

Common Ground House Rules

1. ***Maintain the Commons*** – keep this space clean – clean up after yourselves and your colleagues. At Common Ground we are our brothers' and sisters' keepers!
2. ***No Smoking*** – it's bad for your health and worse for those around you. No Smoking just outside the door either. Don't throw your cigarette butts on the ground – find a trashcan.
3. Maintain a friendly atmosphere based on ***courtesy, civility, and mutual respect***.
4. ***Be a good listener*** - Remember you have 2 ears and 1 mouth, so you should listen twice as much as you speak. Keep your comments short and to the point, under 2 minutes (an hourglass is provided at each table for this purpose). Give other people a chance to speak before speaking a second time.
5. ***Share your thoughts*** – don't hide your light under a bushel – share your ideas so that others can benefit.
6. ***Be generous in your relations and reactions*** – avoid nitpicking or fault-finding that is irrelevant to the discussion. Compliment and complement each other. Remember acts of omission can be as harmful as acts of commission. Failing to say a good word can be as destructive as saying something nasty.
7. ***Don't interrupt each other***. Don't have side conversations while others are talking. It's rude.
8. ***Stick to the topic***. Avoid ad hominem attacks. Intervene when you hear such attacks and say, "Let's stick to the topic – Hard on the problem, soft on the people." If you want to change the topic, ask permission first.
9. A discussion at its best is a ***creative, enjoyable activity with an outcome***. At the end of a discussion you should have learned something, clarified your thoughts or the thoughts of others, found new issues and problems that need clarification.
10. ***Before starting a discussion always:***
 - ascertain how much time you have.
 - set the agenda – what issues will you discuss, how will you discuss,
 - determine whether you have the facts and information necessary for the discussion, if not identify the gaps and set aside such issue for future discussion.
 - don't argue about facts – factual disputes cannot be settled by discussion – they require research and evidence.
11. ***Hospitality*** - Coffee and Tea are available at Common Ground and participants are expected to make nominal contributions in the Contributions Box to cover this cost (AMD 200). You are expected to clean and return your mug to the cupboard and wipe the table after use.
12. The Common Ground staff is here to help you and is a partner in this enterprise. ***Treat the staff with respect***. Suggestions are always welcome.

Common Ground Board

The Board of Common Ground is appointed by the Arak-29 Charitable Foundation, which funds Common Ground.

Participating Organizations and Individuals

Participation in Common Ground Activities and use of Common Ground facilities are privileges granted by the Common Ground Board to selected groups and individuals. Those privileges will be revoked, if abused. Participating Organizations may use the Common Ground facilities by submitting a written request to the coordinator with proposed times for use. Common Ground facilities are designed for up to 30 people. The Common Ground scheduling coordinator will make best efforts to respond within 2 business days to such requests. All activity schedules will be reviewed every six months to ensure that the facilities are being utilized efficiently and fairly.

Priority will be given to activities organized by the Common Ground Board.

Intergroup Discussions

One of the main activities of Common Ground will be **Intergroup Discussions**. These are designed to bring together people from different groups who have an interest in a topic. Intergroup Discussions are by invitation only. Participating organizations will be invited to propose names of individuals from their organizations to take part in the discussions. Common Ground staff may invite additional individuals. We hope that besides holding an enriching discussion, the individuals in each group will get to know each other better, make new friends and find new colleagues as they take time during the discussion to get to know each other.

The Cupboard Club

Individuals who have been invited to be charter members of Common Ground will have their own mug (for tea or coffee) and own place in the cupboard for their mug. From time to time, the Common Ground board will invite additional members who have been active in Intergroup discussions or are exemplary of Common Ground's values to become Cupboard Club members, presenting them with their own mug and place in the cupboard. Cupboard Club members are expected to make a special effort to take part in Common Ground activities and to promote the values and activities of Common Ground. Since the space in the cupboard is limited, Cupboard Club members are expected to relinquish their space (they can keep the mug) on their own or at the request of the CG Board during times when they become less interested or active in Common Ground.