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# Consensus Building and Large Group Conflict

Is this for me?

We help communities, multiple parties or groups who are struggling with:

- conflict
  - major decisions
  - public policies
  - understanding important issues together
- Your Next Step

Contact Us for a free consultation or to learn more

Some conflicts or disagreements are much larger than a few issues -- or involve more than a few individuals. While discussion or negotiation in these instances may seem daunting or impossible to manage, there are specific methods that MFR can use to bring clarity or resolution. MFR offers several processes and can work with you to choose the best strategy for your particular challenge.

- Consensus Building - Community Dialogue
- Mediation - Facilitation and Planning

## Why Build Consensus?

Consensus building can be crucial in cases where you need to include all the stakeholders in a discussion or decision. For example, environmental or land use issues, public policy and planning or visioning for a community - all require that multiple groups have input. When groups have input, they are much more likely to be able to "live with" any final decision and thus minimize or avoid future conflict.

## Our Services

### Consensus Building

This is a powerful decision-making process where an unbiased facilitator helps people to raise issues, understand each other's views, and then develop a resolution. The strength of consensus building is that through patience and active participation it is possible to reach a resolution. A resolution that addresses everyone's most important issues and

that they can commit to and "live with" afterwards.

### Community Dialogue

On some issues, agreement may not be realistic or needed, but conversation may be vital. Professionally facilitated dialogues can be helpful in fostering understanding in a safe environment where people can express themselves openly and explore ideas.

In a public or community dialogue, participants are drawn from as broad a representation of stakeholders or the community as possible. The humanizing effect of these face-to-face forums allows people to tell their stories, their experiences and their perspectives. Participants get to hear others' viewpoints and to ask questions. Community dialogue is useful for improving understanding or for developing solutions to community problems.

Dialogue can be helpful in discussing hot-button issues where understanding is important. Some areas where dialogue has proved helpful in the past include race relations, interfaith issues, violence prevention, same-sex marriage, abortion, immigration policy and contentious environmental issues.

### Mediation

In cases where issues can involve serious value differences or apparent win-lose choices, consensus building may not always be the most effective process, at least initially. In such cases, mediation involving some or all groups or stakeholders can be the best option.

### Facilitation and Planning

Visit this page to learn when this process can help

### Cost

Visit the Consensus Building and Large Group Conflict section at Professional Fees  
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