



Annual Meeting

FREDERICTON

2026

June 11-13

*Deep roots.
Renewed growth.*



**Member
Education Forum**

Negotiating Good Co-op Solutions
Shawn Conway

Land Acknowledgement

We respectfully acknowledge that New Brunswick is situated on the unceded and unsurrendered territories of the Wolastoqey, Mi'gmaq, and Peskotomuhkati peoples. We seek to repair and rebuild meaningful relationships with Indigenous peoples and honour these lands which hold the hopes of future generations.



Guidelines

- All questions are welcome and will help build our pool of knowledge
- Respect each other and give space to others
- Avoid identifying specific co-ops and workshop participants after
- What else?



Agenda

1. What challenges do you face in dealing with disputes or disagreements.
2. The stories we tell and bias
3. How our brains work and the dynamics of escalation
4. Some tools for managing yourself and conflict
5. Practice
6. Principled negotiation



Personal Reflection

Think of a couple of challenges you have had – or have – with disagreements, disputes and conflicts in your co-op

- What specifically is challenging for you?
- What is going on inside you when you are in these difficult or conflictual moments?
- What are your default responses to accusations, demands, put-downs and hostility?



How our brains work and unconscious bias



How our brains work and unconscious bias

- Preconceived notions and automatic associations are examples of cognitive bias and distortion.
- Bias relates to how we understand and sort and respond to information and experiences.
- Bias is automatic and occur in everyone to some degree.



Unconscious bias & stories we tell

Situation/ Scenario	The story you tell yourself
Someone lets you down, and it's not the first time.	They are irresponsible and unreliable.
You let someone down, and it's not the first time.	It's because I'm overworked.
Someone cuts you off while driving.	They are rude, aggressive, and inconsiderate.
You cut someone off while you are driving.	It's because I'm in a hurry, and if I don't catch these lights, I'll miss my doctor's appointment



Attribution Bias

- An inclination to assume that other people's behavior has more to do with their personality than with the situation, while believing the opposite of oneself.

“We judge ourselves by our intentions and others by their behaviour.” (Stephen Covey)

How our brains work under threat

- Perceived threats -- cascade of hormones
- Being “triggered” = Amygdala Hijack
- Self-protection = perspectives trapped into narrowed view
- Complex decision making disappears



Calming your brain during conflict

1. Stay present: notice you're activated, be curious
2. Let go of the story: let go of the thinking and judging mind
3. Focus on the body
4. Breathe



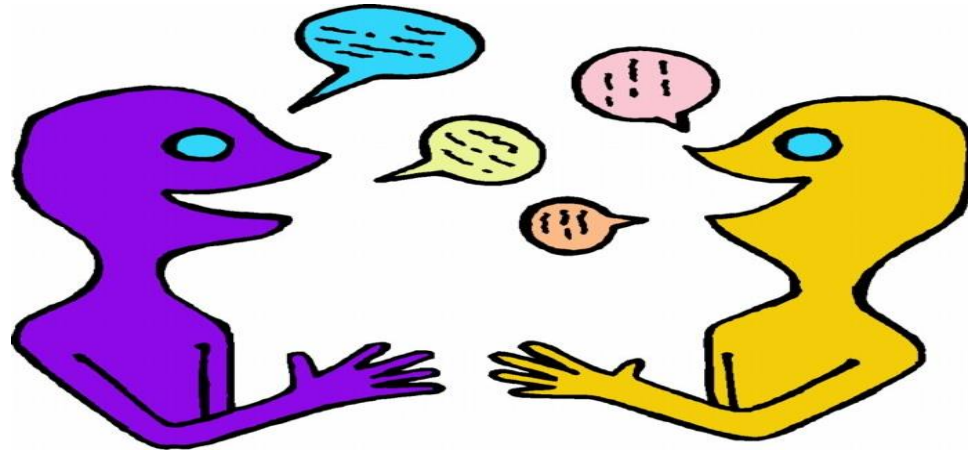
Your Toolbox: Presence and Attitude

- Prepare and centre yourself (and stay centred)
- Depersonalize what the other is presenting
- Park your own feelings and reactions
- Adopt an attitude of curiosity: lean in, pay attention



An interest based approach to resolving conflict and negotiating satisfying outcomes

Interest Based: discovering the underlying needs and interests of people and creating solutions to meet as many needs as possible.



Are there alternatives to an interest based approach?

Power Based: when pressure, force or coercion is used, e.g. use of authority, public pressure, strikes, physical force, etc.



Rights / Rules Based: a general standard, or set of laws and rules is used to deal with a particular case, e.g. policies, laws, by-laws, moral codes, etc.

