



ARROWSMITH COMMUNITY JUSTICE SOCIETY

Consensus Decision Making

Adopted 14 Oct 2014

Reviewed 10 Aug 2021

WHAT IS CONSENSUS DECISION MAKING?

- Respects diverse views and builds on the group's respect for one another
- Enables participants to better understand the knowledge, interests, and experiences of others
- Promotes deeper discussion and understanding of the issue at hand
- Promotes a strong, long-term commitment to the decision
- Ensures every member of the group has the opportunity to listen to and be heard by every other person in the group
- Involves everyone in action planning

CONSENSUS DECISION MAKING PROCESS

1. The issue must be clear to everyone

The discussion leader and/or any member with knowledge may explain the issue. (Limit discussion to defining the problem)

2. The leader encourages everyone involved to participate in the discussion

- a) Everyone is to have an opportunity to discuss suggested solutions
- b) The leader offers several chances for participation, encouraging all to speak even though everyone may not want to participate in the discussion
- c) Seek solutions

3. Solution is restated – clarify the solution!

Summarize and restate the solution. Ensure all are clear to the intent of the solution.

4. Ask if there is anyone who is not in agreement with the suggested solution

This may encourage anyone who has not spoken to participate.

5. Deal with all objections

People who have concerns and objections are asked to propose an alternative. If the solution is seen to work, but some people have concerns, those people can:

- a) **Stand aside** - not expected to participate in implementing the solution, but agree to not block it
- b) **State Non-Support** – to be recorded in minutes

6. If there are no objections (or if they have been discussed and satisfied)

Record the decision in the minutes of the meeting as approved.

IN THE EVENT CONSENSUS CANNOT BE REACHED

If no decision can be reached and there needs to be a clear and decisive decision, the group may choose to vote on the issue and have it recorded as *'majority' approval or defeat.*