

TENSION REVELATION PROTOCOLS & PROCESSES

Tension Revelation is a complementary approach to traditional Conflict Resolution protocols. A holistic perspective is that tension is natural within teams, as humans have many needs and perspectives to consider. Working with others may bring many personal & interpersonal dynamics to the surface. If not appropriately navigated, tension can lead to conflict which can demoralize a group and limit cohesion & success.

As a practice, Tension Revelation not only strives to resolve conflict, but provides opportunities for learning and revealing the greater gifts of tension. By thoughtfully engaging interpersonal challenges, a path opens to reveal what wisdom is lying within tension.

SUGGESTED COMPLIMENTARY PROCESSES and PRACTICE FOR MINIMIZING TENSION

These processes are encouraged at the formative stage of a new project or group. These can also be good for group's in a re-design or transition phase or for group's who are experiencing tension and haven't implemented these key foundations for healthy teaming or collaboration.

- *Facilitate a BluePrint of We Process for team or community members to get to know each other's "operating system"- [BluePrint of We Process Example](#)*
- *Craft a shared Culture Map to express the ethical foundations of a team or community.*
- *Facilitate Alignment Process to allow each member to explore their aligned participation in culture and activities of a project, community, or group*
- *For collaborative projects or activities- determine appropriate membranes in the Levels of Engagement- including scope, functions, roles, responsibilities, authorities, benefits, etc. Also identify Transitions (how people change participation), Exits (how people end participation)*
- *Design cooperative governance models & clear decision making levels & processes*
- *Adopt social protocols & communication tools for healthy teaming and community processes*
- *For projects or organizations- determine systems & metrics for tracking accountabilities, deliverables, KPI's, incentives*
- *For Communities- determine goals, tracking and recognition systems for contributions*
- *Conduct rhythmic personal and team or community (peer-to-peer) reviews & feedback processes and host team/ community building sessions to strengthen regular connection, reflection, and growth*

SHARED UNDERSTANDINGS

- Tension is natural within communities or teams as humans have many needs and perspectives to consider and working with others brings many personal things to the surface
- If not appropriately navigated, tension can lead to conflict which can demoralize a group and limit cohesion & success.
- We acknowledge that we are each responsible for our experience and that we are inter-connected with others through our shared experience. Each word, thought and action is an agreement made between ourselves, ourselves and life, ourselves and each other. We hold ourselves accountable for our experience and are considerate of others in our choices.
- As a practice, Tension Revelation not only strives to resolve conflict, but provides opportunities for learning and revealing the greater gifts of tension. By thoughtfully engaging interpersonal challenges, a path opens to reveal what wisdom is lying within tension.
- All team members understand and agree that trust is required for effective teaming and operations. We value clear agreements and commit to abiding by the those agreements, ensuring that we are working together with mutuality and clarity
- Through the Alignment Process, each member is actively placed in, internally chooses, and is appropriately considered for the roles and responsibilities they hold. In addition, proper pathways exist for people to step into their highest gift, to work in ways that are supportive of capacity, to honor their interests and nourish passion, and to be personally accountable and flexible when we realize that we are either unhappy or not fully capable of fulfilling a role. Alignment is rhythmically reconsidered in order to ensure ongoing team coherence and uplift our personal experience.
- Through a rhythmic peer-to-peer review pattern and regular team check in's there are opportunities to express feedback, reflection, needs and requests. This encourages growth, helps identify upcoming goals, provides an opportunity to voice and move through challenges and to consider re-assessment of a role if desired.
- All parties within our group agree to participate in tension revelation protocols to work through any tension in order to shift into new understanding and empowerment

