Conflict Resolution Process

Introduction

We all arrive in the room with our own traumatic imprints – from our own lives, our ancestors, and our communities and cultures. ... We can and must heal the "soul wound" that marks us all.
~ Thomas Hübl, ***Healing Collective Trauma***

As its core, FMM's response to internal conflicts, tensions, and perceived differences must embody and reflect the movement's values. A process centred on compassion and empathy will transform conflict if it maintains accountability and builds solidarity. By prioritizing self-reflection and informal group processes, FMM will succeed in promoting friendly interaction and engagement.

The world suffers from pervasive structural violence at all levels in every society. As a result, a global social movement like FMM will naturally confront and arouse conflict. For internal operations, FMM key values include nonviolence, respect, diverse collaboration, persistent learning and sharing, transformation, and accountability. Leaders across the FMM network have a particular responsibility to cultivate a climate that embodies these values, and we entrust all FMM coalition members with this sacred duty of care.

Our approach to resolving conflict is grounded in active and direct engagement, including the courage to address difficult issues and differences of opinion. Underlying our process is the universal need for healing and self-reflection. Consequently, though we recognize the necessity for healing within each human being and amongst all cultures, FMM cannot assume responsibility for individual or collective healing that is beyond the scope of our mission.

PART I: Clearing Process

As Founding Mothers, we are united in our commitment to Partnership and Peace as the two pillars of a just and harmonious world.
~ Preamble to the ***Founding Mothers Proclamation***

FMM is committed to developing strong, effective, and harmonious relationships with and among our Members, Partners, Delegates, and extended coalition network. Consequently, our Conflict Resolution Process begins with an informal Clearing Process which should resolved most issues. Failing that private step, we then ask FMM Members to request assistance from a leader of FMM to help resolve the conflict.

Step 1: Private Meeting

To ensure that minor misunderstandings do not grow beyond reason, an FMM Member should first discuss the matter privately and directly with the other involved Member(s). Simple requests, such as listening deeply to and not interrupting each other, are reasonable and should be honored. Always use neutral and respectful language. Use "I" messages to describe your feelings, and describe the other person's behavior simply, factually, and without derision. If a resolution cannot be reached privately, involved Members should proceed to Step 2.

Step 2: Meeting with Peace Room Member or Matriarch

The involved Members should choose a facilitator to assist the Clearing Process. They may approach a Peace Room member or the Matriarch (or Maven) of their Operational Circle to assist at this stage. The facilitator should be trained in the Clearing Process and able to interpret the FMM governing documents. If the conflict still is not resolved with the assistance of an FMM facilitator, then the parties should proceed to the Formal Dispute Resolution Process below.

PART II: Formal Dispute Resolution

FMM is committed to reaching prompt and fair resolution of disputes and disagreements that threaten harmonious relationships within FMM or that adversely impact the ongoing functioning of the movement. FMM encourages all Members to watch for signs of conflict as they emerge, and to resolve issues at the earliest opportunity before they turn into a dispute. It is important that when issues arise, they are dealt with in a fair and timely manner. While some conflicts will be resolved through the Clearing Process, others will need a deeper process for successful resolution.

Disputes should be acknowledged and addressed respectfully and confidentially, in accordance with these principles:

- Commit to resolve the issue and be willing to compromise;
- Listen to and respect every person's point of view;
- Do not involve other parties unnecessarily;
- Honor confidentiality and expect impartiality on the part of the facilitator; and
- Anticipate prompt and fair action from FMM.

Step 1: Group Meeting

1.1 A Member may file a request for group dispute resolution with the Peace Room.

1.2 When a dispute is submitted, the parties will be asked to identify and clearly detail the issue by putting it in writing. The Peace Room will acknowledge receipt of the request within two (2) weeks.

1.3 With the assistance of one or more Peace Room members, members of the relevant Operational Circle and any other impacted FMM Members, a group meeting will be scheduled to resolve the conflict. Particularly if there are no applicable community guidelines about the issue, the conflict should be evaluated by a group to obtain final resolution and to eliminate ambiguity for other FMM Members. Inclusion of the larger community recognizes that "group wisdom" is often the best way to see things objectively and fairly.

1.4 The parties will take turns objectively explaining the issue. Then the group will brainstorm on a fair and appropriate resolution, avoiding the appearance of "taking sides" with one of the involved FMM Members.

1.5 If the conflict still is not resolved due to an unwillingness to abide (or a failure to abide) the group decision, then Members may proceed to Step 2.

Step 2: Petition for Mediation

2.1 The party seeking to appeal the group decision in Step 1 will file a Petition for Mediation with the Peace Room. The date and time of the mediation will be set within two (2) weeks after the dispute is appealed.

