



“I love them, but...”

Constructively Addressing Values Differences & Conflict  
in Community

‘Cohousing Over Time’ Conference, August 2021



# Agenda

1:25 EST — Welcome & Introduction

Review Agenda

Background & Goals

Exercise Overview

Communication Strategies/Techniques

Exercise Roles

1:35 EST — Exercise Round 1

1:50 EST — Exercise Round 2

2:10 EST — Group Debrief/Q&A

2:25 EST — Thank you & closing

# Background & Goals

## Background

- Growth mindset
- Takes two to tango
- We're social creatures!
- Most (if not all) human actions are ways to meet a need

## Goals

- Less a set method/process and more a toolkit/set of skills that people (you!) can continue to build
- Feeling more confidence in approaching/exploring conflict as an opportunity for growth
- Having more tools in your toolkit for navigating conflict yourself *and!* supporting others in navigating conflict

# The Exercise — Overview

- Three people per round: a “Client,” a “Consultant,” and an “Observer”
  - For the rest of the group, you will be actively observing, but please keep your microphone off and the chat box quiet—let’s help our volunteers focus by holding questions and comments until the end
    - if you want to grab something to take notes, we will have time to debrief each round and more time for general commentary at the end!
- This is being recorded, and (hopefully!) viewed by a broad audience of co-housers
  - Let’s keep that in mind and be intentional and respectful in how we discuss situations and people
    - Please use an initial or alias when discussing people who aren’t present in the session (if you don’t have their consent to share so widely about them/your interactions)

# Communication Strategies/Techniques

## Process skills

- Reflecting/mirroring
- Rephrase & check for understanding
- “How” questions
- Comparison questions

## Content skills

- Focus on needs
- Focus on emotions
- Focus on identifying areas of strength, and areas where there is room to grow
  - Focus on social identities, cultural background, dynamics of privilege and power

# The Exercise — Roles

## “Client”

- This is the person who has a situation or issue— past or present— related to conflict with another person in their community, that they would like help with today

## “Consultant”

- This is someone who has agreed to help the “Client” with their problem, by listening and asking thoughtful questions
  - Your role is not to give advice! Your role is to help the “Client” explore the problem: what is important about it, what solutions have they tried or considered trying, what excites or angers or frightens them about this particular conflict, etc.

## “Observer”

- This is a person who volunteers to pay close attention to the exchange between the “Client” and the “Consultant,” and to offer feedback at the end about the *process* of their communication
  - Process means *how* the interaction went: what kinds of questions were asked, what were the emotional dynamics like, were many topics covered or were a few areas explored more deeply, etc.

# Further Reading

Cooperative Culture Handbook — Yana Ludwig & Karen Gimnig

- “Six Common Elements of Conflict Resolution” checklist
  - “Reach for compassion, not truth-seeking”

Liberating Structures

- Troika Consulting
  - <https://www.liberatingstructures.com/8-troika-consulting/>

Active Listening Activities/Games

- <https://www.goodlisteningkills.org/active-listening-games-exercises-activities/>

Your facilitator today

- Georgia Handforth (she/they)
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Thank you!!