PERSONAL BEST PRACTICES

- **Look inward:** Ask questions such as- Can I find the source of my tension? What patterns or behaviors can I identify that tend to trigger me? What are the current conditions that make me thrive? What are the current conditions that constrain me? Where can I take responsibility for this tension and what would be an empowered approach to resolving this tension.
- **Know personal triggers:** Take responsibility for owning emotions and feelings. As appropriate, be willing to reveal these vulnerabilities to the team as an aspect of building trust and taking ownership of one's experience. Be willing to grow. Realize that change can only come from within. Consider right placement or right participation in situations that continue to trigger tension and self select appropriate participation.
- **Utilize self soothing practices:** We each have ways to address our personal stress response before getting to the "boiling point". We agree to tend to our own needs as appropriate in order to operate from coherence
- **Respond instead of React:** When triggered, we agree to slow down, engage our practices and come back to a situation when appropriate so that parties can respond instead of react to a trigger. Remember to use our hearts to guide the conversation. Distinguish between facts, thoughts, feelings, needs, and requests and recognize all have their place and are helpful to share in a heart-centered context
- **Be empowered to ask for personal needs:** Clearly ask for our needs to be met, creating the conditions to feel supported, understood, and respected. Remember that while others may not always be able to accommodate our needs, sometimes there are compromises that can be arranged and tension can be mitigated by feeling heard or allowing feelings to be expressed. If someone can't meet our personal needs, we recognize that we can always make a new choice and release responsibility of another to resolve our personal need.
- **Be direct and utilize compassionate communication techniques:** We agree to clear tension as soon as possible and to clear it directly with someone when possible in order to come from a response-able place. We agree to use NVC principles, participate in mediation processes and to create containers for safe and respectful communication.
- **Be a good listener:** We agree to practice "Active Listening" techniques we can slow down the nervous system and create a safe space to share and to hear another. Endeavor to remain open to a change of heart or new perspective and authentically aim to understand another's need or feelings.
- **Ask for mediation or support when necessary:** Sometimes we are just not able to effectively communicate with another. When needed, we agree to utilize the H/R department's facilitation services to address an issue. With a mediator as a point-person, we agree to (re)approach the person(s) who the tension is with and ask if they are willing to communicate with the intention of resolution, collective empowerment and to move the situation forward. We agree to follow the facilitation

of the mediator and that the purpose of the group or mediator is primarily for holding the space of supportive witness, and accountability

- **Allow for spaciousness if mediation is not effective:** We agree to take a break from the situation to see if time can allow for understanding or a shift in perspective. Ask the team / group that forms the immediate container in which the conflict is occurring to support the communication with the intentions of resolution and collective empowerment. Remembering that all parties are playing for the same team and to do our best to shift our own experience towards resolution and collective empowerment, even if the other person is still holding on to the tension. We agree to revisit the situation when both parties consent and to ask for mediation support to finish the facilitation of the tension revelation process
- **Create new agreements based on new understanding:** Once we have effectively shifted tension, we acknowledge the lessons from the tension, and agree to create new protocols or adaptations in teaming in order to address underlying cause or pattern of tension and to create new pathways for resonance and cooperation
- **Sometimes tension brings individuals to an impasse:** We acknowledge that cross-roads moments are natural in the evolution of any Organization. We agree to stay committed finding a way through challenges and acknowledge when it is time to move on. We trust the process and know that sometimes there is a reason for things to change. We agree to participate in the group's Transition and Exit processes. We recognize there are important lessons that can lead to wisdom for future endeavors and commit to leaving the group on respectful terms

GROUP PROTOCOLS

We agree to:

- **Recognize tension and challenges as dynamic edges** in order to find more clarity, to deepen relationships, to clear false beliefs or expectations, or to redefine something that is no longer serving individuals or the group's needs
- **Take responsibility for our experience and our feelings** and work towards respectful expression of our tension, needs, or feelings
- **Acknowledge our inherent interconnectedness and impact** on each other and strive towards personal and collective Alignment.
- **Create clear agreements before tension arises-** outline deliverables, accountabilities, and agreements in order to have transparent and mutual understandings of participation and accountability and agency within the group.
- **Familiarize ourselves with and actively participate in group culture,** informative documents, processes and tools in order to effectively participate within the culture.

- **Participate in on-going review and feedback** processes along with team building sessions in order to nurture group Alignment.
- **Hold ourselves accountable** to agreements and to participate in practices to strengthen the foundation of our team coherence and accountability.
- **Utilize these guidelines**, protocols and best practices to effectively address tensions as they arise and find resolution and insight from conflicts rather than avoid or inflate conflict.
- **Engage tension** with the goal of revealing the gift or insight for all parties. However, if a genuine effort has been given and this is not feasible due to time constraints or other limitations, then a workable interim **resolution** where all parties feel clear, centered, ready and able to focus on the immediate needs of the vision will suffice until a time when communication may continue uninterrupted or until time allows for a different perspective to emerge. Trusting the wisdom of the group and the right timing for healing or understanding to emerge.
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Personal Best Practices- when Tension arises we agree to:

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