

House Agreement

Conflict Management

Responsible: Community Process

Last reviewed: 10/23/2017

Community Members Agreements:

Please see Common Space Agreement Values

Conflict Resolution Basics

Basic tenets

- Always keep in mind that the relationship is your priority.
 - "Winning" the argument is not the goal
- Pick your battles
 - Is this issue really worthy of your time and energy?
- Be specific about what is bothering you.
 - Vague complaints are hard to work on
- Deal with only one issue at a time.

A potent factor in resolving conflict is *careful and thoughtful listening*.

- Listen without judgment, criticism or interruption
 - Silence the internal noise of your own thoughts, so that you can hear the whole message
 - Pay complete attention to the other person, don't let other thoughts-like what you are going to say next distract you.
- Restate and reflect what you have heard
- Be respectful of the other person and his or her viewpoint
 - Be aware of and respectful of differences, cultivating empathy.
 - By avoiding disrespectful words and actions, encourage the other person to share his or her issues as fully as possible.
- Focus on the present
 - Be open to the reality of the current situation
 - Focus on what you can do in the here and now to solve the problem
- Clarify the real issue
 - Avoid making assumptions
 - Avoid ascribing intention behind the others' behavior
- Be willing to forgive
 - Resolving conflict is impossible if you're unwilling or unable to forgive
 - Resolution lies in releasing the urge to punish or assign blame
- Know when to let something go

- Validate the concerns of the other person, even if the solution is elusive at this time
- If you can't come to an agreement, agree to disagree
 - You can choose to disengage and move on
 - Accept the other has a different view of the situation from you

Excerpted from www.helpguide.org.

Guidelines for Resolving Conflict:

- **Conflict Management Team Facilitator (CMT):** Community members trained to facilitate conflict management issues within the community in specified areas. CMT facilitators agree to honor the confidentiality of involved parties, when possible, to be neutral and to communicate transparently.
- **Physical Violence** Under no circumstance will physical violence be tolerated. The individual attacked or witnesses of the attack will call 911. The Health and Safety Committee will be notified immediately.
- **Conflict** Each type of conflict has a multi-step process. The next step is only used if the conflict remains unresolved. In cases of severe conflict, the process may skip initial steps. No person who is personally involved in conflict will serve as a mediator or facilitator or be involved in determining the type of conflict.

Types of Conflict:

- **Interpersonal Conflict:** general conflict between two or more community members. No assumption is made about who is “at fault” or who has primary responsibility for resolving the conflict—all parties participate in resolution.
- **Factional Conflict:** two or more groups within the community have conflict that is primarily at a group, not an individual level. No assumption is made about who is “at fault” or who has primary responsibility for resolving the conflict—all parties participate in resolution.
- **Accountability Conflict:** one or more persons has either violated community agreements or otherwise demonstrates a pattern of behavior that is viewed by the majority of community members as detrimental to the community as a whole. The offending person has primary responsibility for changing the behavior or resolving the conflict, with appropriate support by the community.
- **Inter Personal Conflict:**
 1. People in conflict try to work it out with each other. If unable to

resolve move to step 2

2. Schedule a confidential meeting with a CMT facilitator
3. A CMT facilitator from within the community holds a meeting following a six-step process, in which each participant says (and has reflected back by the other):
 - i. What happened? (The facts)
 - ii. What feelings do you have about it?
 - iii. What's at stake for you? What needs do you have that were not met in this situation?
 - iv. What are you willing to do to help solve the problem or change the situation?
 - v. What would you like the other person to do?
 - vi. Summary of agreements
4. If steps 1-6 are not successful (including several tries, if needed), individuals involved in the conflict discuss the following options:

Options:

- Allow a longer “cooling off” period to see if the conflict dies down, if not, then try steps 1-3 again.
- Continue to live in the community and tolerate the conflict with appropriate steps to ensure that the community is not negatively impacted. Continue to be an engaged member of the community
- The CMT may ask you, or you may request a CMT approved mediator external to the community to facilitate a process in which possible compromises are identified. If this option is chosen, the Community Process Committee must approve one session in advance. The community pays one-third of the fee; the remaining fee is shared among conflict parties.
- One or both members could explore the option of leaving the community. In cases of severe and persistent conflict that have a clear negative impact on the community, the issue will be referred to the Community Process Committee for resolution.

- **Factional Conflict:**

1. Groups in conflict try to work it with each other.
2. A CMT facilitator facilitates a resolution meeting that includes everyone involved. This meeting may use as many different structures at the discretion of the CMT facilitator, depending on

what is needed.

3. If no CMT facilitators are available or internal CMT facilitation is not effective, the conflict will be taken to the Community Process Committee for approval to use an external facilitator or mediator paid for by community funds for one session. If the conflict is about a specific policy decision or practical issue, an outside mediator can be hired for one session to identify specific practical compromises.
4. If not successful, the conflict is referred to the Community Process Committee to decide among the following options:
 - a. Allow a longer “cooling off” period to see if the conflict dies down on its own, then repeat steps 2-3.
 - b. Continue to live together and tolerate the conflict, with appropriate steps to ensure that the community is not negatively impacted.
 - c. One of the factions could separate from the community and either leave entirely.

- **Accountability Conflict:**

1. Any member concerned about agreement-violating or problematic behavior provides individual feedback to the offending member.
2. A CMT facilitator meets with the person individually to provide feedback, request specific changes in behavior, patterns of behavior or adherence to agreements including specific timelines for behavior change. The CRT facilitator offers appropriate support in making the changes.
3. If agreed upon change is not made, the Community Process Committee may offer the offending member a meeting with an external facilitator and two people who represent the best interests of the community as a whole. The community will pay for external facilitator. This group will develop a specific written plan for resolution, including specific behaviors needed, a timeline, and specific contingencies outlined for what happens if the plan is not followed. This plan will be shared the CMT team.
4. At the end of the time specified, after gathering feedback from all involved community members, the CMT will determine whether the plan has been met satisfactorily. If needed, and funds approved, step 3 can be repeated. If no resolution, then conflict management is brought to the whole community.

Adopted 10/23/2017