

MODULE TWO:

Trust and Connection



CORE MODULE INFORMATION:

Module Type: Phase 1 – Improving group dynamics and member engagement.

Module Objective: Identify strategies to build trust and connection within the group on encouraging better interaction among members.

Module Dilemma: “There is no real trust or connection in the way my group members interact with each other.”

Module Delivery: This module was developed to be delivered physically but may be converted to a remote module with some customization.



WHAT IS NEEDED IN PREPARATION FOR THIS MODULE:

- Facilitators should review this Module in detail and customise the content to suit their participants, as needed (including adding case studies/ examples relevant to your region or country)
- Facilitators should prepare notes for each activity. While this guide provides some discussion points and explanation as a base, further explanation at times will be needed (and participants may ask clarifying questions, so the facilitator should be well prepared).
- Review [Content for Training Activities](#) for a list of general training materials and module-specific activities (this link includes sample questions for Menti questions and Kahoot quizzes, and information about how to make them). Before the training, be sure to have these activities prepared.



MATERIALS

- Powerpoint slides (linked to sample PPT slides)
- Links to videos and MP4 files should be downloaded for backup (videos are embedded in PPT slides and linked below, per session).

Module 2 Specific Materials:

- Trust Building Activity ([Reference Video](#)). This Pipeline game can be purchased or made DIY style with PVC pipes and marbles. Note: this in-person activity can be swapped out with a cooperative/ team game of your choice. Zoom has an [“Apps” feature](#) to make the integration of this trust-building game more seamless.
- Privilege Pyramid Activity: [Linked here](#), and to be printed and cut out (one set per group).

Note: Depending on the discussion and engagement in Session 1, it may run over 60 minutes, as this was the case for the pilot training.

Session 1: Building Trust



Session Objective: Understand why trust is important in digital communities and identify ways to foster it.



Note to Facilitator: Depending on the level of participant engagement, this session may run longer than 60 minutes. The Facilitator should seek to review this session in advance and customise it as needed.

Facilitators will briefly introduce the Module and its objectives: To identify strategies to build trust and connection within the group on encouraging better interaction among members.

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THE DILEMMA – A QUICK RATING

Note to Facilitator: The trainers will present the Module's Dilemma on Mentimeter/ Menti ([instructions for Menti](#)). Make sure you have the presenter's link and QR code for participants ready to avoid any technical issues.

The trainers will begin the module by dissecting the module dilemma. The trainers will use a scale on Mentimeter and share the following dilemma: *“There is no real trust or connection in the way my group members interact with each other.”*

Participants will be asked to rate on a scale of 1-5 the situation with their own group, with 1 being ‘the level of trust and connection in my group is very low’ to 5 being ‘the level of trust and connection in my group is very high’.

Based on the results from Mentimeter, the trainers will get an average for the group of community stewards. The trainers can also ask a couple of participants what rating they gave their group and why they picked that number. This activity will help us understand how relatable and relevant this dilemma is for the participants.

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UNDERSTANDING TRUST IN DIGITAL COMMUNITIES

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INTRODUCTORY EXPLANATION

The trainers will begin the discussion on trust in digital communities by connecting the objective of this session to the previous module.

In Module 1, we discussed the importance of engagement. It was about increasing the participation of members of the group. A core requirement for improving participation is to establish trust. Members cannot engage with the group – or each other – if there is no trust within this digital community.

It is not enough that the members share information, post regularly, and connect with the objective of the group. They must connect with each other. There need to be interpersonal relationships within the group.

So, this session will focus on how we can foster this digital trust to improve engagement and sharing among members - while also enhancing the overall sense of safety and confidence in the group

In order to understand trust in digital communities, the trainers will facilitate a trust-building activity for the participants.

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TRUST BUILDING ACTIVITY – THE PIPELINE

Delivery Note: This activity was developed for an in-person module. It can be adapted according to your needs (e.g. an online game can be played if the module is taking place online)

Setup: Materials needed: Half-round pipes per participant. One ball per team. The trainers will split the participants into groups of five.

Gameplay: In each group, each person will hold short pipe halves they use to balance the ball until it passes into another person's pipe halves. Then, they move towards the end of the line so they can retake the ball when it reaches them again.

