

Movement Medicine Association

Protocols for Dealing with Conflict

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Purpose (The Big Picture)

- To keep dancers, practitioners, facilitators and teachers of Movement Medicine safe
- To promote clear healthy working practices
- To promote clear compassionate working relationships

The purpose of the Protocols is to support us to lean into the practice we all know and love. So that when we get 'caught' in the heat of an issue we are encouraged to keep the faith, and get support from our own practice. The Protocols for Dealing with Conflict are designed to give us a bit of help.

The underlying assumption of these Protocols is that being human can be hot and messy. None of us is completely immune from the heat and mess. And all of us have good intent.

At the heart of the Protocols is mediation¹, which is a process that is fair to all, and respectful of diversity and difference.

The Protocols for dealing with Conflict, do not over ride any individual's legal and ethical rights and responsibilities. Care will be taken to ensure that all members of the Movement Medicine community are treated fairly, and that issues are taken outside the Movement Medicine community if that is appropriate. A wise elder who has no connection with the Movement Medicine community will be appointed. They will offer an 'outside eye' on the process. They will have access to reports held within the Mediation group. And they will offer regular (three monthly) Supervision to the Mediation Service.

Four Components

Having effective Protocols for Dealing with Conflict means that a number of important components are in place.

¹ For more information about the Mediation Process, see page 15, below

- 1. The first is a procedure to support members of the public if they feel upset about how they have been treated by Movement Medicine teachers and/or facilitators
(A Complaints Procedure)**
- 2. The second is a procedure to support practitioners, teachers and facilitators if they feel upset with other practitioners, teachers and facilitators
(Procedure for dealing with Peer Conflict)**
- 3. The third is a procedure to support teachers and facilitators if they feel upset with how they have been dealt with by The Movement Medicine Association or individuals within it
(A Grievance Procedure)**
- 4. The final component is a procedure to support The Movement Medicine Association to uphold standards and act when individuals have broken our Code of Ethics
(A Disciplinary Procedure)**

Complaints Procedure

A procedure to support members of the public if they feel upset about how they have been treated by Movement Medicine teachers and/or facilitators

Level One: self help

All of our teachers and facilitators are encouraged to welcome feedback, even if it is negative and causes discomfort. Anyone who wishes to complain is encouraged to contact the teacher or facilitator who has given them cause for complaint. **They are advised do this as quickly as possible after the incident took place.** Our teachers and facilitators are familiar with a process that gives us all a bit of support to share issues are honestly and fully.² Using this process and any other Movement Medicine process, they may resolve the problem together. They may feel that the issue is completely resolved, and this may be the end of the procedure.

Level Two: mediation³

The dancer or the teacher or facilitator concerned, may feel that it would be useful to get help in resolving the issue. The first point of contact will be the Mediation Guardian. The mediation process is very powerful. It is our intent that all issues be fully resolved at this level.

Level Three: Disciplinary Procedure

However, if, after the mediation process has happened the dancer or the mediator believes that a serious breach of Movement Medicine Code of Ethics may have taken place, the matter will be referred to the Disciplinary Committee. What happens next will be covered by The Disciplinary Procedure.

² This refers to The Clearing Process, which has been circulated to all apprentices. Some communication around this may be required as part of embedding this document in our culture!

³ For more information about the Mediation Process, see page 15, below

Protocols for practitioners, teachers and facilitators

A process to support practitioners, teachers and facilitators if they feel upset with other practitioners, teachers and facilitators

Level One: dance

We are all dancers. Anyone who finds themselves in a conflict situation is strongly encouraged to dance with the conflict. Seriously. Our dancing practice can give us great insight into whatever projections may be at work in us. There are so many tools we can work with as individuals. We have the SEER process; and the Phoenix process; and the conflicting commitments exercise. When we are feeling 'stuck' it is easy to underestimate the power of our own practice. Movement is the Medicine. Remember the power of the Dance.

Level Two: self-help (or courageous connection)

People in conflict situations are encouraged to be courageous. Before approaching the Council for Mediation, there is an opportunity to practice using the tools and maps and practices of Movement Medicine. All parties in the conflict are Movement Medicine practitioners. So they have a shared vocabulary for working with difficult feelings. If someone is angry or upset, it is great that they contact the individual **as quickly as possible after the incident has taken place and/or as soon as they realize they are not going to stop being angry and upset**. It is important that any conversation is given plenty of space. So it's probably helpful to set aside a decent amount of time to work on the issue. Working together, there are so many ways to work with conflict. The Four Levels of Seeing can be really rich. And Sue's Clearing Process is a very powerful tool to unravel what is happening. Between them, teachers and facilitators have a lot of resources to create a Movement Medicine process that would help.

Level Three: mediation⁴

Those in conflict may have tried dancing with the issue. And they may have tried to resolve it directly with their colleague. They may have hit the buffers, either because the other person didn't want to talk, or because the contact ended in a row. And it may simply be that the idea of approaching their colleague is too daunting without support. At level three, either party in the conflict is free to contact the Mediation Guardian.

The mediation process is very powerful. It is our belief that most issues can be resolved at this level.

