What are Community Agreements?

Community Agreements are guidelines that help us to name what we each need to build a group environment that's safe enough for us all to feel brave and build trust. Some of these agreements are to help people avoid problem behaviors (making "we" statements, etc), some are to help people notice their own growth points and what they'll have to push themselves on. In order to build genuinely meaningful community, it's important to be honest with each other about what we each need, and to have clear agreements for how we'll try to meet those needs. Here are some suggestions:

- **Speak from your own experience**: Make sure you're not generalizing to entire groups of people or presuming anything about someone else's experience. Speak with "I" statements and questions (I believe, I wonder, I struggle with, I was hurt by, etc).
- **Seek out productive discomfort**: Allow yourself to feel the discomfort that may come up, and be proud of yourself for working to truly grapple with it, as long as that grappling is getting you to a more productive point of engagement. Figure out how you need to process between programs -- do some journaling, find a friend to talk stuff through with, etc.
- **Multiple truths**: We are all experiencing different things that are simultaneously true, even if they sometimes come into contradiction with each other or are difficult to hold together. Embrace that complexity and work to communicate with and understand each other.
- **Learn to listen/listen to learn**: When you find yourself with a point of disagreement, work to find the question that's inside that instead, and ask it. Then really listen to the responses you receive. If you're about to respond defensively, try and see what it's like to wait and see if that need passes. If you're not speaking up because you're afraid to jump in, see how it feels to try.
- **Speak up, listen up**: Pay attention to how much you've been participating. If you find that you haven't been speaking up, push yourself to do so. If you find that you've been speaking up more than other people, take a step back and make sure others have a chance to contribute.
- **Whose voice is missing? Invite them in**: Look for what perspectives are represented in your materials, both in terms of the range of texts/sources and the perspectives that the activities are oriented towards. Work towards a genuine range of voices; especially in activities that are about a particular group's experience, perspectives from that group should be highlighted and at the center of the learning process.