Community Agreements focused on Friends of Color

Prioritize Black and Brown voices
Black and Brown people are most impacted by White Supremacy and the violence of everyday systemic and interpersonal racism. Remember that most everywhere, the voices of People of Color are marginalized and tokenized. Much energy is spent prioritizing and adapting to White spaces and conversations. Avoid forcing a spotlight on someone, or believing that nonwhites speak for all people of their race/ethnicity.

"The Vegas Rule"
What's said here stays here; what's learned here, may leave here — Confidentiality
Personal stories are shared in confidence and should remain in confidence, but the lessons learned and understanding gained from those stories can be carried into all your experiences.

One speaker, one mic
One person speaks at a time. Please, leave space in between speakers, for those who need more time to process words, or are less comfortable fighting for speaking time in a conversation.

We are all accountable to enforce these ground rules
It is not only the facilitator's job to make sure we are accountable to the ground rules! Everyone in the space can notice when we need a reminder, and mention that reminder.

Speak from your own experiences and feelings

Use "I" language and respect others' experiences. Speak from your own experience instead of generalizing ("I" instead of "they," "we," and "you"). Instead of invalidating someone else's story or experience - which is not a subject for discussion - with your own spin, just share your own story and experience.

Not one of us knows everything, together we know a lot
This means that we all get to practice being humble, because we have something to learn from everyone in the room. Each member of your group has something to learn and something to teach. Together, you can create a fuller experience.

Acknowledge the difference between intent and impact
Be mindful about how your words are taken by others, because the impact could result differently than you intended. This intention creates room for differing perceptions. Take care that you are responsible for the impact as well. "Oops, Ouches, and Whoas" can help us identify and learn from unintended harms. That said, it is possible that there might be wounds and unintended negative impacts.

Ask for clarification before responding
Listen compassionately, striving to understand the feelings of the person speaking, whose experience and reactions may be very similar or very different from ours. Before reacting, remember that others probably have good intentions, even if their words were triggering. Allow space to understand and listen fully, before responding to what someone has said. Be mindful to allow time for discernment before responding out of anger. Take the opportunity to stop what is happening by saying “oops, ouch, or whoa.”

Stop & Attend to the hurt
When someone has let the community know they have been hurt, the group will stop and listen to what that person needs. They will let the community know if they would like to address their pain with the group at that moment or at another time. The Community will honor the wounded person’s needs.

Let’s take care of ourselves and each other
Literally, this means ensuring your basic needs are met (hunger, thirst, health, etc...). Additionally, this means addressing emotional issues that come up. If something triggering occurs, let someone know and discuss what’s going on.

———————

*This document is a combination of different agreements, including the Pittsburgh Racial Summit, PacYM worship sharing, and different FOC FGC spaces.