

Mental Health Through Time: Our Group Agreement

This module explores how mental health has been understood and responded to across different times, cultures and perspectives. Some topics may connect with our own experiences or those of people close to us. This agreement helps us create a respectful environment where we can ask questions, think critically and learn together.

Together, we agree to:

1. Listen with respect.

Give others space to speak, avoid interrupting, and share opportunities to contribute. We may disagree with an idea while respecting the person expressing it.

2. Stay curious and open to different perspectives.

Ask questions rather than make assumptions. Be willing to reconsider our views and recognise that no individual speaks for an entire culture, community or group.

3. Use thoughtful language.

Avoid jokes, labels or generalisations that stigmatise mental health difficulties. When examining historical language that is now considered harmful, make its context clear and consider its impact.

4. Keep personal sharing optional.

Nobody is expected to disclose their mental health history, diagnosis or personal experiences. We can participate fully through discussing readings, examples and ideas. Avoid pressing others for personal details.

5. Respect privacy.

Do not repeat classmates' personal disclosures outside the group or share identifiable information about other people. Do not record, photograph or post others' contributions without permission and any required university approval. We respect privacy, while recognising that the tutor may need to share a concern through university procedures if someone's safety is at risk.

6. Maintain appropriate classroom boundaries.

Our class is a place for academic learning and discussion. We will avoid diagnosing one another, interpreting classmates' experiences or offering unsolicited treatment advice. Nobody is expected to counsel or take responsibility for another student's wellbeing.

7. Engage critically and sensitively.

Distinguish between personal views, lived experience and research claims, considering what each contributes. Evaluate theories and evidence without dismissing people's experiences.

8. Look after ourselves during difficult discussions.

We can choose not to answer a personal question or briefly step outside if needed, without explaining ourselves publicly. If a topic affects our ability to engage, we can speak privately with the tutor about participation and available support.

9. Contribute to a supportive learning environment.

Arrive prepared, use devices in ways that support learning, and contribute fairly to shared tasks. If something we say causes harm, listen, acknowledge its impact and help put things right.

Our shared agreement

We will review this agreement if something is not working for the group.

What would you add or change to help you feel able to participate and learn?