

## **Guidance for Conflict Resolution**

*In considering conflict and the factors that influence our responses to it, we realize that in an ideal world all conflict would be addressed as soon and as productively as possible. However as a collective, we acknowledge that there are many factors that can influence conflict and how or whether it is addressed and resolved. Some of these factors include issues related to power balance among group members, personal comfort levels in addressing conflict, and whether the benefits of addressing the conflict are perceived to outweigh potential consequences.*

*The following principles can serve as tools to guide us in our commitment to address conflict within the collective group as well as between individuals in the group. We realize that these are ideals for which we can strive and encourage group members to foster an environment that supports these principles.*

### **Principles to Consider When Addressing Group Level Conflict**

- ☞ Our group includes members of varying status. It can be challenging for members to raise issues and frustrations in this setting. We will strive to create an environment where people can share these feelings of dissatisfaction. We will do this by:
  - reacting and encouraging others to react positively to constructive criticism
  
- ☞ We will encourage group members to raise issues, frustrations, etc. when they experience them within the group and provide opportunities for them to do so when possible by:
  - debriefing at the end of discussions in which issues, frustrations, etc. are shared.
  - including an “Unresolved issues / Check in” section on the Large Group Conference Call agendas
  
- ☞ It can sometimes be challenging to share a minority point of view. This can be especially difficult when the majority of the group seems not to agree with that point of view or seems to have consensus around a different point of view. We will facilitate this sharing by:
  - asking the group directly if there is a different point of view in decision making discussions
  - recognizing that suggesting alternatives does not necessarily represent commitment to that alternative
  
- ☞ In addition to these specific strategies we commit to continue to discuss and work on ways to promote safety and trust as a group.

## **Principles to Consider When Addressing Individual Level Conflict**

### **Some Possible Challenges:**

- ☞ Conflict may sometimes occur between individuals within our larger group. This may include feelings of being disrespected or devalued.
- ☞ Group members may sometimes feel that the Large Group discussion or other group settings are not appropriate for addressing an issue or concern with another individual in the collective.
- ☞ Negative feelings and sensitive issues can sometimes “fester” or remain unresolved when not addressed. This may lead to further difficulties or strain between group members.
- ☞ We may sometimes witness what seems to be disrespectful behavior occurring between other members in the group.
- ☞ We may sometimes continue to feel that an issue has not been resolved despite efforts to clarify and resolve the issue with the other person involved.
- ☞ We may sometimes find it is difficult to know when an issue should be raised and when to have faith and “let it go.”

### **Guiding Principles to Address These Challenges:**

- ☞ We encourage group members to constructively raise issues, frustrations, and negative feelings when they experience them.
- ☞ We should seek clarification of circumstances we feel are disrespectful. If we perceive that someone is being disrespectful, we should ask “tell me what do you mean?” This can help develop a better understanding of where the other person is coming from and help us to determine when additional work is needed and when it can be “let go.”
- ☞ We will seek prompt clarification from other group members as sensitive issues arise or negative feelings develop.

### **Suggested Process for Interpersonal Conflict Resolution:**

- ☞ In processing a sensitive issue or conflict:
  1. We commit to first seeking resolution with the other individual(s).
  2. If we feel the issue remains unresolved, we commit to contacting the PI at that person’s (or persons’) site, or
  3. Contacting another PI, as is most appropriate for the circumstances.