

**Conflict Resolution policy:**

1. Disputes regarding Billy Foundation policy and/or the Board of Directors are to be brought to:

- A. Advisory circles to be held at each gathering;
- B. Board of Directors meetings; and/or
- C. Annual advisory retreat

In addition, it was felt appropriate to deal with such disputes via letters to the Board, the Billy office (for referral to the Board), and/or a Billy newsletter.

2. Disputes regarding events, problems, and handling of specific gatherings should be brought to:

- A. The specific coordinator (i.e. Kitchen, Site, Heart circle, etc.)
- B. The general coordinator for the gathering
- C. Gathering 101 for that event
- D. The Board of Directors

3. Personal disputes between Billys should be handled as follows:

- A. Official policy is that when we come together we create a safe space within which we may approach each other and try to resolve whatever disputes may arise, one on one, directly with the person we have the dispute with;
- B. Refer to an Emotional Support person for help in dealing with the dispute himself;
- C. If the issue cannot be resolved with the help of the Emotional Support person, he would refer it to an on-site mediator who would then contact the other party and attempt to mediate both people toward a resolution of the dispute; and
- D. If on-site mediation fails the next step would be a full panel mediation, most likely to be held later, after the gathering has ended.
- E. If none of these approaches works and/or one or both of the folks involved declines to participate, we need to accept the idea that the dispute may not be resolvable at this time, and take whatever steps may be necessary to maintain the peace, safety, and integrity of the space (i.e. Asking someone to leave.)

(10/13-15/95 Board Retreat - Majority vote)

## **BILLY BOARD CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCESS**

### **Context**

On occasion, conflict arises in any relationship. When it appears during the course of a meeting, our Board Working Agreements declare that:

- “6. We agree to keep communication focused on concerns rather than on an individual’s position. We will speak to the issues; personal attacks are not acceptable.
8. We agree to stay engaged when we have disagreements. We will not walk away. We will try to understand.
9. We agree that when conflict arises, we will address it.
10. We agree that if conflict does arise, a board member shall intervene as necessary.”

The following process (on page 2) details steps to be taken to address conflict.

In many cases, it will be appropriate to stop the meeting and initiate this process immediately. Otherwise, the spirit of consensus will be impossible to find.

If the conflict arises in the moment, Steps 1 through 4 will be able to deal with it.

However, if the conflict between two or more board members is chronic, Steps 5 and 6 are advised. They require more time and may be best scheduled at a time after the meeting.

### **Guidelines for the Process**

There is important information for the organization and all of us in conflict that may arise. Conflict is not *bad* – it can be developed to yield its benefit to us.

We can manage differences constructively.

Differing cultural attitudes, e.g., toward cross language or financial conservatism, can lead to distrust and inaccurate assumptions about another’s values and behavior.

The Billy Values Statement can guide this conflict resolution process.

- Mutual respect
- Focus on issues and behavior, not personalities
- Deep listening
- Suspending/being aware of judgments
- No interrupting/name calling/blaming/walking away
- Speak honestly
- Use “I” statements, not “you” statements
- Seek to understand before being understood.
- Work to resolve the situation with a win-win outcome.

*with thanks to Pacific Resources Education Programs and many other sources...*

## BILLY BOARD CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCESS

### Step 1 Agree to the Process, Seeking Understanding and Win-Win Solutions

Discuss and agree to the Guidelines (pg. 2), agree on the facilitator, the time and setting (perhaps the present), and the spirit of this process.

### Step 2 Identify the Differences/Problem

Each person makes an opening statement.

Then, Person A shares what happened from their perspective, how it affects them, and how they feel about what happened.

Person B shares what they heard happened from Person A's perspective and then listens to corrections from A.

Person B shares their experience.

Person A shares what they heard from Person B's perspective, then listens to corrections from B.

### Step 3 Explore Underlying Issues

Ask each: What old tapes, buttons, filters, prejudices might be influencing your responses?

What differences in values, perspective, or styles of communication, thinking or working might be contributing to the conflict?

What exacerbated the situation?

Each shares what they understand of the other's perspective and listens to corrections.

### Step 4: Discussion between A and B: How can we relate better from here?

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*{for chronic conflict or if deemed appropriate, continue through steps 5 & 6}*

### Step 5 Generate a Plan: What Can We Do from Here?

Generate options and "achievable," small steps that can be easily accomplished.

Brainstorm possibilities.

Listen for shared needs and mutual benefits.

List commonalities and possible outcomes.

Focus on interests, not positions.

Develop "achievable":

- that build trust in working together;
- that build on individual and shared needs;
- that share positive power.

### Step 6: Develop Mutually Beneficial Agreements – these are lasting solutions

While these may take time to accomplish, these deal with the most difficult/deep issues and combine steps of improvements into a comprehensive agreement.

Focus on reaching a fair, sustainable, realistic resolution for each issue that will strengthen the relationship.

Develop an ongoing process to follow-up: Is our plan working? If yes, let's celebrate. If not, why not and what can we learn to do differently?