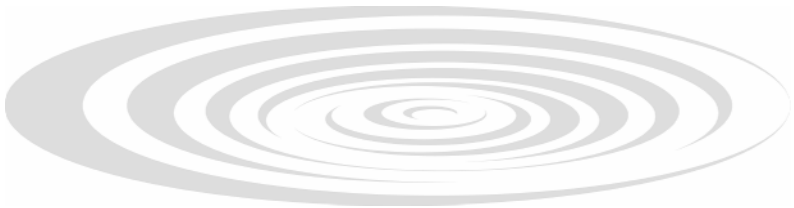


pt'chang

volunteers manual

2004



pt'chang nonviolent community safety group inc.

december 2003

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Other publications by Pt'chang:

The Community Listening Project Report, March 1999

Pt'chang Protocol and Procedures Handbook, September 2000

Legal Observer Team Report, World Economic Forum Protests, December 2000

Nonviolent Community Safety and Peacebuilding Handbook, April 2003

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welcome to pt'chang

Pt'chang Nonviolent Community Safety Group is an amazingly dynamic, independent community organisation. Our work as an organisation is underpinned and informed by the concepts of nonviolence, community development and social justice.

Pt'chang Nonviolent Community Safety Group formed out of a merging between a small safety team that had been working at ConFest since 1991 called *Pt'chang* and the *ConFest Safety Project*, which began in 1996. A larger and ongoing organisation was formed from these two projects and is now an independent, incorporated community organisation that has grown in size and scope in many ways since then.

Pt'chang currently has four major roles:

- Nonviolent Community Safety Teams at events and festivals;
- Legal Observer Teams
- Community Education and Training
- Debriefing for community and activist groups

Whilst Pt'chang does not have membership fees or forms to fill out, membership in Pt'chang is through involvement; coming along to the regular fortnightly meetings, doing a training workshop or volunteering on a Pt'chang peacekeeping project.

This manual aims to provide you with most, but certainly not all the information you will need to play an active role in Pt'chang. Hopefully it will give you a sense of how we work and how we are structured as an organisation. The *Pt'chang Protocols and Procedures Manual* and the *Pt'chang Constitution* are two other documents available that are useful to active volunteers and organisers.

Importantly, all participants in Pt'chang are valued for their input and contribution. Your involvement, energy, suggestions and ideas are appreciated and we encourage you to get involved. If you see anything that's not working or that could be improved or changed then please bring it up and let's work on it. The consensus and participatory-based structure of Pt'chang is based largely on trust, respect and individual involvement.

vision statement

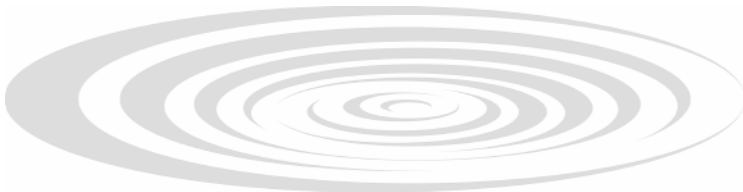
Pt'chang works toward the vision of a world free from fear and violence. We believe that everybody has a basic right to feel safe at all times and that everybody is, in their own way, responsible for creating safety within their lives and communities.

Pt'chang sees safety as pro-active - the creation of space where all people can experience and express their lives to the fullest - that it *is* possible to create safety powerfully and nonviolently.

Pt'chang sees itself as a small part of a wider movement toward restorative justice systems, toward safe, peaceful and sustainable communities and toward social systems and structures that meet human needs.

pt'chang safety themes

- we all have the right to feel safe all the time
- we are all responsible for creating safety within our lives and communities
- we can respond powerfully, effectively and nonviolently to violence within our community
- creating safety is a crucial part of building real and sustainable communities



volunteer rights

All Pt'chang Volunteers have a right...

