



CONFLICT MANAGEMENT MECHANISMS

1. CONFLICT AS A BY-PRODUCT OF COLLABORATION

Conflicts are inevitable in a collaborative environment. It is a natural part of human interaction, and when safely supported, it can be healthy and creative. Handled with tenderness, conflict can create possibility and learning for all involved. In the collaborative context, it is therefore important to understand conflict resolution as a dynamic iterative process where different stakeholders initiate attempts to solve the conflict informally and formally in search of “better” management solutions. The collaborative should therefore create space to address conflict and grievances in individual and group settings, with the focus on reconciliation and the restoration of social harmony, rather than on punishment of the conflicting parties. The resolution procedures aim to generate common/shared perceptions, objectives or understanding among the stakeholders, inform negotiation and decision-making.

2. CONFLICT RESOLUTION APPROACH

Conflict resolution will be based on a collaborative approach. Collaboration plays a major role within conflict resolution. Collaborating with the other party involves listening to their side, discussing areas of agreement and goals, and ensuring that all parties understand each other. The most desirable outcome is sustaining a long-term relationship so that people can continue to collaborate in a productive way.

3. OUR COLLECTIVE CONSCIOUSNESS

Our collective consciousness is rooted in our Terms of Engagement which are undergirded by a culture of mutual accountability, mutual learning, transparency, robust engagement, reconciliation, and peace.

In line with these values, the following behavioural principles are encouraged and declared acceptable:

- We each have full responsibility for the collaborative.
- If we sense that something needs to happen, we have a duty to address it.
- It is not acceptable to limit our concern to the remit of our roles.
- Everyone must be comfortable with holding others accountable to their commitments through feedback and respectful confrontation.

4. PRINCIPLES FOR CONFLICT AND GRIEVANCE RESOLUTION

The following fundamental principles shall guide all conflict resolution within the collaborative are:

- Be interests focussed. Separate the person or people from the issue(s) in dispute.
- Act Holistically. Place emphasis on responding to all the needs of each of the parties in the conflict.
- Be Inclusive. Ensure the interests of the community affected by the conflict are accommodated in the resolution.
- Focus on Healing. Place emphasis on re-establishing right relationships and balance in the community affected by the conflict. The focus is not on punishment.

- Be Fair. Ensure the empowerment, dignity, respect, and care of all parties in the dispute, avoiding as far as possible “winners and losers”. Promote healing, harmony and integration.
- Aim for problem solving. Focus on resolution, not blaming and scapegoating of participants.
- Ensure Accountability. Make sure there is accountability for any harm that has been done.
- Seek a Just Resolution - Address the needs of all those affected by the conflict.

5. PROCEDURES

The process has three phases:

- One-on-one discussions.
- Mediation by a peer
- Mediation by a panel.

Practical Application of the Process:

- The aggrieved approaches the other party. The two people sit together and try to resolve the problem privately.
- If they cannot find a solution agreeable to both, they nominate a collaborative member they both trust to act as a mediator. The mediator does not impose a decision, rather he/she supports the participants coming up with their own solution.
- Should the mediation fail, the aggrieved party shall report the matter to the Strategic Alignment Task Team, which will appoint a panel of mediators with the required expertise to hear both parties. The panel has a final and binding remedy to the parties in dispute. Agreement will be in writing.

6. COMPETENCIES AND SKILLS OF A MEDIATOR

On an annual basis, a Conflict Resolution Forum will be established. These are the people who will be called upon to mediate conflict resolution sessions. Mediators should possess the following competencies:

- The ability to act in an independent and impartial way.
- The ability to listen, reframe and prioritize issues.
- The ability to facilitate communication between the parties.
- The ability to focus on interests rather than persons and helping the parties to generate options for the resolution of the issue in dispute.
- The ability to reach a deeper level of personal relationship with parties.
- The ability to be empathetic, non-judgmental, patient, optimistic, persistent, trustworthy, creative and flexible.
- The ability to understand, connect and show genuine interest regarding the well-being of the parties.
- The ability to inspire parties to trust them.
- Possess a high degree of emotional intelligence
- The ability to keep confidential all information acquired in the course of mediation.

7. REVIEW

This policy shall be reviewed bi-annually by the Collaborative.