


Conflict Engagement Policy and Process

1. **Required Reading:** Within 6 months of becoming a SELC staff member, all staff members shall read or re-read the book “*Difficult Conversations*,” or the book “*Powerful Non-Defensive Communication*,” or a comparable book. By the end of that period, each staff member shall write a short summary on lessons learned from the readings, ideas for improving SELC’s internal and interpersonal communication processes, and other takeaways from the readings.
2. **Conflict Engagement Training:** If any staff member sees a reasonable and affordable opportunity for some or all staff members to take a training on conflict resolution, that staff member should bring a proposal to the General Circle or the Conflict Engagement Team to have staff attend that training.
3. **Conflict Engagement Team:** SELC shall form a Conflict Engagement Team of two or more people that will be responsible for the following:
 - a. Maintaining a list in Asana of potential mediators and other external conflict resolution resources.
 - b. Maintaining a list of conflict resolution training opportunities and informing staff of the opportunities.
 - c. Requesting staff to provide their short summary of the required reading.
 - d. Scheduling 1-2 mandatory workshops, trainings, or facilitated meetings on conflict and communication per year. The Conflict Engagement Team shall have discretion over the content and facilitation of those activities, including bringing in outside facilitators or workshop leaders, and shall seek input from all staff, especially in regards to scheduling.
 - e. When the Conflict Engagement Team observes a conflict and feels that the parties in conflict are not taking appropriate steps to resolve the matter, the Conflict Engagement Team shall bring this to the attention of the parties, offer their assistance, and/or ask the parties to take the appropriate steps to resolve the conflict within a period of time assigned by the Team. If the parties are still in conflict after that time has passed, the Conflict Engagement Team may require the parties in conflict to take part in a mediation process to resolve the conflict. All parties in conflict must agree to the chosen mediator.
 - f. If any member of the Conflict Engagement Team is part of a conflict, then it is his or her responsibility to take the appropriate steps described in the Conflict Resolution Process.
 - g. The Conflict Engagement Team shall be elected positions voted on by the General Circle. Elections shall take place at least every 12 months.

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4. **Conflict Resolution Process:** If any staff member feels irritated or in disagreement (has a conflict) with one or more other staff members, the staff member shall follow these steps to resolve the matter:
- a. **Reflect:** Reflect on whether it is possible to forgive and let go of the issue without lasting feelings of resentment or without fear that the issue will arise repeatedly.
 - b. **Discuss:** If it is not possible to forgive and let go of the issue, the staff member shall discuss the conflict with the relevant staff member(s) and attempt to seek resolution using the communication strategies learned in the assigned reading in Paragraph 1 and staff trainings.
 - c. **OPTIONAL - Seek Mediation from Another Staff Member:** At the early stages of a conflict, a staff member may ask another staff member to mediate. At that early point in the conflict, the parties should explain what level of support they desire. For example, the parties could ask the staff member to be present simply to be a calming influence and/or facilitate the discussion (stepping in when certain agreed ground rules, such as “no interrupting,” are violated). A mediator does not provide judgments about who is “right” or what should be done. Rather, the mediator merely assists the parties in coming to an agreement/resolution of their own design. Any staff member acting as mediator shall have either taken mediation training or have otherwise learned the appropriate tools and techniques of mediation.
 - d. **Seek External Mediation:** If the matter still feels unresolved after discussion, any of the staff members in conflict may request mediation by an external party. All staff members in conflict must agree to the chosen mediator. If the external mediator will cost money to SELC, the Conflict Engagement Team shall confer with Financial Circle to come up with an appropriate budget. The parties in conflict shall attend up to three mediation sessions with an external mediator if the matter is not yet resolved.