

GVI Plan for Addressing Conflict

Intention

The following is a living document, initiated through work with Via Arts and GVI and continued by GVI. It is a co-created process, meaning the whole of folks both current, past, and future have the right to shape this process to fit GVI's current position in their journey to becoming an AntiRacist Organization. The purpose of this document is to give Green Village Initiative guidelines for approaching conflict that centers liberation. This is not a mandate, this process requires **enthusiastic consent**¹.

Collaborative Document vs. Handout: Unlike a handout this document allows everyone to add depth to the information being shared- similarly to a conversation. To ensure that everyone is heard in this document please follow the guidelines below. This document should include all GVI voices and should be created, updated, and continually refined collaboratively.

Process for Keeping this document in Use and Updated:

- We will put "conflict" as a standing agenda item for our team meetings.
 - That time can be used for folks to bring up any changes or comments that they have suggested in the document, or to bring up experiences with conflict that they want to talk about with the team.
- Please remember this is an online document and everyone is not here in real time. If something happens that you feel needs a discussion (not clarification) put a comment that says "Discuss" next to it so that we can discuss at the next Team Meeting. If it's a specific conversation that needs to be picked up from our time together put a comment capturing the root of the conversation "Discuss [this] example"

Guidelines for document:

- If you see something that you feel should be added or changed, insert a comment at that place in the document, with your suggested edit.
- Do not delete anyone else's words or comments.
- Remember that opposing or different viewpoints can be true at the same time. Hold complexity with using "both/and", "yes and...", "and also", "in my experience" instead of "but"
- Stories stay, knowledge goes. Keep personal stories confidential to the group; share knowledge that has been learned with others.
- Don't yuck someone's yums (yucking oppression is fine)
- Be curious-- Ask all the questions.
- Respect: Use appropriate pronouns & names-- ask if you aren't sure
- Little Stuff
 - Complete Sentences not necessary
 - Feel free to put links in that you think help
 - If you'd like to add media (poem, song, drawing, video, etc..) use a link versus copying it

¹ **Enthusiastic Consent** (inspired here by adrienne maree brown and Dr. Chris Donahue) is when someone willingly and excitedly consents to **any action, conversation, or emotional labor**. Seeking enthusiastic consent and giving it is a way to for us to respect and maintain one another's boundaries. **Consent can be revoked at any time!**

- Speak as you, from your point of view- there is no “right”
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Important References for This Work

Principled Struggle

Developed by N'Tanya Lee, introduced by adrienne maree brown

- We struggle for the sake of greater unity²
- Be honest and direct while holding compassion
- Take responsibility for your feelings and actions
- Seek deeper understanding first
- This may or may not be the right container for your offer
- Side conversations should serve the whole.
 - Test: Could I take this back to the whole?

GVI notes on bullet for containers/offers:

- - presentation / timing / place / not our values / might need a different place for help / might not be disagreement, but off place

GVI notes on bullet for side conversations:

- work thru conflict one-on-one could come to team / side convos, experiences, ideas - bring to team! / we all vent, and our work is stressful. If a conflict came up while we are working together, the people involved can approach the conflict and make progress, vs. venting to someone else.

***might be helpful to reword the container/offer bullet in the future so we remember what it means

Individual Responsibility

Those taking on this process agree to the following I Statements:

1. I am dedicated to my continued personal growth and dismantling my part in oppressive systems.
2. I am dedicated to productive discomfort³, to moving in and through conflict in ways that move us closer to a world free of oppression.
3. I am willing to be honest, vulnerable, and aware of my boundaries. I say “no” when I need time or space to ensure I am able to hold compassion for others and myself at the same time.

² Greater Unity is unity in our work towards liberation. Not a “false unity” where we get along and continue oppressive behaviors.

³ **Productive Discomfort** Taught in part by Justin Lang, this is the area where we are removed from a system just enough to be able to change. Productive Discomfort is when we are agreeing to be made uncomfortable so that we may shift our perspective

Via Arts Suggested Self Work Before You Address Conflict with Someone

1. What do I need?
 2. What do I want?
 3. What are my boundaries?
 4. Why am I here? (in this situation)
 5. How am I willing to participate?
 6. How am I willing to push myself?
 7. Is it the responsibility of the group/other person to give me what I need?
 - What is the power dynamic that is at play right now?
 - Am I a person of color, asking something of a white person? Vice versa?
 - Is my gender or class, impacting what I am perceiving right now?
 - Is the ask emotional labor or unpaid labor? (Or is it meeting a professional need?)
 - If it is emotional labor, is it something we need to figure out in order to do our work better, or is it creating toxicity in our work environment?
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Working Conflict Resolution Plan for GVI

This is the framework that we expect (and agree) each team member to use when addressing or approaching conflict with a colleague at GVI. The below steps should be followed as one approaches conflict resolution.

1. Acknowledging/Asking

Looks like:

- Doing Self Work (see last page for a list of questions to ask yourself)
- “Is there a problem/tension between us?”

2. Asking for participation

Looks like:

- “I’ve been having a [specifics of tension/problem/conflict] which involves you. Can you give me some time to talk about this?”
- Acknowledge their options: “You are welcome to make space for me, ask me for another time, or say no because you do not have space for emotional labor right now. I will accept any of these choices”
 - Practice and make concise so we all get it and remember these!

3. Organizational document that outlines who is comfortable with this step being either in person or via email. **Hearing the response**

- a. The person may say no; acknowledging that this may happen and accepting the responses is important. If the person says no, there should be a clear reason.
- b. Response Options
 - i. Yes, set up a time to meet in person in a neutral space. “Can we take a walk now?” “Can we have coffee next week?”
 - ii. Maybe, give a time frame when you can deliver a clear answer. “I’m not sure, I can let you know by Friday.”
 - iii. No, with an honest brief reasoning.

1. “No, this dilemma seems rooted in white supremacy and I don’t have the capacity for that emotional labor at this time.”
- c. If the person’s response falls out of this framework, remind them of the agreements that we made as a team, what the response options are, and remind that this document exists. Ask for a follow up.

4. The Conversation

- a. Begin with an affirmation of connection/relationship, starting with the person who initiated the meeting.
 - i. Looks like: “I would first like to say that I value the passion you bring to the work we do and appreciate the ways in which you are committed to leaning into your growing edge.”
- b. State the conflict in “I statements”
 - i. Looks like: “I am having a conflict around x. When x happens I feel/sense/experience y. I would like to have a deeper understanding of what’s happening for you.”
- c. Allow the person to respond, in “I statements.”
 - i. Allow time, be ok with silence while the person processes the information.
- d. Identify any repair actions that are needed or could be helpful.
 - i. Can be as simple as sharing perspectives and agreeing on mutually beneficial opportunities for progress, but may look like negotiation or mediation depending on severity of issue/s.
 - ii. If group issue/groups take sides, we may need an outside, unbiased facilitator.-This is a worst case scenario.

5. Self Reflection

- a. Reflect on the conversation and how your actions can / should change moving forward.
- b. Remember why we created this document, why we are committed to this work, and how conflict resolution relates to our antiracism work.
 - i. We are committed to a culture that promotes liberation. Hierarchy-based conflict resolution processes are rooted in oppression.

6. Team Questions

- a. Any other steps? Maybe make a point to remind everyone involved in process, we are looking for win-win solutions. Maybe discuss what that looks like? Borrowing this idea from conflict class. A simple reminder that we’re on the same team/attempting to work together for the best results can help.
- b. Do we need other clarifying info here?
- c. If after this process, either person feels like harassment, discrimination, or purposeful harm was done, the person should make a formal complaint, following GVI’s formal complaint procedure