This activity will require the participants to trust the members of their team to move the ball patiently and carefully while taking over from each other at the right time. The winner is anyone who can keep the ball longer without dropping it.

Activity [reference video](#).

Discussion: After completing the activity, the trainer may ask participants about the key takeaways as it relates to trust. The trainer can then explain the following: The activity demonstrates the importance of reliability and trust in group environments.

It also shows the need for timely and effective support. These are traits that are necessary for the smooth and safe functioning of a social media group. It is crucial that members of such digital communities are able to rely on each other and trust each other. Moreover, as leaders of communities, digital community stewards must identify the best approaches to ensure the continuous flow of information and interaction - while minimising risks and errors.

Trainer to screen-share the Mentimeter Word Cloud activity on Trust.

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DEFINING TRUST IN DIGITAL COMMUNITIES

The trainers will use the Word Cloud feature on Mentimeter to understand perceptions about trust within the group.



For the discussion, participants will be asked to: *Think of three traits they associate with a trustworthy digital community. What makes an online community feel safe and trustworthy? What are some traits that promote trust within such a group?*

Participants will be given access to a Mentimeter and will each share three traits or qualities. Once the participants complete the activity, the trainers will share the Word Cloud and **identify which traits the group most commonly associate with digital trust**. For example, most participants could have shared 'Active Listening' as their answer. Trainers can inquire why participants shared these commonly identified traits.

After the Menti is completed, the trainer will supplement the definitions of trust. A few traits to share with the participants if not already mentioned, include: Listening, Reliability, Confidence, Empathy, etc.

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TRUST IN DIGITAL COMMUNITIES – WHAT DO WE KNOW

Trainers will share and discuss various findings that give insight into trust in digital communities – specifically on Facebook Groups. These findings will enable participants to better understand, perhaps even relate to the reality of and challenges in building digital trust.

- People can experience a strong sense of community from membership in such groups despite the lack of physical proximity.
- Online groups are a still fluid form of human organisation that, in many cases, attract members and leaders who are marginalised in the physical societies they inhabit and who use the platform to build new kinds of community that cannot be formed in person.
- Many of these groups have counter-cultural norms. These groups cut across traditional social groupings and bring together people normally divided by geography around a shared trait or interest.
- The flexible affordances of online platforms have enabled new kinds of leaders to emerge in these groups with unique skills in moderating often divisive dialogues, sometimes among millions of members.
- The leaders of many of these groups run them as a labour of love; they are neither trained nor paid, the rules that govern their internal operations are often uncodified, and the hosting platform - in this case, Facebook - holds significant power over their operations and future.

Note: The above findings were taken from a [research report by The Governance Lab \(2020\)](#), which interviewed leaders of 50 Facebook groups and 26 global academic and industry experts for this study of the governance and leadership of Facebook groups. Trainers can share this research report with participants.

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BUILDING TRUST IN DIGITAL COMMUNITIES

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QUICK DISCUSSION

The trainers will begin the discussion by asking the participants: *“Do you have any strategies or tools to build and foster trust within their digital groups.”*

Facilitators are encouraged to get the perspectives of social media group moderators and admins who are stewards of other groups (e.g. WhatsApp, Telegram, Instagram) to reflect on this question, in particular, to diversify the discussion.

This sharing will allow the trainers to understand the existing practices among the stewards – and their digital groups – to facilitate trust in online environments.

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ACTIVITY

Sample time structure: Planning: 5 minutes, Presentations: 10 minutes (2 minutes per group), Explanation: 5-10 minutes (1-2 minutes per group).



After the sharing, the trainers will divide the participants into four groups and then introduce the community stewards to the ‘Four Pillars of Digital Trust’.

The participants will be asked to prepare a short skit/ play representing how a Pillar of Trust can be broken (examples are listed below if groups need some suggestions). After the short presentation is done, the other participants are to guess which Pillar of Trust is being violated, and the presenting group can give a short explanation about what their skit represents.

The trainers will conclude the session by reiterating the fact that digital trust has a technical component and a human component. This means members must follow necessary digital safety practices while also focusing on improving the quality of their interpersonal relationships. In order to build a digital community that practises and promotes trust, it is crucial that both dimensions are taken into account.

