

# Consensus Voting & Committee Charter

## Consensus Voting Process

“Fist to Five Voting” which is a consent-based decision-making process in which individuals use fingers to communicate agreement with a decision. The fingers prompt discussion and a decision is considered “passed” when everyone gives the decision 3 or more fingers.

- Fist means “No”
- One finger means “major issues”
- Two fingers mean “minor issues”
- Three fingers mean “I’m OK with the decision”
- Four fingers mean “Support”
- Five fingers mean “Strong support”

# Short Guide to Consensus Building Concepts

Source: [A Short Guide to Consensus Building: An alternative to Robert's Rules of Order for groups, organizations and ad hoc assemblies that want to operate by consensus](#)

- Meeting leader's role involves moving group to decision through consensus-building process.
  - Consensus is the result of a good-faith effort to meet the interests of the people involved in the decision.
  - Interests are the underlying needs or reasons that explain a person's positions or demands.
  - A decision or proposal is framed after listening carefully to everyone's interests.
  - Key indicator of a decision made by consensus: everyone agrees that they can live with the final proposal after every effort has been made to meet outstanding interests.

# Short Guide to Consensus Building Concepts

- **Recording** – Creating a visual record of what a group has discussed. This can be done electronically.
- **Facilitation** - With the permission of the group members, a skilled group member can manage group conversations.
- **Mediation** – If needed, when conflict situations arise, and the mediation process can take place inside or outside of a meeting.
- **Conflict Assessment** – A document that spells out what the issues are, what the group members interests, where disagreement and common ground exists, and recommendations. The recommendations are not final, with the group deciding how to proceed.

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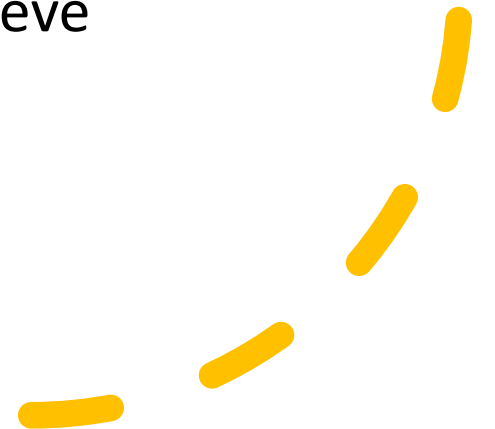
- **Single Text Procedure** – Agreements and documents are generated and then made better by the group or individual by individual
- **Creating and Claiming Value**
  - A “value” is anything a person or group want to get out of a negotiation agreement.
    - Value creation is a collaborative approach where groups work together to expand the pie and create more value for everyone
    - Value claiming is a competitive approach where each group tried to maximize their share of the pie
  - Look for ways where groups can “make the pie larger”.
  - The most effective agreement is one where all groups have done what they can to create and then allocate the value created among groups.

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- **Circles of interested parties**
  - An interested party is a person or group likely affected by a decision – whether it is their decision to make or not
  - Circles of interested parties are individuals or groups that want or should be involved in decision-making at different levels of intensity
  - Some interested parties can be difficult to represent in an organized way. There are various strategies that can be used to achieve representation.



# Short Guide to Consensus Building: Part II

- Focuses on consensus building for groups that are ongoing.
- Steps
  1. Convening
  2. Clarifying Responsibilities
  3. Deliberating
  4. Deciding
  5. Implementing Agreements
  6. Organizational Learning and Development

# Short Guide to Consensus Building: Part III

- Addresses barriers to consensus
- Sections
  - Responding to Disruptive behavior
    - The Harm Reduction Committee meets online. If a participant or an observer of a consensus building process acts in a disruptive manner, the chair will remind that individual of the ground rules of their participation. If that does not result in the desired change in their behavior, the chair can have the person removed from the online meeting, adjourn the meeting, and schedule a follow-up discussion with the whole group, where a decision about next steps related to the disruption can be discussed in a constructive manner.
    - If the individual who acted in a disruptive manner was a meeting participant, a mediation process may be initiated prior to the whole group's constructive discussion.



# Short Guide to Consensus Building: Part III

## Additional Potential Barriers to Consensus

- Acceptance of group's advisory role – The Harm Reduction Committee is an advisory group with at least one member who is a formal decision-maker
- Clarify presumed liability of participants – Not applicable
- Clarify confidentiality agreements – Not applicable
- Clarify Legal Obligations if the participants are simultaneously involved in pending litigation – currently not applicable