. It is a great opportunity to delegate the facilitation role to someone within your team who has strong communication skills – but delegate with enough time for the facilitator to thoughtfully prepare for the job.

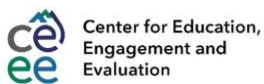
Instructions

Before facilitating this group activity:

Review key components of Code of Conduct development, as presented in Module 3:

- Timing: Creating a Code of conduct is best done early in the group formation process.
- Group process: A critical element in Code of Conduct development is co-creation by all group members. Reschedule this activity if you can't get near-full participation. Set the expectation that if this is taking place on zoom, that cameras should be on.
- Group agreement: Decide on how you're going to agree - can all buy into true consensus? If not, what percent of team members need to agree for the code to be accepted?
- Facilitation preparation:
 - Ensure that there is space for input from every team member (if you anticipate problems here, premeditate how you might call people in, or ask dominant voices to step back)
 - Provide non-verbal and ideally anonymous avenues for input (prepare digital whiteboards, sticky notes and a deposit box, etc)

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- Recall that individuals need to be comfortable to self-advocate. One nuance in facilitation here lies in providing group space for self-advocacy but not allowing a code of conduct to become a laundry list of individual needs.

Review the expectations for respectful discussion with your group:

- Listen attentively
- Be present, don't double task
- Be open-minded to learning and being corrected
Don't dominate - make sure there is space for everyone
- Seek to understand, which means asking for clarification if you don't understand a comment or contribution
- "Ouch and educate" - this means to speak up if you feel uncomfortable with someone's contribution and in the context of that discomfort, try to explain to others your perspective
- Honor confidentiality

Below is a scripted guide that steps through one way to facilitate a values-based discussion for field team code of conduct development. Obviously there is no need to follow this word for word – make it your own.

This guide is based on doing it virtually on zoom and using a digital whiteboard space called "Miro." You will need to set up a zoom link (or other virtual calling software) and Miro boards before starting the activity. This can easily be transferred into an in-person format, and it can be very nice to do this as a discussion together if the team is co-located before the field, or even within the first day or 2 in the field. You can use a flip chart or white board with markers, or even just a couple of stacks of post-its that can be grouped together on a tarp or camping mat to do the same activity that we've just demonstrated virtually. Of course this is only one way to spark a brainstorm around creating group culture - be creative!





Facilitation Guide/Script

Facilitator: I'm [NAME], [POSITION] on this research project. The principal investigator on this project has asked me to facilitate a discussion today that will be the basis for forming a Code of Conduct for our field team. I've asked [CO-FACILITATOR], to co-facilitate this discussion with me. [THEY/HE/SHE] will be monitoring the chat while my attention is focused on the discussion. Both myself and [CO-FACILITATOR] are designated neutral persons, which in part means we have no personnel-supervisory role on this team.

Facilitator: Let's remind ourselves about Codes of Conduct.

[Slide on screen that says:

Code of Conduct: a document ideally built by group consensus to develop team culture and establish group norms so that everyone feels comfortable and supported.]

It is a document ideally built by group consensus to develop team culture and establish group norms so that everyone feels comfortable and supported. We'll call it a Code of Conduct but other organizations use different terms to refer to the same thing, such as a "positive working environment document" or a "norms agreement."

[MODIFY THIS PARAGRAPH AS APPROPRIATE] We have a great group coming together from many institutions, disciplines, and across experience levels. Our data collection goals are very ambitious, and a Code of Conduct will help us create a positive and supportive group culture by understanding the needs of others, and establishing a set of norms for how we operate in the field. The Code of Conduct can also be used as a reference if interpersonal interactions or behavior deteriorates while we are out there.

Facilitator: It's important we create a Code of Conduct at the outset so that we can start off on the right foot, and so we all know what is expected of us as team members from day one. Because this is a code that applies to all of us, it's also important that we jointly develop the code so that 1) it represents the group dynamic and culture that each of us, as individuals, need to be successful and supported, and to feel safe, and 2) we agree to buy in and commit to the norms described in the code. This means that the code is developed by consensus – that is, we will work to develop a document that describes conditions and concepts you can live and work effectively with in the field even if it isn't your ideal.





As we mentioned in the invitation to this call, it's an expectation that you are able to join with video and audio in a non-distracting environment. Keeping your camera on allows us to better understand and connect with each person. Please message [CO-FACILITATOR] in the zoom chat if there is a specific situation that prevents you from keeping video on for the call.