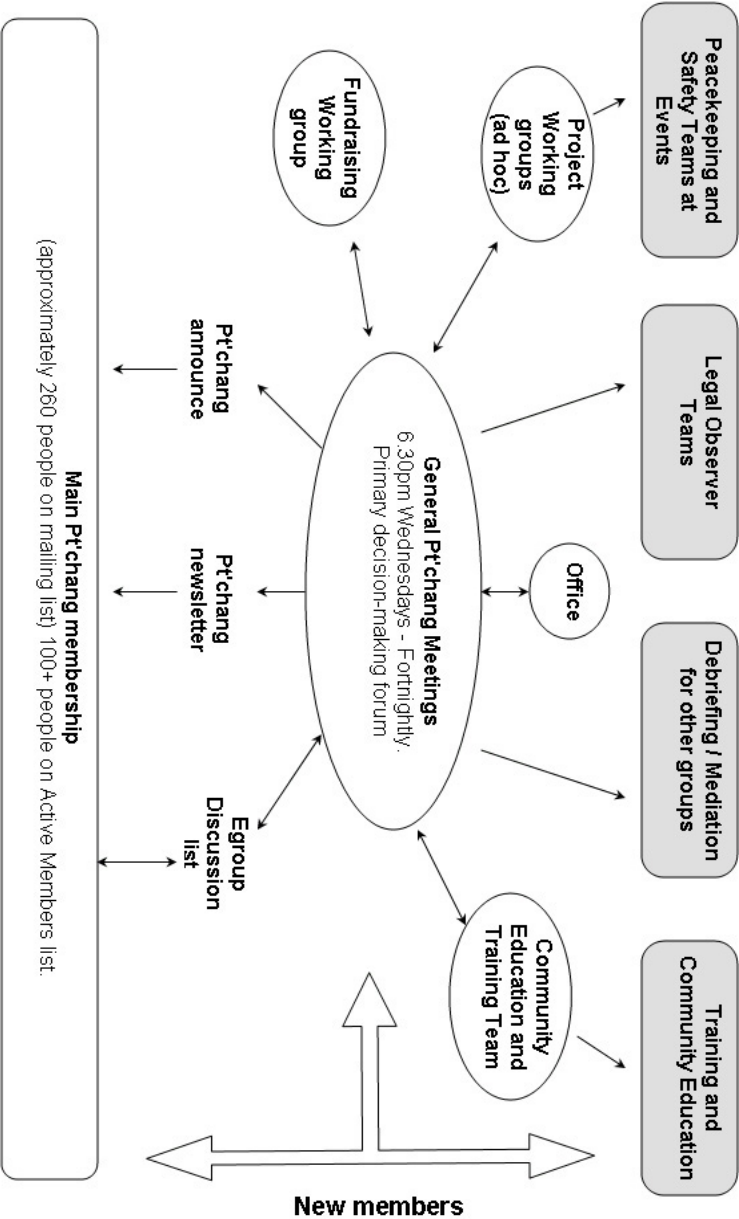
- to have an active role in the decision making processes around issues that affect them and the group as a whole;
- to be fully informed of decisions, procedures and issues that affect them and the group;
- to be a member of Pt'chang Inc. and be entitled to all the rights of membership as specified within the constitution, including attending all general and Annual General Meetings, to vote, and to have access to all the minutes;
- to receive appropriate training and briefing in all aspects of Pt'chang's work and access to further training to enhance their skills;
- to be respected, listened to, and valued within the group;
- to ensure that their own personal wellbeing is not put at risk as a result of their involvement in Pt'chang;
- to only work with someone they feel comfortable working with;
- not to be abused, harassed or verbally attacked by anyone and have the right to move away from such contact during an incident;
- to have personal information treated in confidence by the organisation, and the right not to have to disclose personal details about themselves to other people during incidents;
- to have adequate safety equipment and clothing whilst doing Pt'chang work;
- to be emotionally de-briefed at any time after an incident and to receive professional counseling if necessary;
- to receive adequate supervision and to receive empowering critical feedback;
- to refuse, question or suggest alternatives to any direction or request given by another Pt'chang member.

volunteer responsibilities

All Pt'chang Volunteers have a responsibility . . .

- to always act in a respectful, co-operative and nonviolent manner whilst doing Pt'chang work, no matter what the provocation;
- to abide by the groups standing Agreements;
- to have attended Nonviolent Peacekeeping training (twenty-four hours) before being able to take part in Pt'chang peacekeeping duties;
- to inform others if unable to fulfill a task or duty for any reason;
- to inform other volunteers within Pt'chang of any activities that they have been participating in that may affect their ability to fulfill their role;
- to be punctual and reliable;
- to always work in a pair whilst doing Pt'chang peacekeeping work or responding to an incident;
- to not act in any way that endangers or threatens the safety of Pt'chang volunteers or other people;
- to share all information openly within the group (as appropriate and whilst respecting confidentiality);
- not to disclose any unauthorized or personal information relating to other volunteers, people or the organization;
- not to use Pt'chang or Pt'chang's work for private commercial gain;
- to follow the various Pt'chang Protocols and Procedures as appropriate and to the best of their abilities;
- to inform the group or a person within the group if they intend leaving or withdrawing from Pt'chang.

pt'chang's organisational structure



volunteer positions within pt'chang

Pt'chang currently has four designated volunteer positions in order to carry out many of the basic organisational functions of the group. These positions, although voluntary, have clear position descriptions and support structures and those filling them have expenses paid and receive an honorarium of \$100 per month.

Each position only involves a few hours per week (averaged out) but require at least six to twelve months commitment. All positions are supported by and accountable to Pt'chang's general meetings. These positions are only filled when budget permits. More positions may be created as required. The people who fill these positions make a huge difference to Pt'chang's effectiveness and overall strength as an organisation.

administration coordinator

This position involves responsibility for day to day office administration, as well as correspondence, liaison, networking and outreach tasks. Sound knowledge and skills in basic (Office 2000) programs, as well as general office administration skills, are required. The position is voluntary but a honorarium is provided.

finance coordinator

The position involves responsibility for day to day accounting and bookkeeping, as well as assisting with budgeting and overall financial management of the organisation. Sound knowledge and skills in accounting programs as well as general bookkeeping skills, are required. The position is voluntary but an honorarium is provided. The position is voluntary but a honorarium is provided.

fundraising coordinator

The position involves responsibility for overseeing the annual fundraising efforts of the group, identifying philanthropic and other funding sources and generating fundraising submissions. It is an important position as Pt'chang's independence and functioning depends on a diverse and increasingly growing funding base. The position is voluntary but a honorarium is provided.

training coordinator

The position involves responsibility for the development and co-ordination of Pt'chang's annual training program and workshops offered to other groups, as well as supporting and assisting the Training team within Pt'chang. Some experience in community based training is preferred. The position is voluntary but an honorarium is provided.

public officer

A fifth volunteer position within Pt'chang does not receive a stipend and is an official position according to our rules of incorporation as an association. The Public Officer is our 'link' with corporate affairs and is responsible for overseeing and ensuring Pt'chang's records and financial statements are kept and are in order and ensuring that we have an Annual General Meeting each year. Pt'chang elects a new Public Officer each year at the AGM.

the office

Pt'chang has a small office space at 124 Napier Street in Fitzroy. The office, which we are sharing with Peace Brigades International (Victoria), is upstairs in the social change resource space behind the Fitzroy Uniting Church and is provided at a highly subsidised rate by the Uniting Church.

