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## **Halifax Pride Board of Directors' Mediation/Conflict Resolution Process:**

### **Summary Notes from Preliminary Meetings**

Dear Halifax Pride Board,

I hope this note finds everyone well. Thank you for inviting me to work with you again. I appreciate your commitment to serving the 2SLGBTQIA communities in the greater Halifax area. While we are still in the mediation / conflict resolution process, I thought it would be helpful to share a summary of the conversations that we have had so far. In addition to the meetings listed above, it has been helpful to receive more information from Board members who were not able to participate in those meetings. In this summary note, I will share some major themes expressed by board members and recommendations for next steps.

#### Dates of Preliminary Meetings:

- Aug. 29<sup>th</sup>, 5 p.m. – 6:45 p.m.
- Sept. 12<sup>th</sup>, 6 p.m. – 7:45 p.m.

#### Notes and Reflections from Meetings:

*Interpersonal Conflicts:* Board members have shared concerns about a series of interpersonal conflicts related to the following issues:

- significant miscommunications about events planning
- leadership roles and expectations
- leadership accountability to Board, community partners, and the 2SLGBTQIA communities
- unprofessional leadership communications with community partners
- unprofessional communications between board members, staff, and volunteers
- a lack of cultural sensitivity: particularly attributed to racial bias and anti-immigrant bias

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*Broken trust:* During both preliminary meetings, Board members shared significant emotional distress related to increasing experiences of:

- miscommunications
- arguments and accusations between board members
- decreased effective collaborations
- a loss of confidence in the current leadership team's ability to work together
- a lack of trauma-informed professional work environment
- a lack of culturally responsive leadership training for Board members

*A Leadership Crisis:* Underneath these expressions of distress, there were strong themes of broken trust and serious concerns about the ability of the current leadership team to repair that trust and work effectively together. Some Board members have called for the resignation of other members of the leadership team. Others have expressed concerns about a pattern of culturally insensitive communication which they state has persisted for years.

*Signs for Hope:* Despite these serious conflicts, there are significant signs for hope.

- Board members expressed a willingness to continue the mediation / conflict resolution process.
- Since 2020, Halifax Pride has engaged in critical self-evaluation and change activities as an organization to improve culturally responsive and inclusive communication and collaborations with the 2SLGBTQIA+ communities that it serves. For reference, I have attached summary reports from two activities in 2021.

*Next Steps:*

- Board Meeting to discuss the major themes from the mediation / conflict resolution meetings so far, hopes for the outcomes of this process, concerns about the outcomes of this process, and a plan for moving forward.



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I hope these summary notes are helpful. As a member of the community, I share your concerns and desire for transformative social justice changes. I welcome future opportunities to serve our community in this work. I welcome your feedback.

Peace,

Terrence O. Lewis, PhD, MSW, BASW, RSW

Attachments:

- *Healing, Growing, and Serving Together: Halifax Pride Board Workshop* (Feb. 11<sup>th</sup>, 2021)
- *Halifax Pride Summer Team Decompression/Debrief Meeting* (Sept. 3, 2021)



# Healing, Growing, and Serving Together

HALIFAX PRIDE BOARD WORKSHOP

Terrence O. Lewis, PhD, MSW, RSW



# Our Journey for Today

1. Setting the Relational Frame: Setting group norms / guidelines for conversation
2. Sanctuary Check-in: Who is in the room and what do we bring with us (heart, mind, body, environmental context)?
3. Solution-focused Visioning: What are your hopes for Halifax Pride?
4. Sharing Circle: How do we listen, learn, affirm, heal, and develop stronger relationships?
5. Moving Forward: Considering the visioning exercise, what are the board’s collective goals for Halifax Pride? What are the feasible objectives and steps for reaching those goals?
6. Feedback and Reflections on the Day

## Setting the Relational Frame

(adapted from Miller & Garran, 2017, p. 219)

### Group rules / guidelines for conversation

- ▶ Maintaining confidentiality
- ▶ Sharing time and not taking up too much air space
- ▶ Speaking for oneself and not representing one’s group
- ▶ Listening carefully to others
- ▶ Striving for open-mindedness
- ▶ Challenging behavior and ideas without attacking people
- ▶ \_\_\_\_\_
- ▶ \_\_\_\_\_
- ▶ \_\_\_\_\_

## Sanctuary Check-in

I come as \_\_\_\_\_

I feel \_\_\_\_\_

My hopes for this evening are \_\_\_\_\_

My peers can support me by \_\_\_\_\_

(adapted from Esaki et al., 2013)



## Solution-Focused Visioning Exercise

Tonight, while you are sleeping, an amazing mystical event occurs and all of your hopes and dreams for the Halifax Pride are granted. However, you are not aware of the changes because you are sleeping. When you awake the next morning, what would be some signs for you that your hopes and dreams came true?

- ▶ Emotions
- ▶ Thoughts
- ▶ Interpersonal Relationships with Board Members
- ▶ Community Relationships with Halifax Pride

(adapted from Cooper & Lesser, 2011)

## Sharing Circle?

How do we listen, learn, affirm, heal, and develop stronger relationships?

## Moving Forward

- ▶ What is your collective vision for Halifax Pride and your work as the Board?
- ▶ What strengths need to be nurtured and expanded?
- ▶ What problems need to be addressed and resolved?
- ▶ What are the goals?
- ▶ What are the steps for achieving those goals?
- ▶ What will be the signs of progress?