Are there any questions or concerns at this stage? You can voice those now in the chat or raise your hand, or feel free to direct message [CO-FACILITATOR] if you prefer to express any concerns privately instead of the whole group at any time during today's call.

Facilitator: Let's start with an activity that will help us understand what we as individuals need in a field team environment to be set up for success, and then from there we will develop group norms that will best suit our field team and become our Code of Conduct. We will do this using a virtual whiteboard called Miro. You all should have received the link to Miro that we ask you to click on now. Please message [CO-FACILITATOR] if you are having issues accessing it.

To add a post to the whiteboard, click on and drag over a sticky note. If you have trouble during the activity, please send a direct chat to [CO-FACILITATOR] and [THEY/HE/SHE] will help you troubleshoot.

Facilitator: On the first whiteboard you'll see a circle that is our brainstorming canvas. Inside the circle represents attributes of what we want 'inside our group culture'— things that describe our ideal field experience. Outside of that circle you'll see a space to share things to 'leave at home' that we don't want to be a part of our field team's group culture.

Now please close your eyes. Think about a situation or a group that you were really excited to be a part of, where you felt 100% bought in, you're working hard, and you are helping your teammates do hard things and be successful in navigating challenging roles and tasks, and managing stressful environments. Write down some words that describe attributes of the team that helped you feel so engaged in that team. What was it about the team that created that highly functional space where you could perform, and enjoy being out there? Please populate the inside of the circle with post-its of those attributes.

Group members:



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*[team members populate the screen with post it notes]
[[CO-FACILITATOR] actively groups ideas]*

Facilitator [activity continues]: Wow, this is a great list. I feel excited about a team that this describes. [CO-FACILITATOR] has been grouping these ideas by similarities to create general categories so we can see common themes.

Next let's repeat this activity but this time think about a situation or a group where you felt unsafe, uncomfortable, or excluded. You might have felt like you couldn't wait to go home, or that you wanted to avoid specific people or situations. Write down some words that describe attributes of that team environment and post them on the whiteboard outside the circle – these are group characteristics that we will leave at home.

Group members:

[team members populate the screen with post it notes so that it starts to look like the example below]



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[MODIFY THIS PARAGRAPH AS APPROPRIATE] Let's look at the themes that [CO-FACILITATOR] has identified by clustering the post-its. I see that several themes have emerged. Based on the sentiments on the post-its, [CO-FACILITATOR] developed a high-level phrase to describe the theme, but I'd like to make sure that we – as a team – agree that the phrase appropriately captures the character of the post-its. I will pause for a minute at each phrase, and if anybody feels we need to modify the phrase then they can speak up or send me a message.

Let's start with these post-it clusters:





- culture of respect > Mutual respect for others to create an inclusive space for all identities
- Clear communication, expectations
- Everyone doing their fair share, expedition-oriented behavior

[each cluster has a phrase - so include as many here as needed]

[Pause for approximately 30 seconds, refine if needed]

[Repeat with all the other themes]

[Consider taking a break at this point - you want folks to be engaged for the development of the actual Code of Conduct in the next part. Read the room!]

Facilitator: The next step in the development of a Code of Conduct for your team is transforming values/sentiments into useful/actionable statements that become our Code of Conduct.

As a reminder, the Code of Conduct isn't a list of personal preferences. We are centering group needs and are focused on what we want to accomplish as a team. The code of conduct considers this question: what does the team need to be set up for success?

To structure this step let's look at the themes from our brainstorm.

[brief look at "circles" Miro board, and the phrases that the team 'approved' in the previous step]

Now please bring up the next Miro board linked in the chat.

[open "table" Miro board]

We'll populate the left column with our value themes.

[Miro action = Cofacilitator populates left column with the value sets identified from the circle activity, for example:]

- Mutual respect for others to create an inclusive space for all identities
- Clear communication, expectations
- Everyone doing their fair share, expedition-oriented behavior

In developing a code of conduct I find that it is helpful to be as specific as we can about the behaviors that support or degrade the group environment we aim to create. Let's use a table to help organize how a value set can be supported or excluded by specific behaviors. This Miro board connects those three things across a single line of the table,





which can help organize our thoughts on how to craft a code of conduct statement to address the value set.

