



Building a Conflict Resilient Community

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Community Justice Initiatives

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"I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the water to create many ripples."

-Mother Teresa

Conflict occurs in any community, between families, between neighbours and between members. As a community, when and how we respond to conflict determines how successful we are to resolving conflict. A conflict resilient community is one that welcomes conflict as the catalyst for change that creates healthier relationships and more engaged membership and an overall stronger, more connected community. Learn about tools and techniques to think about how your community responds to conflict.

Opening Circle:

1. Who are you?
2. What is your Co-op and your role in your community?
3. What do you hope to get out of this workshop?

Understanding Conflict:

Activity: Words Associated to Conflict (20 mins)

In small groups, write down words or phrases you associate with the list below:

- a) The causes of conflicts between two people
- b) How I feel about or view myself when I am in conflict
- c) Words I associate with the word conflict
- d) How I feel about or view the other person when I am in conflict with them

Example: When and how do we respond to conflict? (10mins)

Questions:

- a) When you hear that story what stands out for you?
- b) How might you have addressed this situation as a Member or as a Leader of your community?

Activity: Conflict Styles (30 mins)

Scenario questions for Conflict Styles:

1. Your neighbour repeatedly plays loud music that wakes you and your young child
2. Two neighbours are arguing loudly over their fence
3. Drunk university students are hanging out at your Co-op's playground at 2am after a night at the bar. They are having fun playing on the equipment but are making a lot of noise

4. You are talking to a neighbour when they want to share some gossip with you about the Board of Directors
5. You are sitting in a committee meeting when another member makes a sexist joke
6. A Board Member shows up at your door and tells you there has been a complaint against you

Costs and Benefits of Different Styles

Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Modes are one way to understand different conflict management styles.

Compete (Shark): values the task more than the relationship, assertive and uncooperative

- Benefits: gets the job done, principled, decisive
- Costs: insulated from truth, tends to be surrounded by yes-men, may miss underlying problem

Accommodate (Teddy Bear): values the relationship more than the task, unassertive and cooperative

- Benefits: nice to be around, nurturing
- Costs: loss of self, not heard, seen as a pushover

Avoid (Turtle): values neither the relationship, nor the task, unassertive and uncooperative

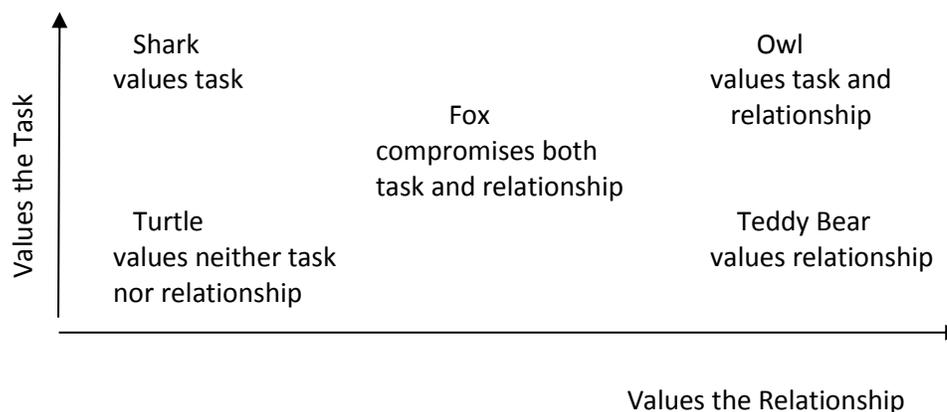
- Benefits: survivor, not caught up in trivial matters
- Costs: nothing gets resolved, resentful, is an unknown quantity

Compromise (Fox): seeks a compromise between relationships and tasks

- Benefits: voice of reason and moderation, quick
- Costs: deal with effects rather than causes, seem unethical

Collaborate (Owl): values both relationships and tasks, assertive and cooperative

- Benefits: gets the job done and keeps everyone happy
- Costs: initially it takes time, may seem unrealistic, may seem unethical





