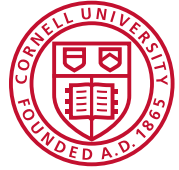


# Cornell Cooperative Extension Cornell Garden-Based Learning



## Our Ground Rules for Engagement

**Be present as fully as possible.** Be here with your doubts and your convictions, listen and speak up. Be present to all involved. Focus on the task at hand (use technology in ways that encourage full engagement without outside distractions).

**Respect individual differences.** Our views of reality may differ, but all are welcome to the table. Listen for understanding before responding. When offering an opinion, use “I” statements and create space for diverse voices and perspectives to be heard.

- **Acknowledge challenges respectfully and avoid defensive behavior.** Avoid denying problems or changing topics, allow others to talk without interruption. Lean in to conflict. Hard stuff...but important.
- **Seek first to understand.** Learn to respond to others with honest, open questions instead of corrections as new ideas are presented. Practice restating what others have said in seeking clarity and understanding.
- **When the going gets rough, reflect.** Suspend judgement to create opportunities for discovering what you don't know that you don't know. Assume the best of intentions.
- **Appreciate tension and complexity.** There may be times we differ in our perspectives. Move away from “either/or” thinking. Know that “us and them” doesn't need to mean “us vs. them.”

**Develop a sense of trust and team.** Certain practices help build “team”:

- Demonstrate a **willingness to compromise** or seek consensus.
- Accept and **publicly demonstrate support** for group decisions.
- Support a **strong sense of community** and relationship.
- **Expect and accept that our work is ongoing.** Have patience in the process.
- **Intentionally model collaborative behavior** practices within and outside of the team.

**Know and respect where the buck stops.** At the end of the day, some decisions are made at a higher level for all of us. Know that those in administrative roles wrestle with and set important priorities accordingly. Be respectful of this relationship.

**Adapted from** Circle of Trust Touchstones. Touchstones are part of the Circle of Trust® approach developed by the Center for Courage & Renewal and based on the work of author/educator Parker J. Palmer. © Center for Courage & Renewal, founded by Parker J. Palmer [www.CourageRenewal.org](http://www.CourageRenewal.org)



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*Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities*

Diversity and Inclusion are a part of Cornell University's heritage. We are a recognized employer and educator valuing AA/EEO, Protected Veterans, and Individuals with Disabilities.