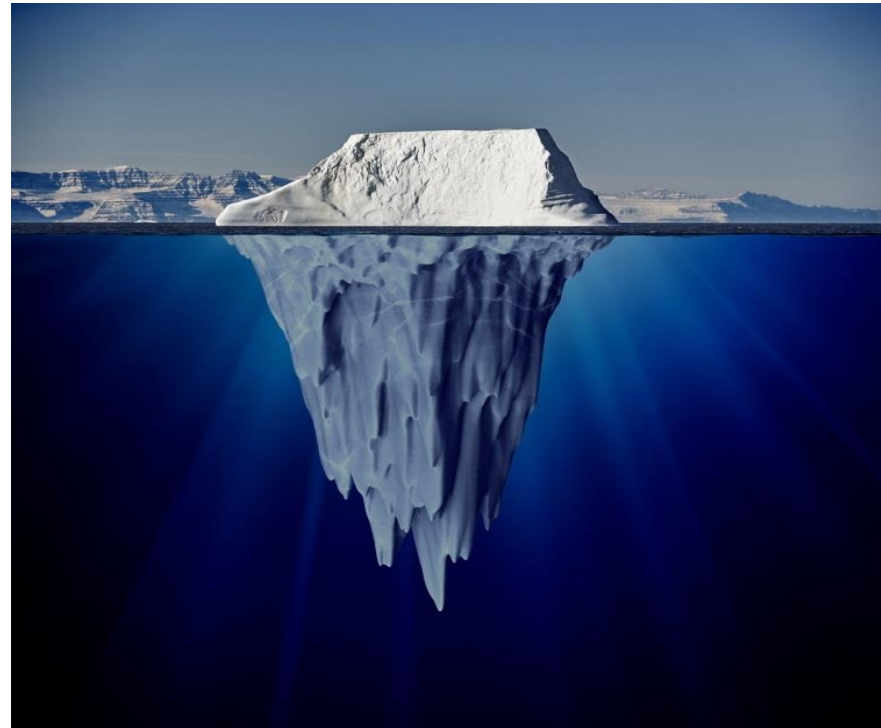


How effective have you found power – based
and rights / rules – based approaches?



Listening for interests beneath positions, claims, demands

- Needs
- Concerns
- Values
- Hopes
- Feelings
- Beliefs
- Assumptions
- Intentions
- Perceptions



Responding to a perceived opponent or angry person

- **Centre yourself**
- **Listen for what's important to the other person**
- **Acknowledge & summarize what you heard**
- **Invite more information**
- **Move to problem-solving**

C.L.A.I.M.

Note: I am indebted to The Neighbourhood Group's Conflict Resolution and Training for "CLAIM".



The Dynamics of Conflict Escalation

- Others' demands, complaints and positions create fear that our needs may not be met.

“You’re not following the rules!”

“You’re incompetent.”

“Why hasn’t the board told us about this?”



The Dynamics of Conflict Escalation

- We protect our needs by:

Defending our behaviour, character, etc.

Attacking : criticising, threatening, insulting, minimizing others' concerns, gathering allies.

Which of these do you see most often?
(Or you find yourself doing?)



Reframing Hard to Hear / Hostile Comments

- Feelings, needs, values, beliefs, etc. are often part of challenging conversations or conflicts
- These are often non-negotiable concerns and cannot disappear or be resolved directly.
- Thoughtful dialogue (acknowledging, open-ended questions, etc.) can reframe these concerns into specific behaviours and systems that can be negotiated.



Reframing Hard to Hear / Hostile Comments

1. Realize and acknowledge that the speaker's anger or distress is rising.
2. Find information about the speaker in their comments.
3. Restate in terms of underlying needs and values (rather than restating their positions and demands).
4. Name the behaviours or issues without characterizing them.



Reframing Hard to Hear / Hostile Comments

”You said that having her around is too upsetting--are there times when you'd especially like to be left alone?”

“You say you feel disrespected. Can you describe specific things you'd like Jordan to do that would demonstrate respect for you?”



Reframing Examples

“The Property Manager’s desk is a disgraceful mess.”

“I don’t want anyone trespassing on my property.”

“You never involve members in the budget until the GMM. It’s deceitful.”

“It’s not like it used to be. Members don’t even come to meetings anymore.”



Reframing Examples

“The guests of unit 210 always park in the visitors spots that are supposed to be for PSWs!”

“That couple who made the pet policy are the only members who don’t abide by the pet rules. They don’t keep their dog on a leash in common areas and let it poop all over.”



Reframing Examples

“You’re supposed to be here to help me and my family, Other members are being helped. Why are you ignoring me?”

“He never comes to board meetings and he doesn’t volunteer to do anything. I end up doing – or re-doing – his work because it’s not complete.”

“She lets her kids tear around on their bikes, screaming and bumping into our cars.”



Reframing Examples

“You control the meetings and don’t give us time to prepare. The agenda comes out at the last minute, the meetings are chaotic and you and few others interrupt and take up all the time.”