Positive solutions to conflict and crime

FAMILIES INDIVIDUALS SCHOOLS WORKPLACE FAITHGROUPS COURTS PRISONS NEIGHBOURHOODS

Sources of Conflict

- **Goals.** Conflict can happen as a result of conflicting goals or priorities. It can also happen when there is a lack of shared goals.
 - **Personality conflicts.** Personality conflicts are a common cause of conflict. Sometimes there is no chemistry, or you haven't figured out an effective way to click with somebody.
 - **Scarce resources.** Conflict can happen when you're competing over scarce resources.
 - **Styles.** People have different styles. Your thinking style or communication style might conflict with somebody else's thinking style or their communication style. The good news is that conflicts in styles are easy to adapt to when you know how.
 - **Values.** Sometimes you will find conflict in values. The challenge here is that values are core. Adapting with styles is one thing, but dealing with conflicting values is another. That's why a particular business, group, or culture may not be a good fit for you. It's also why "bird's of a feather flock together" and why "opposites attract, but similarities bind."
- Retrieved from <http://sourcesofinsight.com/conflict-management-styles-at-a-glance/>

The Conflict Resilient Community

What is resilience?

Resilience means being able to adapt to life's misfortunes and setbacks. It speaks to how well we adapt to turmoil, crisis, disruptions, changes, transitions, stress and conflict.

What are the components of a Conflict Resilient Community?

- *Every community is filled with leaders*
- *Whatever the problem, community itself has the answers*
- *We don't have to wait for anyone. We have many resources with which to make things better now*
- *We need a clear sense of direction AND we need to know the elegant, minimum next step*
- *We proceed one step at a time, making the path by walking it*
- *Recognizing that Conflict is a normal part of life and our ability to respond to conflict in healthy, creative ways can allow us to build our resilience*

-retrieved from resilientcommunities.org

Creating Resilience in your Community

How we respond to conflict is as important as what we do to prepare for conflict.

- Governance
- Committees
- Members

Governance

Board of the Directors

- What is the role of the Board of Directors?
- When should the Board get involved in a conflict?
- Leadership

Policies and Procedures

- Schedule E – starting the conversation
- Anti-violence bylaws
- Communication agreements
 - How to communicate to the Board
 - How to communicate with each other
- Safe Space

Committees

Member Selection Committee

The Member Selection Committee's role is to screen potential members to the community to ensure that new members are representative of the cooperative values. Referrals are then made to the Board of Directors.

- What questions is the committee asking? How does the committee create an understanding of the expectations of membership without scaring away or intimidating potential members

Orientation Committee

The Orientation Committee is responsible for introducing all new members to the co-op providing information as to how the Co-op functions and its policies.

- Introduction to policies and guidelines
- Introduction to the responsibilities of membership

Education Committee

The Education Committee is responsible for identifying and arranging the delivery of training to the co-op membership that enriches the lives of members and teaches them new skills to effectively live in

- Lifelong learning is an important component of building a conflict resilient community
- Conflict management skills require practice and an atmosphere of openness to explore and learn together
- Continuous learning to support long-term members and new members, both with have their own distinct needs

Member Relations Committee

The Member Relations Committee is responsible for responding to complaints and disputes between members. It requires a level of neutrality and acknowledgement of conflict of interest which may be challenging for individuals to successfully participate

- Challenges of Conflict of Interest and Neutrality
- Working with other Co-ops to support conflict management

Members

The Benefits of Membership

If you live in a Co-op you are:

- A voting member who contributes to the governance of the co-op
- Part of a community where neighbours look out for one another
- Living in housing that will stay affordable because it's run on a non-profit basis and is never resold
- Linked through the Canadian Co-operative
- A member of a world-wide movement

Members have the right to:

- Vote on the annual budget, which sets the monthly housing charges and affects the quality of your housing
- Elect a board of directors made up of people who live in your co-op
- Run for the board of directors yourself
- Receive audited financial statements that show how the co-op spent your money
- Pay only a limited portion of your income for your housing, if you meet eligibility rules
- Live there for as long as you like, if you keep to the by-laws agreed on by the co-op membership

- retrieved from [Http://www.chfcanada.coop/eng/pages2007/about_1.asp](http://www.chfcanada.coop/eng/pages2007/about_1.asp)

Members as Leaders in Conflict Management

If you live in community you are going to experience conflict. It is a given. However, how we respond to conflict and what we say to each other when we are in conflict become important indicators for how the conflict will unfold.

- a) Do you feel comfortable speaking to other members in their co-ops?
- b) Do you feel comfortable addressing an issue directly with another member?
- c) Are you the type of person to take action and address conflict with other members versus putting up with conflict?