The above information on digital trust was obtained and adopted through resources from [Deloitte Insights](#).

Note to Facilitator: Once each pillar of trust is explained to the participants, each group will discuss and identify ways through which they can build these pillars. The trainers will add their own strategies (mentioned below) to the discussion. It must be noted that some of these strategies will be further dissected in the latter modules of the training. It is important for the participants to understand that trust is not simply something we feel but also something we must practise.



Pillar 1: Transparency

Transparency is imperative to build trust within digital communities. The maximisation of transparency translates to authentic community stewards who constantly keep the members updated about the purpose, objectives, and health of the group.

The following are a few strategies through which we can achieve the first pillar of trust:

- Being clear and transparent about the objectives and boundaries of the group
- Reiterating the community standards of the platform and repercussions for breaking them

The participants can also share examples of how the pillar of transparency can be broken. For instance: If some members use the group to promote their business, and the admin allows it for personal benefit, this breaks trust within the group since other members were not informed of this before.



Pillar 2: Responsibility

This refers to making ethical decisions and safeguarding the welfare and dignity of the members. Any online platform is only as ethical as its creators and users. This means as leaders of these online groups, digital community stewards have the responsibility to promote fairness and well-being among interactions within the group.

The following are a few strategies through which we can achieve the second pillar of trust:

**Ironing out complaints in a sensitive and timely manner.
Stopping misinformation in its tracks.**

The participants can also share examples of how the pillar of responsibility can be broken. For instance: If one of the members is repeatedly bullied in the group and their complaints to the admin are repeatedly ignored, the responsibility of the community steward is overlooked, which can break the trust between the members and the admins.



Pillar 3: Privacy

All members of the group have access to the information shared within the group. So, the group must acknowledge the preferences of the users regarding what information can be collected, shared, and saved. Consent must be valued and respected at all times.

The following are a few strategies through which we can achieve the third pillar of trust:

- Inform members about boundaries for sharing private information, highlighting the need to practise filtering personally identifiable information.
- Setting clear standards and regulations regarding access, control, and sharing of information within the group.

The participants can also share examples of how the pillar of privacy can be broken. For instance: If a member takes screenshots of discussions within the group and posts them elsewhere (in another platform), this can violate the privacy of the members and break trust and build mistrust among group members.



Pillar 4: Security

This requires digital community stewards to inform the members about the need for digital hygiene – both within the group and outside of the group. Heightened awareness of cyber risks and violations of digital rights will contribute to developing trust and reliability within an online community.

The following are a few strategies through which we can achieve the fourth pillar of trust:

- **Be mindful of common cyber risks and digital threats to digital communities.**
- **Promote and practise basic digital safety practices within the group.**

The participants can also share examples of how the pillar of security can be broken. For instance: If a member intentionally or unintentionally leaks the personal information posted on the group (including email addresses) and endangers the members of the group to cyber risks, it can put their digital security at risk and break trust and affect the confidence in the group.



Session 2: Building Connection



Session Objective: Understand the importance of connection in digital communities through empathy and inclusivity.

The trainer will introduce the session and the objective of Session 2 (listed above).

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UNDERSTANDING EMPATHY IN DIGITAL COMMUNITIES

Note to Facilitator: This session will be conducted by dividing the participants into groups of three or four. Throughout this session, participants are expected to discuss, share, and learn within the group to acknowledge and respect diverse views and perspectives.

Depending on the discussion and engagement in Session 2, it may run over 60 minutes, as this was the case for the pilot training.

The trainers will begin the discussion on empathy with a quick activity.

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FINDING DIGITAL COMMONALITIES- A QUICK ACTIVITY

Each group must discuss and identify 5 things all participants in the group share with each other in the digital world. This could be a trait, an interest, an identity, a habit, a preference – or anything! But it must be something all the participants share – not just some of them. The trainers will give the participants five minutes to identify these traits. Trainers will ask the participants to share their findings – but also discuss the process and experience of finding commonalities.

Trainer to screen-share a Mentimeter Word Cloud on Empathy.

