

## 1.4 CONFLICT RESOLUTION

### Policy Goals

The Burnaby Association for Community Inclusion (BACI) encourages the people we serve, family members, members, directors, employees and members of the broader community to resolve their differences among themselves in a respectful and cordial manner. However, people are sometimes too close to an issue or too emotionally involved in a situation to accept and understand a differing point of view. Sometimes this creates anger, resentment or ill will, which can make it more challenging to find a resolution. With this in mind, the goal of this policy is to:

- Help people understand what conflict is and recognize some of its common sources;
- Guide people in avoiding conflicts;
- Encourage people in conflict to find their own amicable solutions and;
- Provide a means for resolving conflict when other means have been unsuccessful.
- Ensure, consistent with BACI's Disability Confidence Policy, that accommodations are made so that people with disabilities can access the conflict resolution process.

### Conflict and Its Sources

In the context of our Association, conflict usually is the struggle that occurs when people's needs, demands, or goals conflict with those of others. Conflict can result from (among other things) incorrect assumptions, misunderstandings and incomplete information.

### Avoiding Conflict

BACI recommends that people try to anticipate and avoid conflicts by:

- Being realistic about their own expectations, and understanding the abilities or perspectives of other people and the restrictions that may apply to some situations;
- Deciding how important a matter is and if it is really worth disputing;
- Being honest and communicating openly. People should make clear to themselves and others what they want, need, or expect.

### Resolving Conflicts Informally

BACI suggests that people first try to resolve conflicts using one or more of the following methods:

- Step back and try to be objective about the situation;
- Try to put yourself in the other person's position;
- Negotiate a compromise. Sometimes people are better off getting most or part of what they want now than spending time trying to get everything;
- Explain their position to someone they trust to give honest feedback about whether they are being reasonable and fair;
- Get someone to advocate or negotiate on their behalf if they are too close to the problem or too emotional about it.

- Get an informal mediator – someone whose judgment, objectivity, and fairness all parties trust.

### **The Formal Conflict Resolution Process**

If a conflict cannot be resolved informally, BACI has adopted a formal Conflict Resolution Process as follows:

The person seeking resolution should clearly define and put in writing if possible:

- The history and present circumstances of the dispute. (How did this conflict come about and what is the current situation);
- The factors that they think are causing the problem, and;
- How they want the dispute resolved and why it should be resolved that way.

The person should then present their concern:

- First, to the BACI Supervisor/Coordinator unless the conflict is with the Supervisor. If the conflict cannot be resolved at this level, then;
- Second, to the Manager responsible for the program in which the dispute started, unless the Manager is one of the parties in the conflict. If the conflict cannot be resolved by the Manager, then:
- Third, to the designated member of the Senior Management Team. If the conflict cannot be resolved by the Senior Manager, then:
- Fourth, to the Executive Director.
- If the Executive Director cannot solve the conflict to the party's satisfaction, a third party may be brought in to resolve and finalize the dispute.
- The decision of the Executive Director is binding.
- If a conflict arises that involves the Executive Director, or relates to major policy issues, or relates to members of the Board, then the matter will be referred to the Conflict Resolution Committee, a sub-committee of the Board of Directors.
- All conflicts involving Board members will be addressed as per the BACI Board Governance Manual.

### **Linking Policies:**

- 1.5 Conflict of Interest Policy
- 1.8 Code of Ethics
- 1.16 Disability Confidence Policy
- 1.20 Board Manual Policy
- 4.4 Performance Appraisal Policy