2.2 The appeal documents should fully explain the situation. Once submitted, no more documents will be part of the mediation record unless cause exists to admit additional documents.

2.3 The involved parties will sign a Mediation Agreement to affirm that mediation is the best option to resolve the conflict. The Mediation Agreement will affirm that the mediation is a private matter and that anything said during the process will remain confidential. The agreement also will state that the parties are voluntarily entering into mediation and that the decision of the Peace Room will be final.

2.4 In the event one of the parties refuses to sign the Mediation Agreement, the matter may be escalated to the Expulsion Process addressed in Part III below.

2.5 Sample Petition documentation:

- Your name, address and contact information, and the name of the other involved FMM Member(s);
- Your FMM affiliation and other organizational affiliation, type of membership and years in the organization;
- Brief description of the situation:
  - How long has this situation been going on?
  - What steps have already been taken to try to resolve the situation?
  - Has the Clearing Process and Group Meeting taken place?
  - If in-person mediation is requested, explain why online mediation will not suffice.
  - What you would like to change or happen as a result of your appeal?
  - Explain why mediation can help to resolve the dispute;
- If mediation is best, provide permission for the Peace Room to contact the other party.

Step 3: Mediation Procedure

3.1 Five or more members of the Peace Room will be assigned to conduct the appeal of the group decision, and they will review the submitted documents in advance of the mediation session.

3.2 If the dispute involves a member of the Peace Room, she will act solely in the capacity of a party to the dispute, and she will recuse herself from voting on the outcome of the mediation.

3.3 A Lead Mediator from the Peace Room will be selected to conduct the session, and the assigned members of the Peace Room will be permitted to ask questions to clarify the cause of the conflict.

3.4 After the mediation, the assigned members of the Peace Room will caucus privately to arrive at a decision. The Peace Room will seek to arrive at a unanimous decision. However, if consensus cannot be reached, a supermajority vote of two-thirds (2/3) will determine the final decision.

3.5 After arriving at a final decision, the Peace Room will issue the decision in writing. The decision will be sent to the parties within two (2) weeks of the mediation, and the Peace Room decision will be final.

PART III: Expulsion Process

The Peace Room is responsible for monitoring and managing the FMM Expulsion Process, which will be binding on all FMM Members and used in the following instances:

- Failure to honor FMM Mediation: If a Member fails to accept mediation when requested, or if a Member fails to abide by the final decision of the Peace Room after mediation.
- Failure to honor FMM Principles: If a Member wantonly or repeatedly violates FMM standards of care, values, principles, or FMM governing documents.
- Harming or Threatening Another: If a Member intentionally harms or threatens to harm another FMM Member, commits a serious crime or some other grievous act in violation of FMM ethics, principles, or responsibilities.

NOTE: In the case of harm done or a threat posed to another FMM Member, the Peace Room may immediately expel a Member from FMM without undertaking the additional stages set forth below.

Step 1: Petition for Expulsion

1.1 To commence the expulsion process, FMM Members may file a Petition for Expulsion with the Peace Room. The petition should describe the alleged violation and name the involved Member. The petition also should include all relevant paperwork regarding the matter.

1.2 The Peace Room will meet privately to determine if there is just cause to hold an Expulsion Hearing and it will seek a unanimous decision. However, if consensus cannot be reached, a supermajority vote of two-thirds (2/3) will determine whether an Expulsion Hearing is required.

1.3 If the Peace Room concludes a hearing is warranted, a hearing will be scheduled by providing the involved Member(s) at least thirty (30) days prior written notice.

Step 2: Expulsion Hearing Procedure

2.1 Five or more members of the Peace Room will be assigned to conduct the Expulsion Hearing. The hearing will be held virtually, unless otherwise agreed to by the Peace Room. Expulsion Hearings will be closed and held in confidence, unless otherwise decided by the Peace Room.

2.3 The Member who filed the Petition will explain the reasons for seeking expulsion of another Member, and each party will have the opportunity to speak and present evidence of their claim or complaint. If further information is deemed necessary to fully understand the conflict, the Peace Room will have the right to ask the parties questions, call witnesses, and request additional relevant documentation.

2.4 After the hearing, the assigned members of the Peace Room will caucus privately to arrive at a decision. The Peace Room will seek to arrive at a unanimous decision. However, if consensus cannot be reached, a supermajority vote of two-thirds (2/3) will determine the final decision.

2.5 After arriving at the final decision, the Peace Room will issue the decision in writing. The decision will be sent to the Member within thirty (30) days of the hearing, and the Peace Room decision will be final.

2.6 If the Peace Room decides to expel a Member, he or she will be removed from all positions within FMM.