The office is an accessible resource space, a place to store much of Pt'chang's equipment and training materials and a workstation to run the many administration tasks it takes to maintain Pt'chang.

It is available for your use, to carry out any Pt'chang or community safety-related tasks.

We share the office with Peace Brigades International (PBI) and staff the office in conjunction with PBI staff.

the egroups

Pt'chang has an email discussion list, or egroup, called ptchang@coolist.com which is used as a forum to raise and discuss Pt'chang related issues, develop and build consensus in between the regular face to face meetings. It is also a forum for those people who cannot make it to each meeting to have input into discussions. The egroup has a policy of only allowing postings which are directly related to a Pt'chang project or a community safety issues in which Pt'chang has an interest.

Once you become more involved in Pt'chang you may want to be put on this egroup and take part in email discussions.

We also have an email announce egroup, which is called ptchangannounce@coolist.com This egroup is for anyone interested in Pt'chang and includes announcements and updates in between the Pt'chang newsletters. We try and keep postings to a maximum of one per fortnight.

training & participation policy

nonviolent community safety and peacekeeping training

All Pt'chang volunteers receive an intensive two-day or eight session (24 hours) training in basic community safety and nonviolent peacekeeping skills. A follow-up 24 hours of training called Peacekeeping Two (PK2) is available after the volunteer has gained some experience on Pt'chang projects.

The initial training draws upon and explores protective behaviour skills, nonviolent intervention skills and basic conflict resolution concepts. Components on stress management, group skills and assertive behaviour and communication are seen as integral.

Each year, Pt'chang also conducts a series of specialised, skill-development training sessions for all volunteers. These skill-development training sessions include: First Aid (workplace level 2), responding to people with mental illness, suicide intervention, responding to sexual assault, legal rights and critical incident stress debriefing. Overall, experienced Pt'chang volunteers can receive up to 90 hours of training each year.

training and participation

Although no particular training or experience is required to play an active role within Pt'chang, all volunteers are expected to have undertaken Nonviolent Peacekeeping training (approx. twenty-four hours) before working with Pt'chang in a peacekeeping role. This is to ensure safety and consistency of approach and develop a sense of safety and trust amongst all volunteers working on projects.

As a minimum requirement, the training should ensure that all volunteers have:

- a demonstrated understanding of the roles and responsibilities of nonviolent peacekeeping;
- demonstrated knowledge of basic peacekeeping skills, including active listening, nonviolent interventions, communication and conflict resolution skills;
- demonstrated understanding of the concepts of *Power-with* and *Power-over* and nonviolence and how they are applied to nonviolent peacekeeping;
- an understanding of Pt'chang philosophy, structure, agreements and decision-making processes.

The trainer(s) of each Pt'chang workshop have responsibility for ascertaining that all new trainees have achieved the learning outcomes above and other competencies.

other training

Other training that is important for all Pt'chang volunteers to have includes:

- First aid (Workplace Level 2) – 24 hours. Offered once per year for Pt'chang volunteers
- Peacekeeping two (PK2). 24 hours. This 'advanced' peacekeeping and nonviolent community safety training builds upon and continues on from the initial Peacekeeping and nonviolent community safety training. It covers defining violence and violence prevention approaches, more advanced roleplays and exercises, peacebuilding and community safety case studies, project development and team co-ordination and more skills.
- Alcohol and other drug training. Offered once per year for Pt'chang volunteers
- Responding to sexual assault training. Offered once per year for Pt'chang volunteers
- Conflict resolution training. Offered once per year for Pt'chang volunteers
- Consensus decision-making and group facilitation skills training.

Trainings such as those listed here are available at subsidised prices for all volunteers. These may be offered internally or via other organisations or outside trainers.

briefing and skill-sharing

Briefing and skill-sharing by experienced volunteers is seen as an important aspect of further training within Pt'chang.

All Pt'chang volunteers should be fully briefed by an experienced worker about Pt'chang Protocols and Procedures before undertaking new tasks or going on a roster.

New Pt'chang volunteers should work with an experienced volunteer in a pair for the first three shifts in order to continue briefing and familiarization.

the community education and training team

Pt'chang has an active Community Education and Training Team which meets and works separately to the main Pt'chang group. The Training Team is responsible for co-ordinating and running Pt'chang's annual training program, community education workshops and also organising and running trainings for other groups.

The Training Team has its own egroup discussion list and often meets on alternate Wednesday evenings at the Pt'chang office. The address of this egroup is: ptchangtraining@coollist.com

If you are particularly interested in the training aspect of Pt'chang's work then talk with the Training Co-ordinator to get involved in the Training Team.

pt'chang meetings

Pt'chang has regular fortnightly meetings at the office space. These fortnightly meetings are the primary decision-making forum for Pt'chang. It acts as sort of a voluntary management committee, making decisions on policy, direction, budgets, responding to requests and making sure Pt'chang is functioning and running well. All Pt'chang members are welcome to these meetings and they are a good way to get involved in the group.

Meetings start at 6.30pm each Wednesday fortnight. The first half-hour is for arriving, chatting, catching up and getting ready for the formal part of the night, which starts at 7.00pm.

