

Athletes As Leaders



Session 1: Introductions & Group Agreements

Prep Before Session:

Make Sure You Have:

- Dry erase board or poster paper (with markers) to write group agreements
- Beach ball with written questions (see “Warm Up” below)

Review Key Messages:

- Athletes have a key role in helping to create a sense of safety, welcoming and belonging for all people in the community. This type of community benefits everyone.
- We are going to create this type of space here during our sessions, and hopefully in the larger community too.

Warm Up

Introduce Presenters and Athletes: (3-10 min)

[Get to know who is in the room. Spend time on this, especially if you do not know the group, or the group does not know each other well. You can do introductions or facilitate an ice breaker activity.]

Suggestion for Ice Breaker: “Just By Looking At Me” Activity

[Have athletes share in a circle or in small groups. Introduce the prompt]:

“My name is ____ and I use ____ pronouns.

One thing you cannot tell just by looking at me is ____.

This is important for me to tell you because ____.”

Facilitator Notes

This ice breaker allows athletes to reveal personal facts that they may not have had the opportunity to share yet. It also may break down stereotypes by highlighting qualities of people that are not obvious based on their outward appearance.

More about sharing pronouns:

<https://www.mypronouns.org/what-and-why>

Introduce the Program: (2 min)

We are starting a new program called Athletes As Leaders. Throughout this program we are going to talk about some important topics that show up in our everyday lives. We hope that this will be a space where you can speak openly about your experiences, problems you see happening, and your ideas to solve them. As athletes and leaders, you can help create a community that is safe and welcoming. We want everyone to have a sense of belonging here at _____ High School.

During this program, our group discussions will be based around some key principles. These are things I want for everyone in our community, and I hope that you want these things too. We will explore how we can support these key principles of:

- **Health & Safety**
- **Inclusive & Welcoming Community**
- **Empathy**
- **Consent**
- **Gender & Racial Equity**
- **Youth Leadership**

As leaders, you play an important role in creating the culture in this community. Many of your peers may follow your lead. We have an opportunity to make a positive difference in our community!

Each time we meet, we will discuss important topics that aren't always talked about openly. Hopefully, this will be a space where we can talk honestly about these issues and how they affect you, our team, and our community.

Here are our weekly discussion topics:

1. [Today's welcome session]
2. Understanding Privilege & Oppression
3. Challenging Harmful Stereotypes
4. Addressing Misinformation & Bias
5. Unpacking Beauty Standards
6. Ending Rumor Spreading & Shaming
7. Promoting Consent
8. Fostering Healthy Relationships
9. Building Community
10. Celebrating our Successes

These groups are going to be about 20 minutes once a week, on [day] at [time]. Each week we will follow a general agenda:

- » We will introduce a topic
- » We will discuss the topic as a group
- » We will create a group expectation/ team commitment related to that topic.

Work Out

Create Group Agreements: (5-10 min)

We will be talking about some sensitive topics and how to build a strong and safe community. We want everyone to feel like they are able to participate as freely and as safely as is possible. Let's come up with some group agreements that we can all stick to for our discussions this season.

During group sessions, we agree to...

Facilitator Notes

You can have volunteers write on the board or in a notebook. You can also create a poster to display at every session. Use the questions below if needed as prompts.

? Think about a group where you felt very comfortable expressing yourself. What helped you be able to participate fully in that group?

? What do you need from yourself or others to make this a safe space?

Facilitator Notes

Try to re-frame most group agreements into positive, affirmative statements if possible. For example, instead of “Don’t talk over someone,” you could write “One person speaks at a time.”

[Examples of group agreements include]:

Come ready to participate	*One person speaks at a time
Show respect to those who are speaking. (Avoid using cell phones or side talk.)	**What’s said in here stays here (confidentiality). What’s learned in here leaves here.
*Take space/ Make space. (If you want to speak but you are shy, challenge yourself. If you are talking a lot, allow some space for others to talk.)	Respect differences of opinion
It’s your choice if you want to share	

*[These ground rules are critical, so if they are not brought up by the group, then you can bring them up and add them to the list.]

**[It’s ok to share concepts learned in the group, but not ok to share personal things about people or mention names. When confidentiality is mentioned, it is also important to note the exceptions to that, e.g. if you are a mandated reporter and what specifically you must report. For more information on mandatory reporting and to find out your state’s requirements, see the Recommended Policies on the program website].

Facilitator Notes

To get the group’s commitment to follow the agreements you can have participants sign their initials on the poster or just raise their hand to indicate they agree.

Cool Down

Wrap Up Today's Discussion: (1 min)

Athletes have a key role in helping to create a sense of safety, welcoming and belonging for all people in the community. This type of community benefits everyone, and we are going to create this type of space here during our sessions, and hopefully in the larger community too! This is a key time to ask yourself what type of community you want to be a part of. We have the opportunity to do that this season. This is a space for you all to step up as leaders, support each other, and create the kind of community you want to live in!

I'm really excited to have these discussions with you this season! I appreciate the thought you put into coming up with our group agreements. Our next session will be on _____ and we will discuss privilege & oppression.

Facilitator Notes

Take pictures of the group agreements so you have a record of them and can refer back to them if needed.

Optional: You can make a poster with the group agreements to bring each week.

