

**Michigan's State Planning Project for the Uninsured
Advisory Council
Ground Rules for Effective and Respectful Communication**

Advisory Council members agree to the following ground rules to facilitate effective and respectful communication:

- Only one person may speak at a time.
- Resist defending positions; rather look for common ground and areas of agreement.
- Agree on what important words mean.
- When speaking, explain the reasons behind your statements and ask for feedback from the group.
- Speak to be understood, not to win.
- Ask questions to understand the rationale and data behind the position of others.
- Test your assumptions and inferences by asking questions
- Don't assume motives behind the statements of others. Assume positive intent.
- Be sensitive to differences in perspectives.
- Avoid debating issues (discussion, not debate) and assigning blame.
- Do not interrupt others or monopolize the communication. Raise your hand to speak and the facilitator will keep a list with the order (all members are expected to participate with their perspective).
- Avoid personal attacks, cheap shots or loaded questions. Use open-ended questions.
- Keep discussion focused.
- Keep the focus on agenda items.
- When speaking, be brief and to the point (try to give examples).
- Make every effort to attend or be represented at all meetings.
- Make every effort to be on time for meetings.