All Pt'chang meetings tend to have the same basic agenda structure which has worked well over time.

Each meeting tends to look something like this:

- 7.00 **Catch-up or sharing** – letting everyone know how you are – how your day was – how tired you are – anything you want to say really.
- 7.15 **Choosing facilitator and minute-taker**
- 7.20 **Agenda setting** – and review of previous minutes.
- 7.25 **Reports and announcements** – any reports of Pt'chang activities since the last meeting or any announcements of things coming up that may be of interest to Pt'chang.
- 7.35 **Main agenda items** –

 These can be long or short discussion items that need a decision from the meeting. These items may be allocated a time limit if the meeting is busy. See the next session about how each decision is made.
- 9.30 **Evaluation** –

 Each person in the group makes some comments about how the meeting was and what could have been improved.

consensus decision making

Consensus is a nonviolent decision-making process that aims to create the best possible decision for the *group*. Pt'chang has used consensus for many years and found it a fast and effective way of coming to agreement. The input and ideas of all participants are gathered and synthesized to arrive at a final decision that is acceptable to all. The final decision is often not the first preference of each individual in the group, but it is a decision to which all consent because it is what is best for the group at the time. Through consensus, we are not only working to achieve better solutions, but also to promote the growth of trust and respect within the group.

In essence, consensus is a qualitative, rather than quantitative, method of decision-making. With consensus people can and should work through differences and reach a mutually satisfactory position. It is possible for one person's insights or strongly held beliefs to sway the whole group. No ideas are lost, each member's input is valued as part of the solution.

how consensus decision-making works

Reaching consensus does not assume that everyone must be in complete agreement, (a highly unlikely situation in a group of intelligent, creative individuals). Consensus is not unanimity but the reaching of a decision to which the group consents in order for the group to act.

Consensus does not mean that everyone thinks that the decision made is necessarily the best one possible, or even that they are sure it will work. What it does mean is that in coming to that decision, no one felt that her/his position on the matter was misunderstood or that it wasn't given a proper hearing. Hopefully, everyone will think it is the best decision *possible at the time*; this often happens because, when it works, collective intelligence often comes up with better solutions than could individuals.

Consensus sometimes takes more time and skill, but utilises lots of resources before a decision is made, creates commitment to the decision and often facilitates a unique and creative decision. It gives everyone some experience with new processes of interaction and conflict resolution, which is basic but important skill-building.

For consensus to be a positive experience, it is best if the group has:

- 1) common values;

- 2) some skill in group process and conflict resolution, or a commitment to let these be facilitated;
- 3) commitment and responsibility to the group by its members; and
- 4) sufficient time for everyone to participate in the process.

forming a consensus proposal

During a discussion a proposal for resolution is put forward. It is amended and modified through more discussion, or withdrawn if it seems to be a dead end. During this discussion period it is important to articulate differences clearly. It is the responsibility of those who are having trouble with a proposal to put forth alternative suggestions.

The fundamental right of consensus is for all people to be able to express themselves in their own words and of their own will. The fundamental responsibility of consensus is to assure others of their right to speak and be heard. Coercion and trade-offs are replaced with creative alternatives, and compromise with synthesis.

When a proposal seems to be well understood by everyone, and there are no new changes asked for, the facilitator(s) can ask *if there are any objections* to it. If there are no objections, there can be a call for consensus. If there are still no objections, then after a moment of silence you have your decision. Once consensus does appear to have been reached, it really helps to have someone repeat the decision to the group so everyone is clear on what has been decided.

difficulties in reaching consensus

If a decision has been reached, or is on the verge of being reached that you cannot support, there are several ways to express your objections:

Non-support ("I don't see the need for this, but I'll go along.")

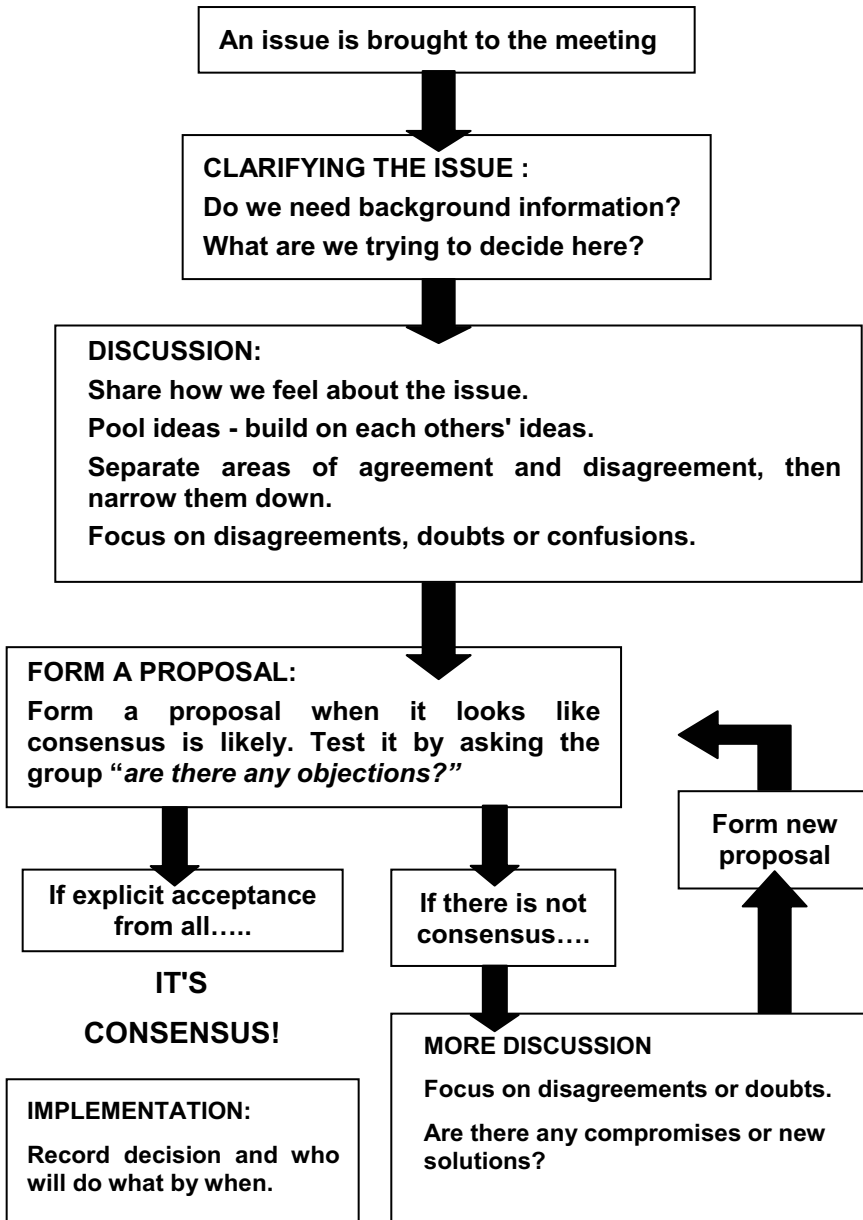
Reservations ("I think this may be a mistake but I can live with it.")