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WHAT IS EMPATHY? - A DISCUSSION

Trainers will ask the participants to share their own definition of empathy. Participants will also explain how they differentiate between empathy and sympathy.



Trainers will go back to Mentimeter and create a new Word Cloud. This time, participants will be asked to: Identify traits of an empathetic person. *What are some qualities we see in those who practise empathy? What makes someone an empath? What qualities differentiate an empath from others?*

Once the participants complete the activity, the trainers will share the Word Cloud and identify which traits the group most commonly associate with empathy. Trainers can inquire why participants shared these commonly identified traits.

Some traits the trainers can additionally contribute to the discussion:



- They don't compare
- They are free of judgement
- They listen actively without the intent to solve
- They are intuitive

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Participants will watch [this video](#) on Empathy for further clarity.

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EMPATHY IN DIGITAL COMMUNITIES - AN ACTIVITY

Participants, in their groups, will recreate the earlier activity. But this time, instead of finding commonalities in the digital world, participants will be asked to: **identify traits, behaviours, and experiences that are unique to each participant in the group.** In other words, each participant must identify something the others cannot relate to and have not experienced. The trainers will give the participants five minutes to identify these traits.

Trainers will ask the participants to share their findings – but also discuss the process of finding unique experiences.



The purpose of this activity is to help participants understand that empathy is not something we simply share with individuals who are similar to us. In fact, empathy can be harder to practise when we are among people who are different from us. But empathy cannot be selective or restrictive.

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The trainers will show [this video](#) to the participants to help them understand empathy in digital communities if time permits. Alternatively, trainers can share it with participants over a different platform.

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UNDERSTANDING INCLUSIVITY IN DIGITAL COMMUNITIES

Note to Facilitator: The trainers should mention that this is just a brief introduction to Digital Inclusion and Digital Exclusion. It will be further discussed in Module 8 (Growth and Inclusivity).

DISCUSSION:

This discussion will begin with some introspection and sharing. Each participant will be asked to: *think of an incident or experience in the digital world where they either felt included or excluded*. The trainers will give the participants a few minutes to identify an experience to share with the rest of the group. This sharing activity will help the group understand diverse reasons for and instances of exclusion within our digital communities.

This can be followed up by two other questions:

1. *Who is often excluded?* (Sample responses: Women and girls, Gender and sexual minorities, Religious and ethnic minorities, Individuals with disabilities, and People living in poverty.) It is important to mention here that identities are complex and intersecting and that when someone has intersectional identities (e.g. someone can be both a sexual minority and an ethnic minority) and exclusion (online and offline) may become more apparent.
2. *What is digital inclusion?* Some sample responses: affordable, robust broadband internet service, internet-enabled devices, access to digital literacy training, and applications for online content are designed to enable and encourage self-sufficiency and collaboration.

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BUILDING EMPATHY AND INCLUSIVITY IN DIGITAL COMMUNITIES

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ACTIVITY - PRIVILEGE PYRAMID

The trainers will print out a range of 'digital privileges' (or rather digital rights), including anonymity, access privacy, non-discrimination, freedom of expression, etc. Sample Activity Printouts are [linked here](#). Each group will receive one set. It is suggested that groups are comprised of 3-4 participants.

Participants will have to discuss and decide which privileges they would rank as most important to least important. These decisions must be made together as a team. Facilitators will give groups about 10 minutes to discuss internally. After this, each group will present their ranking, followed by some guiding questions from the trainer.

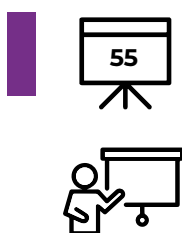
DISCUSSION:



Some guiding questions for the trainers to lead the discussion after participants rank their privileges: *What was the process like deciding as a group? Was there a consensus in the group? Why do you think some didn't feel as important as others? Which privileges felt the most important? What are your reflections on this activity?*

The purpose of this activity is to influence the participants to think about our digital experiences and how they are very much influenced by our diverse and intersectional identities. This activity helps participants realise what digital privileges they may have taken for granted and for them to recognise that their identities can influence the choices they make online as much as offline. The trainers can use this activity to enable participants to understand the importance of practising empathy and inclusivity in digital spaces.

