

Cahoots Theatre's Conflict Transformation Policy

As of August 2022

Conflict Transformation is rooted in the knowledge and acceptance of the reality that conflict between human beings is inevitable, but not inherently negative. Conflict can be the catalyst to transformative change which — through courageous, open and honest communication — increases understanding of accountability, deepens empathy, promotes mutual understanding, and restores respect.

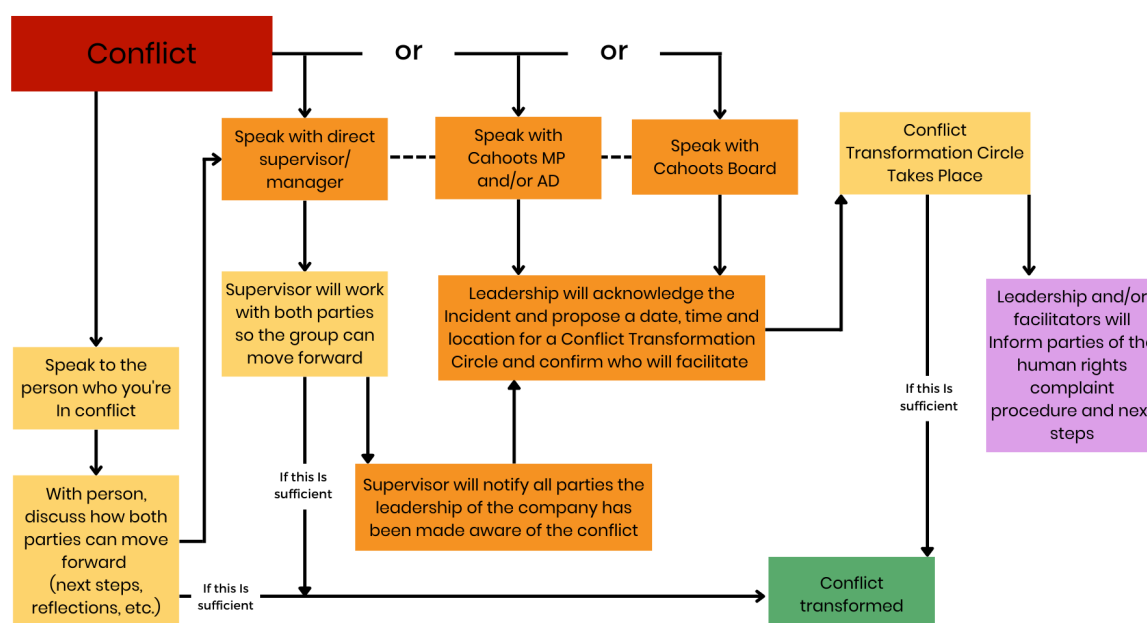
What is Conflict Transformation

Instances of harm at Cahoots, including acts of discrimination, will be handled through the use of a mediated Conflict Transformation process. CT is not conflict resolution, which aims to “fix” a problem. Instead, the focus is on transforming conflict into a possibility for growth for the parties involved. While some conflicts are unfortunately intentional, harm can often unwittingly result from ignorance, ill-considered wording, unconscious bias, or a history of trauma. Our Conflict Transformation Circles are guided by experienced facilitators — who are also from equity-seeking groups — with respected backgrounds in anti-oppression, anti-racism, education, and mediation.

The Process

The process provides for a truthful, compassionate, and moderated space for accountability, learning, reconciliation, and individual & organizational evolution.

Steps to Engaging Conflict Transformation



Graphic: A visual map of what to do when conflict arises. Beginning at when conflict has happened, the following options can take course:

1) speak to the person who you're in conflict with → with the person, discuss how both parties can move forward (next steps, reflection, etc.) → if sufficient, the conflict is transformed, if not sufficient move on to speak with direct supervisor/manager, Cahoots leadership and/or Cahoots board.

2) If speaking with the person you have conflict is not an option for you speak with direct supervisor/manager → supervisor will work with both parties so the group can move forward → if sufficient, the conflict is transformed, if not sufficient, supervisor will inform Cahoots Leadership of the conflict and begin conflict transformation process. → if sufficient conflict is transformed → if not sufficient leadership and/pr facilitators will inform parties of the human rights complaint procedure and provide next steps from there.

3) If speaking your supervisor is not an option speak with Cahoots leadership and/or Cahoots board → Leadership will acknowledge conflict and propose a date, time, and location for conflict transformation circle along with who will facilitate → Conflict transformation circle takes place → if sufficient conflict is transformed → if not sufficient leadership and/pr facilitators will inform parties of the human rights complaint procedure and provide next steps from there.

If a person contracted, employed, or engaged through volunteer opportunities and other community initiatives (patrons, donors, etc.) experiences any circumstance in which they need assistance resolving or addressing conflict, they may contact their direct supervisor/manager — e.g., stage managers, facilitators, producer; or they may contact Cahoots Theatre's Managing Producer and/or Artistic Director and/or Board of Directors directly. In the event that a harmful incident transpires in our space or at a Cahoots event off-site, it will immediately be addressed by the individual leading the process in progress (e.g. the director, program facilitator, etc.).

If a situation is too injurious to be handled at the moment, the work session will be adjourned and the Conflict Transformation process will begin. Should the incident occur immediately prior to or during a performance, the stage manager or assistant stage manager will notify Cahoots' Artistic Director and Managing Producer immediately. The stage manager or assistant stage manager will inform the parties involved that company leadership is aware of the matter and will contact them as soon as possible.

In all instances, the incident will be acknowledged by the Artistic Director and the Managing Producer within 24 hours. Relevant parties will be contacted by either the A.D. or the M.P. with a proposed date and location for a mediated Conflict Transformation Circle (CTC). If Cahoots' studio was the site of the conflict, circles will take place in a private, neutral setting. It is the goal of the CTC to inspire clear, respectful communication and potential for a new relationship. A circle in progress will be stopped by facilitators, however, if the injured party asserts that to continue will inflict further injury.

There may be instances where the harm is so severe that a Conflict Transformation Circle reaches an impasse. If Cahoots Theatre deems the conflict irreconcilable and the situation unsalvageable, and/or if continued conflict transformation will cause undue harm to the person bringing forth the complaint (i.e.; in cases of racism, sexual harassment, assault, etc.), the Conflict Transformation process will conclude. The situation may then be

addressed through further measures, including the Human Rights Complaint Procedure (Page 31) progressive discipline (page 23), performance improvement plans, leaves of absences, or termination if the situation requires.

Who to Talk To?

Here's who you can talk to in the cases of conflict:

- Where to report conflict or harm:
 - Board of Directors
 - In particular, the HR committee currently composed of:
 - Signy Lynch – signy.lynch@gmail.com
 - Alejandra Nunez – alejandra@cahoots.ca
 - Managing Producer
 - Artistic Director
 - Director of a production (*included in rider/contract*)
 - Stage Manager of a production (*included in rider/contract*)
 - Production Manager of a production (*included in rider/contract*)
 - Facilitator of a program (*included in rider/contract*)
- Who will lead the conflict transformation process:
 - mediation via Cahoots Theatre's HR Committee (contact information is on page 7 of this document)
 - a mutually agreed upon third-party facilitator
 - Nikki Shaffeeullah - nikki.shaffeeullah@gmail.com
 - Syrus Marcus Ware - syrusmarcusware@protonmail.com
 - Outside suggestions are welcome

We are aware of other ways of handling conflict. If required, we are open to other approaches as recommended by the person bringing forth the concern. Some examples include talking circles, treaty agreements and/or amendments, etc.

This is a living commitment and will evolve as conversations continue and new realities emerge in our communities.