Standing aside ("I personally can't do this, but I won't stop others from doing it.")

Blocking ("I cannot support this or allow the group to support this.")

If a final decision violates someone's fundamental moral or ethical values they are obligated to block consensus. (*Continued on page 19 below*)

the consensus process



Obviously, if many people express non-support or reservations or stand aside or leave the group, it may not be a viable decision even if no one directly blocks it. This is what is known as a "lukewarm" consensus. The more important the decision, the more important it is to have a strong level of consensus.

If consensus is blocked and no new consensus can be reached, the group stays with whatever the previous decision was on the subject, or does nothing if that is applicable. Major philosophical or moral questions that will come up will have to be worked through as soon as possible.

roles in a consensus meeting

There are several roles which, if filled, can help consensus decision-making run smoothly.

The *facilitator* aids the group in defining decisions that need to be made, helps them through the stages of reaching an agreement, keeps the meeting moving, focuses discussion to the point at hand, makes sure everyone has the opportunity to participate, and formulates and tests to see if consensus has been reached.

Facilitators help to direct the process of the meeting, not its content. They never make decisions for the group. If a facilitator feels too emotionally involved in an issue or discussion and cannot remain neutral in behaviour, if not in attitude, then s/he should ask someone to take over the task of facilitation for that agenda item.

A *minute-taker* can take notes on the meeting, especially of decisions made and means of implementation and a *time-keeper* keeps things going on schedule so that each agenda item can be covered in the time allotted for it (if discussion runs over the time for an item, the group may or may not decide to contract for more time to finish up).

Even though individuals take on these roles, all participants in a meeting should be aware of and involved in the issues, process, and feelings of the group, and should share their individual expertise in helping the group run smoothly and reach a decision.

Pt'chang is committed to creating an empowering and safe decision-making environment and challenging those behaviours that exclude or dominate others.

Here are some specific ways we can be responsible to others and ourselves in groups:

Not interrupting people who are speaking. We can even leave space after each speaker, counting to five before speaking.

Becoming a good listener. Good listening is as important as good speaking. It's important not to withdraw when not speaking; good listening is active participation.

Getting and giving support. We can help each other be aware of and interrupt patterns of domination, as well as affirm each other as we move away from those ways. It is important that men support and challenge each other, rather than asking women to do so. This will also allow women more space to break out of their own conditioned role of looking after men's needs while ignoring their own.

Not giving answers and solutions. We can give our opinions in a manner which says we believe our ideas to be valuable, but no more important than others' ideas.

Relaxing. The group will do fine without our anxiety attacks.

Not speaking on every subject. We need not share every idea we have, at least not with the whole group.

Not putting others down. We need to check ourselves when we're about to subtly attack or 'one-up' another. We can ask ourselves, 'Why am I doing this? What am I feeling? What do I need?'

pt'chang's formal consensus policy:

- 1) Pt'chang has a quorum of four people. If quorum cannot be reached at a regular meeting, discussions can take place and recommendations can be made to the next regular meeting for ratification. No new decisions can be made or enacted without the quorum.
- 2) Once a decision has been adopted by consensus, it cannot be changed without reaching a new consensus. If a new consensus cannot be reached, the old decision stands.
- 3) All content decisions (e.g., the agenda items, proposals, reports etc.) are adopted by consensus after discussion. Every content decision must be openly discussed before it can be tested for consensus.
- 4) A concern must be based upon the principles or purpose of the group to justify a block to consensus.
- 5) Permanent and ad-hoc Working Groups formed by Pt'chang can make consensus decisions within their mandate and with a quorum of four people. Each Working Group must report back to the regular meetings on a monthly basis.
- 6) Every Pt'chang meeting must have an evaluation.
- 7) In the event of an emergency or executive decision needing to be made between regular meetings, at least four other Pt'chang members (including at least one of the Co-ordinators) should be consulted. If consensus amongst those four people cannot be reached then no decision can be made. All executive or emergency decisions are to be reviewed at the next Pt'chang general meeting for ratification or reversal.
- 8) The egrouop discussion lists are to be used for the discussion of issues, and the building of consensus, but decisions must be made at the regular face to face meetings.