Level Four: Disciplinary Procedure

⁴ For more information about the Mediation Process, see page 15, below

However, if, after the mediation process has happened anyone involved in the process believes that a serious breach of Movement Medicine Code of Ethics may have taken place, the matter will be referred to the Disciplinary Committee. What happens next is covered by The Disciplinary Procedure.

The grievance procedure

A process to support practitioners, teachers and facilitators if they feel upset with how they have been dealt with by The Movement Medicine Association or individuals within it

Level One: dance

We are all dancers. Anyone who finds themselves in a conflict situation is strongly encouraged to dance with the conflict. Seriously. Our dancing practice can give us great insight into whatever projections may be at work in us. There are so many tools we can work with as individuals. We have the SEER process; and the Phoenix process; and the conflicting commitments exercise. When we are feeling 'stuck' it is easy to underestimate the power of our own practice. Movement is the Medicine. Remember the power of the Dance.

Level Two: self help and peer support

If someone is feeling aggrieved with The Association or individuals within it, it can sometimes be a real opportunity to work with what is happening at the level of projection. It might be helpful to work with someone they trust. Working privately with a trusted peer, they can use all the tools and maps and practices of Movement Medicine to unravel what is happening. It is important to choose someone they trust not to collude with them, and choose someone they can trust to keep the matter confidential. This might be a fellow teacher or facilitator or it might be their Professional Mentor. It is good to remember that conflict is an opportunity to practise and experiment with all the tools of Movement Medicine.

Level Three: courageous contact

No-one in The Association wants a teacher or facilitator to feel aggrieved. They would want to create an opportunity to sort it out informally. If, after the teacher or facilitator has explored the situation with a friend or a mentor, they still feel that there is something that needs to be sorted out, then they might simply directly approach the person they feel angry with.

If someone is angry or upset, it is great that they contact the individual **as quickly as possible after the incident has taken place and/or as soon as they realize they are not going to stop being angry and upset**. It is important that any courageous connection is given plenty of space. So it's probably helpful to set aside a decent amount of time to work on the issue. Working together, there are so many ways to work with conflict. The Four Levels of Seeing can be really rich. And Sue's Process is a very powerful tool to unravel what is happening. Between them, teachers and facilitators have a lot of resources to create a Movement Medicine process that would help.

Level Four: mediation⁵

The practitioner, teacher or facilitator may have tried dancing with the issue. And they have sought support from a trusted friend. They may even have had a go at sorting it out informally. And they still feel aggrieved.

At this point they should contact the Mediation Guardian.

A mediation process will be offered to both parties. As part of the Mediation Process, both the facilitator or teacher and the person they feel aggrieved with will have a conversation or a number of conversations in confidence with the mediator. This will be in preparation for a mediation meeting. The mediation process may take place over several meetings. The mediation process may take place face to face, or it may take place on Skype or some equivalent.

In the case where the Mediation process is part of a Grievance Procedure the teacher or facilitator has a right to be accompanied by someone to support them. This companion would be there for moral support. The companion would be allowed to speak during the meeting to put and sum up the teacher or facilitator's case, and they may confer with the teacher or facilitator during the hearing. The companion does not however, have the right to answer questions on the teacher or facilitator's behalf, or to express their own views on the matter if the teacher or facilitator does not wish it or to prevent the Mediator from facilitating the meeting.

All conversations and meetings will be completely confidential.

Level Five: Grievance Committee

It may be that even after mediation, the teacher or facilitator still feels aggrieved. It is the intent of The Association to take that seriously, and to resolve any issues there may be.

At level five, the case would be taken to a committee. This would be made up of three people from the Council. The individuals would, as far as possible, come to the issue 'clean'. In other words, they would not have been involved in the case so far. The teacher or facilitator and the mediator might be asked to give evidence to the committee. Again, the teacher or facilitator would have the right to be accompanied for moral support by a companion.

Be assured, the committee would be taking care to be as unbiased as possible. It is in the interests of The Association and the entire Movement Medicine community

⁵ For more information about the Mediation Process, see page 17, below

that matters be resolved amicably at the end of the day, however hot and messy they get during the process.

The Disciplinary Procedure

A process to support The Movement Medicine Association to uphold standards and act when individuals have broken with our Code of Ethics

Our Code of Ethics is key to our Disciplinary Process. A clear Code of Ethics benefits everyone. This is a Code that we have agreed to. It is important that it is well understood. All teachers and facilitators are encouraged to be familiar with it. ⁶

Anyone who has contact with Movement Medicine can expect that the standards in our Code of Ethics will be upheld at all times. It is crucial that we can quickly and effectively sort out situations where this seems not to be happening. And it is crucial that teachers and facilitators know that they will have a fair hearing if something seems to have gone wrong.

A clear procedure helps the Association and the School act fairly and consistently. The keys are that there should be

- prompt communication with the teacher/facilitator
- transparency.
- confidentiality
- consistency
- and as far as possible, no surprises

Level One: Informal advice, guidance and support

If there has been an apparent breach of our standards, the teacher or facilitator has a right to be contacted promptly to have the matter discussed. At level One there would be an informal discussion between someone in the Council and the teacher or facilitator.