Example: Why don't we address conflict?

Questions:

- a) What stands out for you in this story?

Conflict Resiliency Requires

Common Language

- Members should be first-responders when conflict arises, when appropriate. This requires:
 - An agreement that each member has a voice and is a valued member of the community. As such they should be in a position to make reasonable requests of neighbours and fellow members on how to be treated
 - Understanding when to raise the issue, when to raise the relationship and when to raise both

Common Tools

- Members need to have a common toolbox to draw upon to successfully deal with conflict:
- Develop common conflict resolution techniques
- Determine as a community, how and when it is appropriate to address concerns

Common Understanding

- As a community, you need to build common expectation of what is appropriate and how you has a community
 - As a community develop a common understanding on expectations within the community. This may already be complied in your community's by-laws, but are they reflective of the needs and values of your
 - What to do when you get stuck?
 - Conflict is resolved through relationship. The power of reciprocity.

Activity: The Curious Member (30 Min)

- a) In pairs, take a few minutes to tell a story of a conflict you were involved in. The listener can ask questions during or after the story that may help them formulate advice (such as in diagnostic questioning). After the story, the listener will respond with some advice or a possible solution. Each person in the pair will have a chance to be both listener and speaker.
- b) Change partners and retell the same story. After the story, the listener will respond by making a brief summary about what they have heard and highlight an emotion the situation may have evoked (as in active listening).
- c) Change partners and retell the same story. After the story, the listener will respond by asking a few questions that help keep the speaker talking about the issue (as in explorative questioning). Each person in the pair will have a chance to be both listener and speaker.

In the large group, reflect on how you respond to the different types of approaches?

Note: Remember how you felt as a questioner and answerer.

Why enrich your membership with these skills?

By embracing conflict as a part of life, you can **make the most of each situation** and use it as a **learning opportunity or a leadership opportunity**. Generally speaking, as a society, we do not do a good job preparing people to dealing with conflict. In absence of these embracing these skills many people turn to conflict resolution models that they are taught in school, many of these are top-down approaches that focus on issue based resolutions. When members first response is to go to the Board, call By-law or the Police it speaks to unhealthy relationships, fear, or deeper community concerns.

The good news is that by resolving conflict successfully, you can solve many of the problems that it has brought to the surface, as well as getting benefits that you might not at first expect:

- **Increased understanding:** The discussion needed to resolve conflict expands people's awareness of the situation, giving them an insight into how they can achieve their own goals without undermining those of other people.
- **Increased group cohesion:** When conflict is resolved effectively, team members can develop stronger mutual respect, and a renewed faith in their ability to work together.
- **Improved self-knowledge:** Conflict pushes individuals to examine their goals in close detail , helping them understand the things that are most important to them, sharpening their focus, and enhancing their effectiveness.

- retrieved from http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newLDR_81.htm

- *Learning usually, if not always, requires conflict - Johnson and Johnson*

Resources through Community Justice Initiatives

Talking Circles

Community Justice Initiatives trained mediators would facilitate a Circle. A circle is a process that brings together individuals who wish to engage in conflict resolution, healing, support, decision making or other activities in which honest communications, relationship development, and community building are core desired outcomes. Circles are helpful to addressing issues of a larger group and have the following benefits:

- Build relationships
- Foster open dialogue
- Encourage values-based action
- Provide a space to acknowledge responsibility
- Facilitate innovative problem-solving
- Address the deeper cause of conflict
- Empower participants and communities
- Break through isolation
- Bring healing and transformation

Conflict Resolution Workshops

This workshop emphasizes the development of practical skills to resolve interpersonal conflict. The workshop explores skills and develops strategies that enhance effective communication essential for when dealing with conflict.

Workshop topics covered include conflict management styles, active listening and identifying and deescalating conflict. The workshop would be customized to meet the needs of the community.

Community Mediation Services

Community Justice Initiatives trained mediators would facilitate mediations between individuals or smaller groups of members as required. Mediation allows for open and honest communication between the parties, giving them the opportunity to rebuild trust and improve their relationships.

Elder Mediation Services

Community Justice Initiatives also provides specialized mediation services to support participants aged 55 and older. Typical issues may include: housing and living arrangements, power of attorney, family dynamics, health care planning, abuse and neglect, caregiver burden, retirement, financial concerns and intergenerational relationships.