



Naming Our Norms

One way we promote inclusion in any group is by making sure all members have shared norms. Norms are agreements about how we'll work together. They are the guidelines for behavior and practices we follow when we come together. We write and talk about norms so that everyone has the same information about and opportunity to contribute to the expectations for a group.

As consultants, we share our norms as a starting point for conversations with clients about the norms we'll share while we're working together. Generally, we learn and practice the norms of our clients when we're with them, when the norms are consistent with our values.

General SVA Norms

- In each of our consulting engagements, we strive for clarity about roles and the scope of our work and we document agreements in our statements of services.
- In projects and meetings, we name and share our roles and ask those we're with to do the same. We know that we all have many responsibilities so it's important to understand our own and each other's role when our work brings us together.
- We invite—but never require—ourselves and others to share the identities and life experiences that are relevant to the work we're doing together.
- We recognize that each of our lives and our clients' lives are full and complicated. We're consistently affecting and affected by what's going on in our own bodies, minds, and hearts, with our family, friends, and community, and in our work. We appreciate and listen when others share or choose not to share what is affecting how they're showing up in any given moment.
- We pay ourselves and others for their labor. We are a women-owned firm, and our associates are primarily women of color. Historically in our culture, women and Black, Indigenous and people of color have too often been asked or expected to do things for free. Moreover, the nonprofit and philanthropic sector has tended to devalue labor provided in service to community. The often-unspoken

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expectation is that when you are working for something you are passionate about, money doesn't matter. We don't buy into that. We believe that all mission-driven people working to create change in our world should be paid and paid well.

SVA Meeting Norms

- Meetings are planned and flexible. We ensure each gathering has a named and shared purpose. We prepare agendas and/or materials as required to meet that purpose. We're clear with others about what they need to prepare.
- We're thoughtful about scheduling, allowing time before and between meetings for preparation and follow-up.
- Recognizing that we all have lots going on, we are patient and mindful as we gather for meetings so that we create a welcoming and inclusive space and tone for our time together. This usually means we start close to the appointed time. We allow time at the beginning of meetings to check-in with each other. If all of those invited are not present, we pause to consider with the full group how we should proceed.
- We allow the time it takes. We plan our meeting time, using our best judgement to allocate our time together. And we adjust when a topic requires more discussion.
- We do our best to end on-time. If more time is needed, we ask participants if they can continue or want to schedule more time.
- We leave space for thinking. We often allow time for independent reflection on a question or issue before opening a discussion. We're okay with silence and lulls in conversation. We invite and hold tension, lean into difficult conversations, and accept when closure isn't possible on a topic.
- We strive to create environments and meeting structures that enable everyone to participate. We are mindful of and ask others to be mindful of how much they're speaking and contributing. We invite people into participation, paying particular attention to who might be marginalized in the group, and accept when people decline to participate.
- If a decision needs to be made, we articulate how the decision will be made – by one person, by consensus, through a vote, or in some other manner. We acknowledge and affirm when the decision is made and what it is.

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