Theme from "Inside the Circle"	Behaviors that support <small>What behaviors or actions support this value set?</small>	Behaviors that exclude <small>What behaviors or actions do NOT support this value set?</small>	Statement
Mutual respect for others to create an inclusive space for all identities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> intentionally respectful language choice clear structure around privacy/toileting structured rests equity (not equality) on manual labor tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> slurs/offensive jargon, jokes exclusion for tasks based on assumptions about ability lack of access to time/space for basic personal needs Favoritism 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> There is no tolerance for microaggressions or harassment based on age, color, disability, gender, gender identity and expression, nationality, pregnancy, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, parenthood, or veteran status. This can include jokes, innuendos, racial slurs, offensive or derogatory remarks based on a person's color or perceived race. The expectation of each group member is to interrupt microaggressions as bystanders. On days where hiking is required, the group leader will set a reasonable schedule for travel/hiking breaks and communicate it at the beginning of the day with time for review/input from team members. Team members can and should voice concern to the group leader or neutral party if what is requested of them exceeds their abilities or if they are unable to get adequate rest. "The team and individual members will support toileting accommodations if requested. For example enhanced privacy by looking away, designated gendered toileting areas at camp, or additional requests for toileting stops while traveling."
Awareness of different experience levels, learning space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mitigate impact and increase awareness of power dynamics Well, we need to include deliberate support and empowerment of junior staff too build in time to teach students prior to expecting specific metrics of performance and set reasonable time goals for students to complete new techniques/tasks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> anger or frustration with slow, incorrect, or incomplete work intimidation of junior staff taking up all the verbal space during debriefs, both in volume and time talking over others 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> When acting in a supervisor, mentor, or other leadership role, individuals should act with the knowledge of the power dynamics that may be inherent in these roles, and participate in relevant learning opportunities. Group leaders will ask team members about their experience levels and familiarity with techniques to understand instructional needs prior to the day of data collection in the field. These needs will inform training plans, data collection approaches, and setting reasonable timeframes and goals. More senior team members should ensure that they are not taking up disproportionate space in debriefs or other conversations related to group dynamics. We should include a statement about approaching the Post doc for intervention if you feel this is occurring.
Appropriate work loads, working hours			
Everyone doing their fair share, expedition behavior			

Facilitator: Let's take "Mutual respect for others to create an inclusive space for all identities" as a starting place. What behaviors or actions support this value set?
[Populate on whiteboard under Behaviors that support:]

[flesh out this conversation with group - refer to video if you need to see examples on how to facilitate these types of conversations]

Facilitator: What behaviors or actions do NOT support this value set?





[populate on whiteboard under Behaviors that exclude:]

[Flesh out this conversation with group - refer to video if you need to see examples on how to facilitate these types of conversations]

Facilitator:

This is great. Let's form these into one or more statements that define our group behavior expectations. Does anyone feel comfortable synthesizing these behaviors into a statement about our group norms? It doesn't need to catch everything, just start us off:

[flesh out this conversation with group - refer to video if you need to see examples on how to facilitate these types of conversations]

Note:

As you've seen in the video, a broad value statement - like in this case "Mutual respect for others to create an inclusive space for all identities", and identifying specific behaviors that support or degrade that value set, can lead to a much more detailed discussion on the specifics of field life that relate to culture, accessibility, gender, and so on. While it's helpful not to get lost in every little specific need, this often brings to the forefront issues that have come up for team members previously and can be a useful way to break into those somewhat uncomfortable topics. Not all value statements will lead to extensive discussion.

We repeat this exercise so that all our core value sets are reflected in the code of conduct. It is also helpful to include expectations for response if the behaviors are broached, reporting pathways, and what the consequences are as part of the overall Code of conduct document. It is logical that the In-team Safety and Communication (ITSAC) plan discussed in Module 1 is included in the Code of Conduct as this likely details reporting and resolution processes.

After completing the code, a nice practice to confirm that everyone is on board is to have everyone sign the code as if it were a contract – because it is a contract between team members to provide safe, supportive, productive space in the field for each other.

Finally, a note about conflict not easily managed by the norms defined in the Code of conduct: more challenging situations may require conflict management strategies that are beyond the scope of this course. There are a few resources in the toolkit that provide suggestions and initial guidance on deeper conflict situations, restorative practice and nonviolent communication - check them out!