After the activity, encourage participants who already practise empathy and inclusivity to build better connections within their social media groups to share their opinions. For example, *are there any community stewards in this group who take specific measures to make women and girls or people with disabilities feel included in your group?*



EXPLANATION:

Once participants share their experiences and suggestions, the trainers will add to the discussion by sharing the following strategies to promote empathy and inclusivity in online communities:

- **Remember community standards** – Most digital platforms have community standards that are designed and practised to protect the safety and welfare of its users. Since your group is hosted on such a platform, the members must be reminded that discrimination and harassment within the group would violate the community standards. Therefore, all members are expected to practise empathy and inclusivity at all times.
- **Reaffirm through your group rules** – Most groups, as we will see soon, will follow the rules. It is important for community stewards to reiterate the importance of inclusivity and empathy through these rules. This shows members that these values are not simply practised due to the necessity to follow the community standards established by the organisation. But also because the group values diversity, inclusion, and equity for all.
- **Celebrate Diversity** – Many social media groups make celebratory posts for big holidays. This practice should not be restricted to majority communities. For instance, if a group has members of diverse religions, posting a celebratory message only on Christmas is not enough. Similarly, depending on the group and context, key celebrations of diverse communities, such as International Day for People with Disabilities and the International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, and Transphobia, should also be acknowledged and celebrated.
- **Promote Image Descriptions** – Alternative text can be attached to images so that when a screen reader encounters an image, it reads out the text to the end-user rather than just skipping over it. If you are using text in images, say as a header or banner, the end-user is missing out on that key information. Images on social media are becoming more accessible too, and the ability for end-users to add alt-text is now available on most platforms (like Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram). Where this function is not available, the best practice is to provide an image description at the bottom of your post.

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VIDEO ON EMPATHY AND LISTENING

This session will be concluded with [this video](#) – where the trainers will remind the participants that the most crucial step for practising empathy and inclusivity in the online and offline world is to – listen and be open.

This video can be used to start a brief conversation on online dialogue. Trainers will emphasise the importance of consistent interaction, authentic interest in communication, open replies to discourse, and debates and disagreements among group members are all essential for facilitating online dialogue.

Online dialogue is a core element of building trust. Active listening and authentic sharing are essential for building confidence in digital communities. We will further discuss and dissect the importance of online dialogue and interpersonal communications in social media groups in the latter modules.



Session 3: Setting up Community Guidelines



Session Objective: Define, set, and discuss guidelines and boundaries for social media groups



The trainer will introduce the Session 3 objective: to define, set, and discuss guidelines and boundaries for social media groups.

The purpose of this third session is to put the information and insights learned from Module 2 – as well as other modules – into practice. As discussed so far, participants are not aware that a key step in building trust and promoting connections is to practise empathy and inclusivity in our digital communities.

A core strategy for achieving the above is to have clear, well-defined, and uncompromisable guidelines that will protect the members of the groups – including those who are marginalised and made vulnerable online.

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IDENTIFYING KEY COMPONENTS



VIDEO ON SETTING UP GROUP RULES

The session will begin with [this video](#) where experienced admins share their thoughts about setting up rules.



EXPLANATION

Facebook has an existing group rules feature. The group rules feature offers four example rules that admins can use immediately or edit. These example rules are based on some of the most common rules admins use across many types of groups. The trainers can do a quick tutorial on this feature – or even encourage one of the admins who use this feature to share their experience. As the purpose of this session is to go beyond simply using this ‘feature’ but to learn the importance of group rules and how they contribute to trust building, the trainers will not spend too much time on the above feature.



DISCUSSION

To begin this discussion, the trainers will ask the participants: *Do any of your groups already have rules or follow guidelines or a code of conduct?*



EXPLANATION & REFLECTION

This is a set of regulations that is independent of national/international laws and community standards of social media platforms. These are regulations developed by the social media group for the social media group.

