

## *Guidelines for Our Work Together*

In our work and in our conversations we are guided by norms – unwritten and often unspoken rules. Our family life, our employment, and our time together in our congregation are guided by norms which tell people that there are acceptable and unacceptable ways of doing things. Some norms are very healthy and appropriate and some are less healthy and can be damaging.

For our work together today there are some norms, or guidelines, that can be very helpful and healthy if we follow them. They include the following:

- We will remember that our work here today is a part of our spiritual leadership of our congregation. We will treat this work and one another with respect.
- In our conversations we will focus on *issues* and *behavior*. We will not talk about *people*.
- When talking about events or issues in our congregation, we will seek to use words and sentences that *describe* the situation and seek not to use words and sentences that *evaluate* the situation.
- We will talk about our own experience and understanding by using the word “I” frequently. We will not talk about hearsay and rumor, and we will not use words such as “some people” or “everyone.”
- We will share information with the full group appropriately so that everyone has the information that they need, and we will not reserve our comments for after the meeting or to be shared only with people who agree with us.

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