

UCLA EPSS URGE POD Guidelines

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Based on discussions with Isa Hopkins (not UCLA affiliated) + inspired by intellectual ideas and labor from **McKensie Mack, Ericka Hart, Shelagh Brown, Sonya Renee Taylor, Mariame Kaba, Mia Mingus.**

First agreement: We are coming together as a community to work collectively for improvement. We must commit to sharing only from our own experiences and work to actively listen rather than react.

- We are all at different starting points and levels of engagement, and it is important to remember that our learning journeys will each look different.
- We must acknowledge the power dynamics present in our community, and act accordingly when encountering conflict. *(See further reading on interdependence & positionality)*

Second agreement: We commit to learning the difference between personal intent and the impact our words and actions have on those in our community.

- Impact is the heart of the matter. We must be able to recognize this and know how to navigate mistakes as they arise. Relationships are the most accessible and impactful site of transformation. *(See further reading on accountability)*

Third agreement: We will encounter difficult material, experiences, and language as a community. We will strive to find safe ways to acknowledge when others hurt us.

- If you are hurt by the words or actions of others in the URGE community, try to acknowledge your perception and feelings to the community. You are your own best advocate, and you know what you need. *(See further reading on accountability)*

Fourth agreement: If we hurt someone while participating in this community, we will strive to find safe ways to check in with each other.

- We want to be able to minimize the suffering in our community through compassionate and mindful communication.
- If you are called out, or called to accountability-- respond. Recognize that this is an action borne from mutual respect. It is not an attack. Listen to the person you have caused harm to and de-center your reaction. Avoiding accountability perpetuates harm. *(See further reading on accountability)*

Further Reading

Honoring Interdependence By Practicing Healthy Boundaries

- Vulnerability is encouraged, but do not treat this space as therapy.
- Create space for others, not just for ourselves.
- Be present. Listen without formulating a response simultaneously.
- Do not single people out unless explicitly agreed upon beforehand. Do not tokenize members of the URGE community (i.e. do not ask others to speak on behalf of their relevant identities; do not use identities present as examples for the broader community).
- Speak from your own experience, and do not assume that it is interchangeable with the experiences of others.
- Choose nonviolent language when engaging in discussion. This might not be readily apparent-- the trigger words and trauma of others is not always evident. Do your homework and be aware of racial & ethnic slurs, and ableist language. If you make a mistake, acknowledge it.
- **Further background: McKensie Mack**

Recognizing Positionality, Paradox, & Complexity

- Positionality addresses how the different identities of people fit together to construct levels of privilege or marginalization. Research how positionality informs social interactions.
 - Ex. we are a mixed race group-- understand your position in the hierarchy
 - What is your perspective & responsibility?
 - Privilege is not just comfort & benefits, it's your capacity to cause harm to others
- Positionality is also not just about race.
 - Patriarchy, ableism, cis-privilege, etc.
- Paradox and complexity: identities do not exclude or override each other if a person possesses more than one. Identities are multifaceted and make everyone's experience unique. There is no devoted spokesperson for identities.
 - Ex. Everyone in URGE has some level of privilege
 - Attending a well-funded R1 institution
 - Tenure
 - GSR funding
 - Internet access
 - Identities can be paradoxical
 - Ex. Mixed race; racial identity not always correlated with income level
 - Individuals can have privilege in one area, but be marginalized in other areas. Privileges are not always correlated, though they may tend to be coupled.

- Ex. Income level tends to allow access to education, and these are therefore correlated, but this is not always the case-- particularly in UCLA undergraduates.
- No oppression Olympics!
- **Further background: Ericka Hart, Shelagh Brown, Sonya Renee Taylor**

Practicing Accountability In Conflict

- Conflict is not inherently bad.
 - Anti-racist action invites healthy confrontation of conflict and does not let it fester.
 - We should acknowledge that human relationships are about conflict resolution. We all engage with conflict. The challenge is overcoming these conflicts in ways that do not perpetuate harm. We value opportunities for growth over avoidance of accountability.
- Learn to recognize when an experience is uncomfortable and when it is harmful.
- Address when you are harmed. Advocate for yourself in the URGE community.
 - We believe conflict is not to be avoided, so do not resort to the first instinct to avoid it.
 - When we ignore harm caused to us, we are participating in not only our own gaslighting, but the gaslighting of everyone around us.
 - Addressing harm caused to ourselves allows others to see the conflict resolution necessary to move forward.
 - We will not always feel safe speaking up, but this is the place to learn the difference between feeling uncomfortable and feeling at risk.
 - If non-specific “they” don’t want to hear it, it’s probably discomfort.
 - If specific “they” WILL NOT hear this, it’s a circumstance of safety.
 - If you feel unsafe, we do recommend you still address it.
 - If you need to do it via private message at a different time, that’s okay.
 - You can ask a friend in this group to support you.
 - You can ask the moderator to address it.
- If you are facilitating a conversation and someone says or does something capable of causing harm, you have a responsibility to address it.
- If you have been called out, recognize that URGE members do so out of mutual respect and compassion. It is hard to call out instances of harm, and perhaps harder to take responsibility for acknowledging your actions.
 - Remember that, to an extent, we are socially conditioned to avoid conflict. Acknowledge this to yourself. Again, most of us are trained not to do this

- Remember that you are being called out not from a place of hatred or contempt, but because URGE members care for you. Appreciate the opportunity to be held accountable and learn rather than resorting to shame and avoidance.
 - Acknowledge that growth is difficult, and at times painful. In our URGE community, we may encounter painful moments.
- All violence is relational violence
 - Our disruption must be relational: we cannot have legal or governmental change if we cannot commit to relational change. Violence will mutate unless we change the foundation of our relationships.
 - **Relationships are the most potent site of transformation that we have.**
- The idea of “good” and “bad” people underpins white supremacy
 - This is why being accountable and confronting our mistakes is so difficult. Our personal shame is rooted in the fear of being labeled and identified as a “bad” person. We reject this binary in our URGE community.
 - Being “good” people is not what we are working for. We are sufficient human beings capable of healthy relationships. Instead, we are working to lean into these relationships, building community, learning how to identify harm as a form of disrupting its perpetuation, and learning how to remain accountable to those in our community.
- **More info: Sonya Renee Taylor, Mariame Kaba, Mia Mingus**