“That policy is sexist.”



I – Messages or “I have things to say too.”

- There are at least two parties to a difficult conversation or dispute.
- Managing conflict is active listening *AND* effective messaging.
- I- messages involve getting your message across about another’s behaviour and its effect on you *without accusing or blaming*.
- Listen first and then decide if the other is in a position to hear you.
- Measure your message: not too much but also not too little so your message is lost.



I – Messages

- Describe the (difficult / problem) behaviour in neutral language, e.g. “when you raise your voice”
- Describe the effect of the behaviour on what is important to you and the feeling it creates, e.g. “I have the idea things could get worse and I become afraid and I freeze.”
- Speak from “I”, e.g. I noticed, I felt...

The form of I- Messages

- When you.....(state observation)
- I feel or think..... (state feeling)
- Because.....(state need, value or why you are affected)
- I would prefer that.....(state preference)

OR

- I feelwhen you....because... Can we talk about this?



I- Messages

- “I feel upset when you begin speaking when I am speaking because it is hard for me to hold on to my ideas.”
- “I find you a persuasive speaker though I feel stressed when you raise your voice because it makes it difficult to collect my thoughts.”
- “I feel angry and disregarded when you do not let me know beforehand that you will be having a party.”
- “I become irritated when members let their dogs poop on my lawn and do not pick it up immediately. I spend a lot of time with my children on my lawn.”



Try again with an I-message

Director:

“Listen, I’ve been on the board for many years. I think I know how boards are supposed to work. I don’t need you correcting or questioning me, especially you – a new board member.”



Try again with an I-message

Manager:

“I’ve worked here for 12 years. Members only give me good reports. Who do you think you are telling me what I need to do to improve my manner with members?”



Try again with an I-message

“You can’t just tell other members about our in camera board discussions. The member with mental health issues came in yesterday yelling and said your wife asked her if she was off her medication. How can you break confidentiality like that!?”



Try again with an I-message

“You like to hear the sound of your own voice, don’t you? I try to listen to you and do my job but you’re always coming in, looking over my shoulder and asking for confidential information. I don’t have time for this and it’s inappropriate.”



Interest Based Problem Solving and Negotiation Principles

- Separate the people from the problem.
- Focus on interests, not positions.
- Consider mutual problem statements: frame the problem as a common one
- Generate a variety of possibilities before deciding what to do.
- Rely on objective criteria

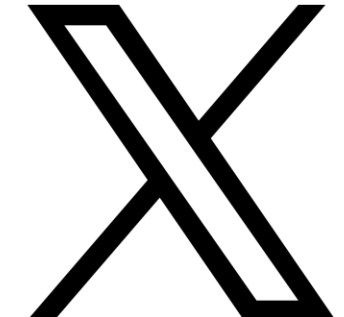


Your Examples



Share what you've learned on social media!

- Post photos, favourite moments, or key learnings from today's workshops on social media
- Tag us @chfcanada
- Use the hashtag #CHFCanada2026



The National Education Committee presents

ONLINE LEARNING

Self-Paced

Move through the content when it suits you.



Courses

Fulfilling your legal duties as a board director

Taking effective meeting minutes

Chair like a champion

Personal information protection

Identity affirming language

Maintenance 101

Financial statements 101

- ✔ For board directors, co-op members, and staff
- ✔ \$30 per course
- ✔ Many courses to choose from
- ✔ 30 minutes per course
- ✔ Requires internet connection
- ✔ Develop practical skills and gain knowledge



TAKE ACTION TODAY!

Youholdthekey.ca



**YOU HOLD
THE KEY**

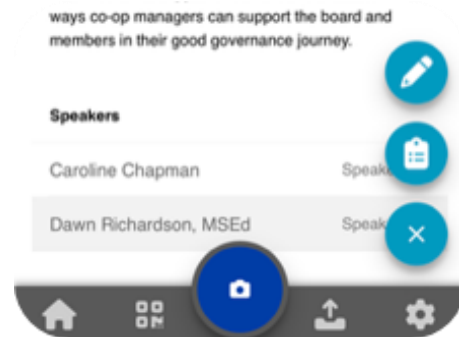
Protect affordable homes
Renew rental assistance now



Before you go

We need your help to do better!
Fill out a paper evaluation, fold in half and leave it in the room.
Or fill out a digital evaluation using our conference app.

Thanks!



When you get home

Find today's workshop materials in the resources section on our website:

chfcanada.coop/education/resources



Reminders

- **Voting in CHF Canada National Business meeting happens on Saturday.** Your co-op's delegate must be there in order to vote. The delegate can pick up a voting device at conference services.
- **All coffee breaks will be held in the tradeshow area!** Make sure you visit all the tradeshow exhibitors so that you can complete the bingo card (found in your bag) and have a chance to win prizes.