If there are participants who have already established such regulations, the trainers will ask them to share the key components of these regulations – as well as their experience in setting up these regulations: *What are the regulations for your social media community? When were these established? Why did you establish them? Who created these regulations? Have you updated these regulations since then? How did the members react to these? What happens if these regulations are breached? Have you collaborated with tech companies or community-based organisations to strengthen and/or facilitate these guidelines?*

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DEVELOPING REGULATIONS FOR DIGITAL COMMUNITIES

Note for Facilitator: This is a step-by-step activity, please refer to all slides and notes for this section, as well as the section on “Finalising Regulations for Digital Communities to guide participants through this process.”

First, the participants will be separated into groups of four or five to develop a set of guidelines. Trainers can group community stewards together, who manage similar pages. Participants are encouraged to do their research during this process.

The following are some focus areas the trainers will share with the participants to develop the community regulations:

- Transparency
- Privacy
- Accessibility
- Safety & Safeguarding
- Non-discrimination & Inclusivity

The following are some guiding notes and recommendations the trainers will share with the participants to develop the community regulations:

- Think of the best way to present these rules: Bullet points, Dos and Don'ts
- Outline and reiterate the purpose of the group
- Be clear about core group values
- Be clear about your moderation policy
- In addition to stating what is not allowed, explain what is welcomed and encouraged.
- Reflect on the overall community standards of the platform
- Consider if there are any legal restrictions or regulations preventing members from commenting on certain topics.

Based on these instructions, the groups will begin to frame the community guidelines for their social media groups.

For participants who already have regulations or rules for their group, trainers will ask them to assess their existing guidelines.

Once the participants are done brainstorming, the trainers will collate all the guidelines and develop one set of social media guidelines for all groups.

The following is one such sample set of community guidelines for reference. Note that these need to be further fleshed out and developed according to context and requirements.

- Be respectful of others and their opinions.
- Do not make personal attacks in your comments.
- Do not post content that is discriminatory, obscene, inflammatory, harassing, hateful, threatening, profane or personally abusive.
- Do not post anything that could be libellous or defamatory: if an accusation is made against a named person, for example, a member of the group, we will hide it.
- Do not post content with explicit or technical detail about self-harm or suicide.
- Do not post adverts for commercial products or services.
- Do not post repeatedly about issues that are off-topic i.e., spam

Some other resources and templates for social media guidelines of various organisations:

- [Social Media Guidelines – Community First Development](#)
- [Social Media Community Guidelines – Fresh Visions](#)
- [Social Media Guidelines and House Rules Template](#)

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FINALISING REGULATIONS FOR DIGITAL COMMUNITIES

Note for Facilitator: The trainers will explain to the participants that these community guidelines do not have to be finalised or shared with the groups immediately. Instead, the trainers will encourage the participants to reflect on them individually (and in consultation with their group members) to review and revise accordingly. Participants will be encouraged to voice and share any challenges and risks they anticipate in sharing these regulations with the wider group.

The following are some suggestions for the digital community stewards to be mindful of when reviewing and further developing the set of guidelines:

- Contextualise and prioritise the guidelines according to the experiences and requirements of your group
- Include group members in the finalisation process. Listen to their suggestions and opinions on the draft guidelines. This is important to promote inclusivity.
- Think about how you are going to hold breaches and violations of these guidelines. Reflect on accountability.
- Decide how often these guidelines need to be reviewed and updated and decide who will be responsible for this process.
- Ensure these guidelines are available in the local languages and/ or commonly spoken languages within the group.
- Remember to practice – not just preach. Lead by example.
- Consider accessibility and where these regulations will be hosted – about section, pinned post, external link, etc.



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MODULE 2 CLOSING ACTIVITIES

Next, the Trainer will facilitate a Q&A session.

The module will end with a Pop Quiz on Kahoot (this is an optional activity, but it is a great way to energise the participants at the end of the module).

Note: See [Content for Training Activities](#) for quiz content and instructions on how to make a Kahoot).

The PPT slide can be linked to the Kahoot quiz for ease of access and presentability.

Trainers can encourage participation by handing out chocolates to the pop quiz winners.

Finally, the Trainers will ask the participants to complete a short feedback form. This can be optional and created according to the organiser and facilitator's needs, therefore a sample is not shared.

The content of this module was adopted and inspired by the following resources:

- [The power of virtual communities](#): Governance Lab
- [Establishing membership and rules](#): Facebook Community