on conflict and consensus

Conflict is usually viewed as an impediment to reaching agreements and disruptive to peaceful relationships. However, it is the underlying thesis of Consensus that nonviolent conflict is necessary and desirable. It provides the *motivations* for improvement. The challenge is the creation of an understanding in all who participate in that conflict, or differing opinions about proposals, is to be expected and acceptable. Do not avoid or repress conflict. Create an environment in which disagreement can be expressed without fear. Objections and criticisms can be heard not as attacks, not as attempts to defeat a proposal, but as a concern which, when resolved, will make the proposal stronger.

This understanding of conflict may not be easily accepted by the members of a group. Our training by society undermines this concept. Therefore, it will not be easy to create the kind of environment where differences can be expressed without fear or resentment. But it can be done. It will require tolerance and a willingness to experiment. Additionally, the values and principles which form the basis of commitment to work together to resolve conflict need to be clearly defined, and accepted by all involved.

The following are principles which form the foundation of consensus decision-making. A commitment to these principles and/or a willingness to develop them is necessary for consensus to work well.

foundation upon which consensus is built

For consensus to work well, the process must be conducted in an environment which promotes trust, respect, safety and skill sharing. The following are principles which, when valued and respected, encourage and build consensus.

trust

Foremost is the need for trust. Without some amount of trust, there will be no cooperation or nonviolent resolution to conflict. For trust to flourish, it is desirable for individuals to be willing to examine their attitudes and be open to new ideas. Acknowledgement and appreciation of personal and cultural differences promote trust. Neither approval nor friendship are necessary for a good working relationship. By developing trust, the process of consensus encourages the intellectual and emotional development of the individuals within a group.

respect

It is everyone's responsibility to show respect to one another. People feel respected when everyone listens, when they are not interrupted, when their ideas are taken seriously. Respect for emotional as well as logical concerns promotes the kind of environment necessary for developing consensus. To promote respect, it is important to distinguish between an action which causes a problem and the person who did the action, between the deed and the doer. We must criticise the act, not the person. Even if you think the person *is* the problem, responding that way never resolves anything.

unity of purpose

Unity of purpose is a basic understanding about the goals and purpose of the group. Of course, there will be varying opinions on the best way to accomplish these goals. However, there must be a unifying base, a common starting point, which is recognized and accepted by all.

nonviolence

Nonviolent decision makers use their power to achieve goals while respecting differences and cooperating with others. In this environment, it is considered violent to use power to dominate or control the group process. It is understood that the power of revealing your truth is the maximum force allowed to persuade others to your point of view.

self empowerment

It is easy for people to unquestioningly rely on authorities and experts to do their thinking and decision-making for them. If members of a group delegate their authority, intentionally or not, they fail to accept responsibility for the group's decisions. Consensus promotes and depends upon self-empowerment. Anyone can express concerns. Everyone seeks creative solutions and is responsible for every decision. When all are encouraged to participate, the democratic nature of the process increases.

cooperation

Unfortunately, Western society is saturated in competition. When winning arguments becomes more important than achieving the group's goals, cooperation is difficult, if not impossible. Adversarial attitudes toward proposals or people focus attention on weakness rather than strength. An attitude of helpfulness and support builds cooperation. Cooperation is a shared responsibility in finding solutions to all

concerns. Ideas offered in the spirit of cooperation help resolve conflict. The best decisions arise through an open and creative interplay of ideas.

conflict resolution

The free flow of ideas, even among friends, inevitably leads to conflict. In this context, conflict is simply the expression of disagreement. Disagreement itself is neither good nor bad. Diverse viewpoints bring into focus and explore the strengths and weaknesses of attitudes, assumptions, and plans. Without conflict, one is less likely to think about and evaluate one's views and prejudices. There is no *right* decision, only the best one for the whole group. The task is to work together to discover which choice is most acceptable to all members.

Avoid blaming anyone for conflict. Blame is inherently violent. It attacks dignity and empowerment. It encourages people to feel guilty, defensive, and alienated. The group will lose its ability to resolve conflict. People will hide their true feelings to avoid being blamed for the conflict.

Avoidance of conflicting ideas impedes resolution for failure to explore and develop the feelings that gave rise to the conflict. The presence of conflict can create an occasion for growth. Learn to use it as a catalyst for discovering creative resolutions and for developing a better understanding of each other. With patience, anyone can learn to resolve conflict creatively, without defensiveness or guilt. Groups can learn to nurture and support their members in this effort by allowing creativity and experimentation. This process necessitates that the group continually evaluate and improve these skills.

commitment to the group

In joining a group, one accepts a personal responsibility to behave with respect, good will, and honesty. Each one is expected to recognize that the group's needs have a certain priority over the desires of the individual. Many people participate in group work in a very egocentric way. It is important to accept the shared responsibility for helping to find solutions to other's concerns.

