

Peacemaking Process

The Peacemaking process is a flexible, inclusive process intended to facilitate the peaceful, respectful resolution of disagreements between parties to this Collective Agreement. It is intended to be a guiding process to assist people with relating in harmony.

Where parties have been unable to come to an agreement in respect to the interpretation, application, implementation or operation of this Agreement the Peacemaking process will be commenced at anyone of the steps of the Grievance Procedure.

The process will consist of participation of the parties in a resolution circle intended to foster trust honesty, respect, equality and consensus. Participants in the circle will be chose in each individual case, based on the individual's ability to assist in the resolution process and may include external cultural support.

Peacemaking Circles

A peacemaking circle is a process that brings together individuals who wish to engage in conflict resolution, healing, support, decision making or other activities in which honest communications, relationship development, and community building are core desired outcomes.

"Circles" offer an alternative to contemporary meeting processes that often rely on hierarchy, win-lose positioning and approaches to relationships and problem solving.

Circles intentionally create a sacred space that lifts barriers between people, opening fresh possibilities for connection, collaboration and mutual understanding. The process works because it brings people together in a way that allows them to see one another as human beings and talk about what matters.

Circles can be understood in terms of the values and principles upon which they operate, and the structures they use to support these values and principles.

Values and Principles – Though each circle develops its own values and principles, all peacemaking circles generally:

- are designed by those who use them
- are guided by a shared vision
- call participants to act on their personal values
- include all interests, and are accessible to all
- offer everyone an equal, and voluntary, opportunity to participate
- take a holistic approach, including the emotional, mental and physical and spiritual
- maintain respect for all
- encourage exploring instead of conquering differences
- invite accountability to others and to the process

Structure – Circles provide effective support to groups seeking to stay on course with the values and principles they have established for their circle.

The circle process is "simple but not easy" and must be experienced to be fully grasped and replicated. However, there are some key structures that help to define a circle.

- The *meeting space* is the most visible structure. Participants are seated in a circle focusing on the centre where symbolic objects may be placed to remind participants of values shared among those in the circle.
- A *talking piece* is used as a way to ensure respect between speakers and listeners. The talking piece is passed from person to person within the circle and only the person holding the piece may speak.