Right Relations Guidelines Menu

This Guidelines template is offered to each East Shore team/committee/task force to help us intentionally embed the deep and spiritual learning we gained from the Right Relations trainings, as well as the inner wisdom we all carry, to guide our approaches and actions as we interact together. We recognize that we are a covenanted community, and we invite people from all faith and social backgrounds to join us. This diversity means our interactions can be sources of great learning. And intentionally practicing Right Relations principles as we interact enables continuous deep spiritual growth. The following Guidelines are merely examples to help your team explore what principles you might want to agree to. We know this is very long, so please use it only to discuss and select what is meaningful to you!

1. How will I hold others on my team in my heart and mind?

For example:

I will hold others as wise, caring, and capable.

I recognize the worth and dignity of each person.

I will hold others as full of complexity and experiences I will never fully know.

I will hold others as capable of discovery and growth.

I will notice and appreciate the positive contributions that others make.

1. How will I hold myself in my heart and mind?

For example:

I will hold myself accountable for being the best person I can be.

I will hold myself as wise, curious and open.

I will hold myself as only one of the perspectives on truth in this room.

I will hold myself as capable and desirous of seeing more perspectives than my own.

I will hold myself as open to learning when I feel uncomfortable.

I will hold myself as possibly wrong!

1. How will I share?

For example:

I will share honestly, directly, and respectfully.

I will speak only from my own experience, not generalizing about others.

I will share with humility, knowing that I could be wrong.

I will share realizing that I could be hurting someone, and be aware of the impact and acknowledge it, and learn from it.

I will share honestly and consistently the positive as well as the negative.

1. How will I listen?

For example:

I will be deeply curious.

I will listen with both head and heart.

I will seek to understand before being understood.

I will listen to hear the other person’s deeper intent, meaning, feelings, and values.

I will listen to learn something new rather than to design my response.

I will listen with awareness of my judgments, working to suspend them and be open.

1. How will I deal with hurt, frustration and anger?

For example:

I will take responsibility for my reaction.

I will make sure I am not misinterpreting others.

I will think carefully about alternative perspectives that could reframe my reactions.

I will slow down and reflect on the sources of hurt, anger and frustration within me.

I will become curious about my own triggers and vulnerabilities and seek to learn from my reaction.

I will breathe deeply and seek calm, choosing my response carefully.

I will share that I am frustrated or hurt, but not blame my hurt or frustration on others.

1. How will I deal with conflict?

For example:

I will reflect, reframe, and ask open-ended questions, seeking to enable the other person to feel heard, and for me to fully understand.

I will try to think about what the other person’s interests and values are.

I will try to discern my own emotions, interests and values.

I will try to understand what is at stake for others and for me.

I will try to seek a common good.

I will seek help if the conflict is difficult.

1. How will I be accountable?

For example:

I will own my part in difficult situations and relationships.

I will take responsibility for my actions and my mistakes.

I will take responsibility for my reactions as well as my actions.

I will hold myself accountable for using conflict constructively to support a stronger team, church and relationships.

I will hold myself accountable for expressing appreciation and gratitude, increasing the positive regard within the group.

I will hold myself accountable to reduce gossip and building of cliques.

I will hold myself accountable for trying hard to discern accurately communications, interactions and events, rather than assuming I know what is going on.

I will hold myself accountable to share only what I know to be true, refusing to fall into shared stories and rumors.

I will hold myself accountable for questioning any disparagement of people not present.

1. How will I use email and social media?

For example:

I will use my messages for efficient and clear communication.

I will hold receivers of my messages as fully human and use empathy to try to understand the impact before I send a message.

I will read over my messages with the receiver(s) in mind to ensure they are clear and accurate.

I will never use messages to discredit someone or perpetuate a rumor.

I will recognize when a relationship or situation has become difficult and messages are likely to be misinterpreted and continue the communication by phone or in person.

When I interpret a message as hurtful or negative, I will communicate with the sender in person to determine the true intent and gain deeper understanding of the meaning and what I can learn from it.

1. How will I restore relationships?  
   For example:

I will recognize my part in any broken relationship, owning and examining my hurt or anger.

I will use imagination and empathy to acknowledge to myself that the other person is also hurting or angry and how that feels.

I will recognize that holding negative feelings hurts me as much as anyone, and center myself in being the best person I can be, which is a loving and forgiving person.

I will reach out to the other person and ask for an in-person meeting, possibly with a facilitator, in which I will truly seek to understand the other person’s emotions, interests and values.

I will consciously shed the negative feelings and actively try to forgive the other person.

I will work with the person to find common values and goals.

I will put the relationship above my hurts, opinions and anger and agree to move forward in a restored relationship.

1. How will I lead?  
   Examples:

I will continuously seek the highest and most long-term view of issues and events – viewing things from “the balcony.”

I will always hold the welfare of the larger church community as my focus, unattached to what I might have created or brought forward.

I will hold others as powerful and seek to inspire and empower their best selves.

I will continuously question my own assumptions about what is good for the church, and will foster deep questioning among those I lead, particularly when I see those around me falling into unquestioned assumptions or group judgments.

I will encourage and listen to the voices of those experiencing the church in ways different from my experiences.

I will recognize that either/or is seldom appropriate when engaging with the difficult issues of a complex relational organization. I will embrace ambiguity and both/and thinking, knowing that when there seem to be two sides, the best way to address the issue is to find the third way.

Recognizing the difficulties involved in organizational change, I will balance challenge and support, focusing on a vision of a church future that can engage most everyone.

I will hold myself accountable for the emotional welfare of the congregation as well as the organizational welfare of the church.