active participation

We all have an inalienable right to express our own best thoughts. We decide for ourselves what is right and wrong. Since consensus is a process of synthesis, not competition, all sincere comments are important and valuable. If ideas are put forth as the speaker's property and individuals are strongly attached to their opinions, consensus will be extremely difficult. Stubbornness, closed mindedness, and

possessiveness lead to defensive and argumentative behaviour that disrupts the process. For active participation to occur, it is necessary to promote trust by creating an atmosphere in which every contribution is considered valuable. With encouragement, each person can develop knowledge and experience, a sense of responsibility and competency, and the ability to participate.

equal access to power

Because of personal differences (experience, assertiveness, social conditioning, access to information, etc.) and political disparities, some people inevitably have more effective power than others. To balance this inequity, everyone needs to consciously attempt to creatively share power, skills, and information. Avoid hierarchical structures that allow some individuals to assume undemocratic power over others. Egalitarian and accountable structures promote universal access to power.

patience

Consensus cannot be rushed. Often, it functions smoothly, producing effective, stable results. Sometimes, when difficult situations arise, consensus requires more time to allow for the creative interplay of ideas. During these times, patience is more advantageous than tense, urgent, or aggressive behaviour. Consensus is possible as long as each individual acts patiently and respectfully.

impediments to consensus

lack of training

Until consensus is a common form of decision-making in our society, new members will need some way of learning about the process. Pt'chang hopes to offer regular opportunities for training to allow full participation. Also, training provides opportunities for people to improve their skills, particularly facilitation skills, in a setting where experimentation and role-plays can occur.

external hierarchical structures

It can be difficult for a group to reach consensus internally when it is part of a larger group which does not recognise or participate in the consensus process. It can be extremely frustrating if those external to the group can disrupt the decision-making by interfering with the process by pulling rank. Therefore, it is desirable for individuals and

groups to recognize that they can be autonomous in relation to external power if they are willing to take responsibility for their actions.

social prejudice

Everyone has been exposed to biases, assumptions, and prejudices which interfere with the spirit of cooperation and equal participation. All people are influenced by these attitudes, even though they may deplore them. People are not generally encouraged to confront these prejudices in themselves or others. Members of a group often reflect social biases without realising or attempting to confront and change them. If the group views a prejudicial attitude as just one individual's problem, then the group will not address the underlying social attitudes which create such problems.

It is appropriate to expose, confront, acknowledge, and attempt to resolve socially prejudicial attitudes, but only in the spirit of mutual respect and trust. Members are responsible for acknowledging when their attitudes are influenced by disruptive social training and for changing them. When a supportive atmosphere for recognising and changing undesirable attitudes exists, the group as a whole benefits.

confidentiality

The community must be confident that Pt'chang volunteers will treat all personal information with the utmost confidentiality.

Personal information divulged to Pt'chang may be discussed only within the group and in the context of debriefing, report-writing and evaluation and may not be shown or divulged to other individuals or organisations.

In the case of information or Pt'chang volunteers being subpoenaed, Pt'chang will seek legal advice regarding the particular incident and attempt to obtain the consent and ensure the rights of all involved. (Currently there are legislative differences across States and Territories in relation to the use of counselling files as evidence in court.)

Confidentiality is also important at regular Pt'chang meetings in which personal and sensitive information may be discussed. Care must be taken not to repeat or transmit confidential information to other parties after it has been discussed at a Pt'chang meeting. This includes in email and in minutes or other reports.

roles on a safety team project

1) project co-ordinator

Responsible for overall planning, recruitment and logistical co-ordination of Pt'chang's involvement with the event. The Project Co-ordinator is responsible for the project budget which is designated by the meeting. For larger projects the co-ordinator may also be part of a working group.

Responsibilities of a Project Coordinator:

- liaison with the event organisers and other parties;
- a ring-around for Pt'chang volunteers;
- planning for transport, food;
- purchases or acquires any equipment, radios that may be required;
- the volunteer roster is prepared;
- all volunteers are reimbursed;
- a team debriefing after the event;
- a team narrative report after the event and any other follow-up required.

Requirements of a Project Coordinator:

- 24 hours / 2 days Nonviolent Peacekeeping training;
- working knowledge of Pt'chang protocols and procedures;
- working knowledge of Pt'chang's organisational structure, philosophy, aims and objectives, and mission;
- experience on at least 2 Pt'chang peacekeeping projects;
- ability to consult, build consensus, mediate and communicate well.

2) on-site co-coordinator:

Coordinates the volunteer roster, assists Comms Operator with deployment of peacekeeping patrols and response to incidents. On-site liaison and consultation with organisers and other groups, facilitates incident reports, radio log, equipment log, facilitates or conducts the briefing and de-briefing of all Pt'chang volunteers.

Requirements of an On-site Coordinator:

- 24 hours / 2 days Nonviolent Peacekeeping training;
- working knowledge of Pt'chang protocols and procedures;
- working knowledge of Pt'chang's organisational structure, philosophy, aims and objectives, and mission;
- experience on at least 2 Pt'chang peacekeeping projects;
- ability to consult, build consensus, mediate and communicate well.

3) comms operator:

Operates main base radio for the Pt'chang radio network. Works with the Coordinator and Patrols to co-ordinate movements and responses to incidents. Facilitates the smooth running of the radio communications network.

Requirements of a Comms Operator:

- 24 hours / 2 days Nonviolent Peacekeeping training;
- working knowledge of Pt'chang protocols and procedures;
- experience on at least 1 Pt'chang peacekeeping project.

4) peacekeeping patrol / response:

Requirements of Peacekeeping Patrol:

- 24 hours / 2 days Nonviolent Peacekeeping training
- working knowledge of Pt'chang protocols and procedures

5) purple collective:

Responds to incidents of sexual assault, child abuse, family violence or personal crisis. Provide initial support and referral to appropriate services.

