

## **Participant Expectations and NYYM Agreements for 2020 Summer Sessions**

We come to Yearly Meeting sessions to create a Blessed Community in which to discern and carry out the work that the Divine leads us to. In order to be fully and authentically present to each other as a faith community, we have agreements that guide our behavior toward each other and towards the whole body, ensuring safety and comfort for all of us, starting with living into our Testimonies of integrity, simplicity, peace, and equality. We have long agreed that our time together will be free of alcohol regardless of the policy of our host facility – or virtual meeting, and the use of illegal drugs is unwelcome and illegal, no matter where or how we gather. Those among us who struggle with addictions must find a safe and supportive community among Friends.

By registering for Summer Sessions, Friends are committing to honor these Testimonies and agreements, and we are all, younger and older, expected to abide by them. Parents and guardians are asked to speak with their youngsters about their behavior, and everyone attending Summer Sessions is asked to take the agreements seriously.

Please understand, this year these expectations and agreements only apply while we are gathered together, in any way, online.

As a Beloved Community that is meeting virtually, we must be especially sensitive to creating an environment free from harassment and free from discrimination, both overt and covert. Thoughtless actions, including triggering words, jokes, or comments, which demean groups or individuals will not be tolerated. Intimidation or sexual harassment, both direct and subtle, will not be tolerated – especially with regard to our children. This includes, for example, inappropriate behavior based on ethnicity, race, age, gender, sexual identity or orientation, faith and religious belief, or physical or cognitive abilities.

In addition, given our agreements and expectations, we all must refrain from the use of alcohol and illegal substances and limit our use of tobacco, during our gatherings a NYYM Summer Sessions – even though we are meeting virtually this year. Friends with addictions viewing these behaviors may have no recourse but to leave the meeting, in order to stay safe.

In order to maintain a respectful environment while meeting online, participants carry a responsibility to each other to enter each activity in the spirit of worship. Please act as you would during worship in your home meeting, including being fully dressed and spiritually focused, making no recordings and taking no photos, and engaging in no other distracting internet use or home activities. Please place yourself on mute when appropriate and choose a simple background.

Finally, a vibrant community recognizes that often, conflict is a call for growth and an invitation to change. Because of the unique nature of our virtual gathering, we have simplified our response team for conflict. If you witness or hear about something that you are uncomfortable addressing yourself, please seek out Melanie-Claire Mallison, clerk of

Sessions Committee, and or Dawn Pozzi, JYM Coordinator. They will work with you to ensure that any allegations of impropriety will be investigated. Please know that if you are reported for choosing to engage in these unwelcome behaviors or activities, you (and possibly your family) may be asked to leave Summer Sessions – and blocked from joining any future zoom activities.

### **1. All attenders are expected to:**

- a. If 18 years or older, register yourself and dependents with New York Yearly Meeting by the registration deadline, to facilitate the YM's logistical planning;
- b. Attend the activities of New York Yearly Meeting as led, including but not limited to Opening Worship, Community Worship in the morning, Worship Sharing, Meetings for Worship with a Concern for Business, committee meetings, JYM events, and Closing Worship;
- c. Honor the NYYM agreements and expectations, keeping in mind also New York State laws regarding the use of illegal drugs and the legal age for drinking alcohol (see the first paragraph of our agreements).

### **2. Attenders under 18 years old are expected to:**

- a. Register with Junior Yearly Meeting in the company of their parent or legal guardian (so we know you have permission to be online with us!);
- b. Honor the NYYM agreements and expectations, keeping in mind New York State laws regarding the use of illegal drugs and the legal age of drinking alcohol (see the first paragraph of our agreements).

### **For your consideration:**

**NYYM Advice #8, Faith & Practice:** Friends are earnestly advised to refrain from practices that are detrimental to the body or the mind; for example, the use of intoxicants and tobacco, and the misuse of drugs.

**NYYM Query #8, Faith & Practice:** Have we confronted our own decisions about our use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs, and do we encourage others to do likewise? Have we considered the cost in human suffering that might result from such use?