This conversation should take place in private. It should be a two-way discussion, aimed at discussing possible shortcomings in conduct or performance and encouraging improvement. Criticism should be constructive, with the emphasis being on finding ways for the teacher/facilitator to improve and for the improvement to be sustained. Listen to whatever the teacher/facilitator has to say about the issue.

If the issue has arisen because of a complaint, Level One of the Disciplinary Procedure may include all steps in the Complaints Procedure, up to and including mediation between the dancer/participant and the teacher/facilitator.

⁶ Once the Code of Ethics is fully formalised, it will be important to communicate very explicitly with all teachers and facilitators reminding them of their responsibilities in this regard.

It MAY even be a good idea to consider Mandatory Training around any issues we think might be contentious or difficult to grasp. (It would head off at the pass any Grievance Procedures, if after a disciplinary process someone felt that they had a case against the Association because they had not fully understood the Code of Ethics.) This would be a big step. Mandatory Training within organisations would normally be paid for by the organisation.

Where improvement is required it is crucial that the teacher/facilitator understands what needs to be done, how their performance or conduct will be reviewed, and over what period. It may be useful to confirm in writing what has been decided.

Level One is informal. It is important that it doesn't slide into a formal disciplinary action, as this may unintentionally deny the teacher/facilitator some of their rights, such as the right to be accompanied. If, during the discussion, it becomes obvious that there may have been a serious breach of the Code of Ethics, the meeting should be adjourned.

If informal advice guidance and support does not bring about an improvement OR the matter is considered too serious to be classed as minor the process will go on to level two. The teacher or facilitator must be clearly informed that this is going to happen. (no surprises!)

Level Two: A disciplinary hearing

At level two, a committee would be formed. The urgency would be decided by the Council Member who was involved in the informal discussion at level one. This committee would meet, either in person or by Skype, to discuss their next steps. This group would take a decision quickly as to whether the teacher/facilitator should be asked not to teach during the disciplinary process.

The decision to ask someone to suspend their teaching would not be taken lightly, and would be taken by at least three people. It would usually be taken on grounds of safety or of illegality.

At level two, the case would be heard by the committee. This would be made up of three people from the Council and the School. The individuals would, as far as possible, come to the issue 'clean'. In other words, they would not have been involved in the case so far. The mediator would probably be asked to give evidence to the committee.

The teacher or facilitator would have the right to be accompanied. This companion would be there for moral support. The companion should be allowed to speak during the meeting to put and sum up the teacher or facilitator's case, and they may confer with the teacher or facilitator during the hearing. The companion does not however, have the right to answer questions on the teacher or facilitator's behalf, to address the hearing if the teacher or facilitator does not wish it.

The content of all conversations and meetings will be completely confidential. The outcome, however, if it was suspension or exclusion from the association, would be a matter for public record. This would be handled as sensitively as possible.

What is Mediation?

Mediation is an even handed process that brings holding to hot places

- Mediation gives a voice to the voiceless
- Mediation creates space where the unspeakable can be spoken
- Mediation is fair to all perspectives
- Mediation gives shape to an exchange of views, and gives space and compassion to all

Mediation can only be entered into voluntarily. It gives support to people who want to work something out together. It is a process (or rather a set of processes) that helps slow things down. It gives space and attention to everyone's thoughts and feelings.

How does Mediation work?

Step One: Mediation is asked for.

Usually one person will ask for mediation. They will tell their story. They may receive advice, guidance and support in the light of which they feel able to take the matter on by themselves. This could be the end of the process. But if the matter cannot be resolved, it will proceed to Step Two.

(Sometimes two people will ask for mediation as a result of recognising that they need some support. And sometimes the request will arise as a result of an ongoing complaint, or disciplinary or grievance process. In both cases, we jump straight to Step Two.)

Step Two: Each person's story is heard individually.

Each person will be offered mediation. The process is voluntary. Each party will talk with the mediator. We would call these Mediation Conversations, even when they happen face to face (to distinguish them from Mediation Meetings). During these Conversations, the mediator will use Movement Medicine tools and practices. This will support all parties in the conflict to lean into the practice we all know and love. (These tools will help even dancers new to the practice.)

During these Conversations, the mediator will be asking themselves 'Is this person ready, willing and able to participate in a Mediation Meeting?' Mediation is only likely to be successful if the answer is Yes! The mediator may feel that more than one Conversation is required before a Mediation Meeting is likely to be successful.

The mediator, in consultation with all parties, will decide when and whether to proceed to a meeting.

Step Three: The mediation meeting

The Mediation Meeting may be face to face. And it may be on Skype or something similar.

The meeting will be held in such a way as to have fairness and felt fairness. So, for example if there are two individuals on one 'side' of a conflict, and only one on the other, the other individual would bring a companion to support them.

The mediator will hold the Meeting, using whatever tools and practices seem appropriate.

Eg Interoception and movement

Eg The Clearing Process

Eg Using the four levels of seeing

Eg Using the terminology of the Insight Council

Always, the process will be even handed. If a tool is offered to one, it will also be offered to the other. This gives a sense of solidity and fairness. It also slows down and cools the process.