Requirements of Purple Collective:

- Experience working in the family violence, sexual assault field; and/or
- Experience and/or training in crisis counselling;
- Working knowledge of Pt'chang's protocols and procedures;
- Knowledge of suitable local referral options or how to find them.

6) support person:

Supports other team members in a variety of ways. Provides assistance to the Co-ordinator or the Comms Operator. Could also be responsible for the kitchen area, food preparation, transport or patrol equipment on-site. No prior knowledge or experience required

internal conflict resolution procedure

awareness and preparation phase

- This can take some time. People need to go into the conflict resolution session ready to tackle the issues, and well reassured about the fairness of the process.
- All parties need to accept there is a conflict, even if they do not 'feel personally affected'.
- All parties need to agree to deal with conflict using the conflict resolution process.
- Who should be there? Rule of thumb being: all those involved in the conflict should be involved in the resolution.
- Do we need a facilitator or can we do it alone? If we need one, should it be an outsider or is there someone suitable within Pt'chang? All must agree on the facilitator. An outside facilitator is strongly recommended for any group conflict.
- A suitable time and place is made for the conflict resolution session. This needs to be private, neutral and free from interruptions. Starting and ending times need to be clear.
- For conflicts between two individuals or in which one person is isolated, it is recommended that a support person or 'ally' be designated to each person, to provide emotional support during the conflict resolution process. The support person's role is not to enter into, or be involved in the processes, but simply to listen and 'be there' for the person.
- Dealing with feelings - it may be appropriate to suggest that people consider finding a way to deal with strong feelings in a safe and independent way before the conflict resolution session.

the conflict resolution session

one to one without a facilitator

When conflicts are not major and are responded to in time, the process can be quite informal whilst still using the basic structure and the primary skills of assertive language and reflective listening.

- **Each takes a turn to speak** - this can be an agreed upon length of time to ensure fairness if this seems best. People speak of their view of the conflict, their feelings and needs and the effect on them - NOT SOLUTIONS.
- **The other party reflectively listens** - the speaker should be reflectively listened to until they FEEL HEARD.
- **Ownership and responses** - each person has a turn to own their part in the dispute and to respond to criticisms made. It may be necessary to have 2 or 3 turns at this until all criticisms and feelings have been heard or apologies given.
- **Working out solutions** - this needs to be a collaborative effort where clear solutions of mutual benefit are worked out.
- **Follow Up** - it is important to make a time to follow up and see how the solutions are working out. This can be as informal as a cup of coffee together but needs a definite time to prevent avoidance!
- **Evaluation** - this can simply be answering the question of how did we go and how do we feel now? It is, however, an essential step in the process.
- **Affirmations** - it is good to finish with some positive comments about each other if this seems appropriate.
- **Congratulations and Celebration!** - it is important to congratulate ourselves when we have reached the end of the process. Maybe a meal together is in order?

for more complex conflicts

When conflicts are more complex a more structured approach is needed and a facilitator is required

setting the scene

Facilitator/s should:-

- Introduce themselves
- Get clear acceptance for their facilitation
- Check that all agree to be there & that all significant people are there
- Outline the process, see that everyone understands it, and get the parties agreement to use it

- Reflective listening and 'I' statement reminder - people need to be reminded in some way of these essential techniques to help encourage clear communication during the session

the negotiation phase

- Make behavioural agreements, For example:
 - Clear ending time
 - No personal put-downs
 - All staying to the end
 - No interruptions
 - Break Times
- Tune - in - eg; a pause of silence for everyone to gather thoughts and centre themselves in the present.
- Timed turns to talk - each person has equal time (unless otherwise agreed) to speak of: their view of the problem / their feelings / their needs / what they are prepared to own in the conflict. NOT SOLUTIONS!

***Note:** Flexibility is needed here - it may take several turns or some people may need extra time. This must be negotiated with the group.*

- Others listen and reflect back what the speaker is saying without answering back - until the speaker states that they feel heard.
- After each speaker has heard, record (on large paper for all to see) the major issues that they have raised.

the negotiation phase (continued)

- **Ownership and apology** - after people have heard everyone's views, feelings, needs and contributions to the conflict it is useful to ask people again to own their parts in the conflict and to make any apologies that are required. This is especially important when criticisms have been made to particular people. What part of this criticism are they prepared to own and apologise for?
- **Group discussion of major issues** - after all views, feelings, needs have been heard and people's parts in the conflict acknowledged, link and group all issues into two or three major issues which can be re-named and recorded separately.

- **Prioritise** quickly and then take each issue separately.
- **Brainstorm possible solutions.** Expand range of possible outcomes, encourage wild ideas and exploration of all possibilities. Broaden people's perspectives of the available choices.
- **Discussion of solutions** - attempt to merge or build upon ideas, leading to a choosing of solutions - Ask people to ask themselves 'What is the best for US? not 'What do I want?'.
• **Implement chosen solution** - What, when, how, who, - write all of this down.
- **Repeat process** for other 'issues' or make another time to discuss them later.
- **Make a definite time for follow up** to see how the resolutions have gone.
- **Affirmations** - affirm people and the group as often as possible and appropriate, and encourage people to affirm each other.

evaluation of session.

- **Celebration!** - make every attempt to celebrate the outcome.

With thanks to Glen Ochre for the development of this Conflict Resolution Procedure

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