

Board Composition and Dynamics

Building Productive and Effective Working Relationships

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Productive and Effective Working Relationships

Everyone's Role and Responsibility

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Effective Communications and Processes: Considerations and Principles

There will be divergent perspectives and opinions on issues presented to the individual commissioners and to the board as a whole.

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Effective Communications and Processes:
Considerations and Principles *(continued)*

Each commissioner will bring his/her own unique talents, knowledge, skills, commitment and behavior to the board. Some may be more vocal. Some may ask more questions. Some may bring more of a business tone, while others a more social tone to discussions. Some may bring optimism, others more caution and skepticism. Some may be risk-takers, while others are cautious. **It is not productive for any commissioner to expect that the others will operate just as they do.**

Effective Communications and Processes:
Considerations and Principles *(continued)*

Attendance and preparation are important. Review of documents or agenda issues should be accomplished before a meeting.

Effective Communications and Processes:
Considerations and Principles *(continued)*

Listening for understanding is the behavior that demonstrates respect and how respect is experienced. Agreement may or may not occur. However, when a person believes his/her perspective or opinion has been heard, he/she will experience a sense of respect.

Effective Communications and Processes:
Considerations and Principles *(continued)*

Examining both the “**pros and cons**” of an initiative, action or issue that the board must decide upon is appropriate.

Commissioners need to **participate/be involved** to make quality (i.e., appropriate and effective) decisions.

Effective Communications and Processes:
Considerations and Principles *(continued)*

Quality board decisions are **based on complete and accurate information**—and are made in a **timely** manner.

Effective Communications and Processes:
Considerations and Principles *(continued)*

Commissioners and the whole board are **ultimately responsible** for the agency’s activities within the community. Deliberation and decisions are made from the point-of-view of the best interests of the agency and community.

A Key Concern

What About Conflict?

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Conflict

What words, thoughts, feelings does this bring to mind?

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Conflict

What's the *good* news about it?

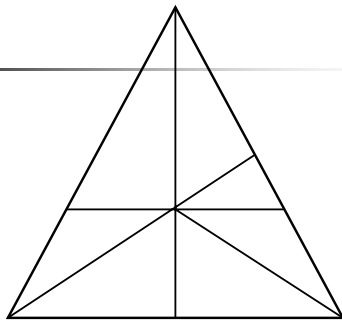
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In Which Conflict-Related State Are You More Effective?

- Conflict leads to peace/resolution
- Conflict presents opportunity for learning

You choose your own perception because 85% of problem solving is managing conflict.

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Rules of Active Listening

- Give your undivided attention and focus.
- Suspend judgment.
- Paraphrase what you hear (check for accuracy).
- Be 100% involved in the communication.
- Go for understanding—content and feeling.

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Rules of Active Listening (continued)

- Use "body language" (such as leaning forward) to communicate interest.
- Use body language to show understanding (e.g., head nodding).
- Use encouraging words and phrases ("I see," "Uh-huh," "Yes," etc.) to encourage free flow of conversation.
- Maintain eye contact much/all of the time.

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Rules of Active Listening (continued)

- Use open-ended questions to encourage the other person to expand fully on his/her feelings/thoughts.
- Listen attentively. Refrain from interrupting and taking over with your point-of-view.
- Use the restatement technique ("What I hear you saying is..." or "Let me make sure I understand that what you are saying is...") to encourage communication.

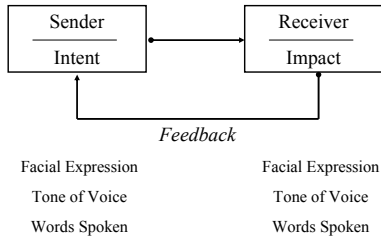
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Rules of Active Listening (continued)

- Seek clarification when a statement is not totally clear. ("Can you say more about that?")
- Summarize at various points during the conversation. ("What I am hearing is that you are frustrated with the detailed requirements of the new verification process.")

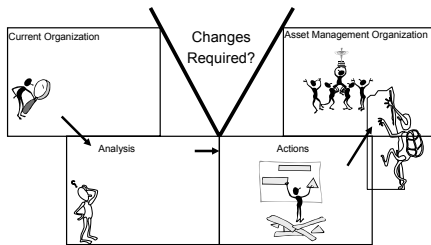
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Interpersonal Communications Between Individuals



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Organizational Change: An Overview



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Guidelines for Reaching Consensus

1. Members should avoid arguing in an attempt to **win** as individuals. What is "right" is the best collective judgment of the group as a whole.
2. Conflict about ideas, predictions, issues, solutions, etc. should be viewed as helping rather than hindering the process of reaching a consensus.
3. Problems are solved best when individual group members accept responsibility for **both** listening and contributing, so that **everyone** is included in the decision.

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Guidelines for Reaching Consensus (*continued*)

4. Tension-reducing behaviors can be useful if meaningful conflict is not "smoothed over" prematurely.
5. Each member is responsible for monitoring the process through which work gets done, and for initiating discussions of **process** when work is becoming ineffective.

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Guidelines for Building Consensus (*continued*)

6. The best results flow from a fusion of information, logic and emotion. Value judgments include members' feelings about the data, and about the decision-making process.
7. Decision-making by consensus is **hard work**, but rewarding.

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Board/Staff Retreats

- Some possible key agendas:
 - Improving the group functioning of the board
 - Visioning and planning for the future

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Improving the Group Functioning of the Board

- Build team coordination, cooperation, and positive relationships between and among board members and the Chief Executive. Use to:
- Integrate one or more new board members
 - Resolve or manage conflict
 - Integrate a board member that is a customer/person served by the agency
 - Integrate a new chief executive

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Visioning and Planning for the Future

- Create or revisit the commissioners' perspectives on the agency's mission, future vision or direction

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Other Uses for Retreats

- To examine and improve the Board's problem-solving, listening and communication skills, and decision-making capacity
- To improve the Board's effectiveness in addressing complex issues
- To provide an opportunity for the Board to analyze its performance
- To establish new or improved board roles and responsibilities

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Policy Formulation Topics

- Admissions and Occupancy Policy (ACOP – Public Housing)
- Personnel
- Contracting
- Purchasing
- Travel and expense reimbursement
- Hiring and selection
- Administrative Plan (Section 8/HCV)

Developing Agency Policy

