

THE AUGUSTINE FELLOWSHIP of MONTEREY COUNTY
INTERGROUP
PRINCIPLES AND CORE VALUES

This document has been prepared using the Consensus Based Decision Making process of the Consensus Council of Bismarck, ND as its foundational document. All modifications are those of our Intergroup Working Group.

Our Mission: To help carry the message of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions through support of meetings and services to current and potential members of this program.

Our Purpose: Intergroup exists to support the Augustine Fellowship meetings of Monterey County by way of deep listening and meaningful communication to identify and take action on service efforts for enhancing recovery in our community. Our aim is to assist meetings in bringing about meaningful recovery for its members as well as attracting others in need to our recovery community. Intergroup desires to attract representatives from every meeting in our community. Additionally, it hopes to have regular listening sessions to assess our impact and to improve efforts to better meet our community's needs.

Our Core Values:

1. **Principles:** the principles of the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions of the Augustine Fellowship inform our every decision.
2. **Consensus Decision Making:** we utilize a Consensus Decision Making Process rather than majority vote.
3. **Accountability:** we are accountable to each other, valuing action and implementation of our decisions.
4. **Flexibility:** we strive to be flexible; not every decision merits the same process.
5. **Shared Control:** no one person is in charge including the Facilitator; the Ground Rules process is followed. We are inclusive of everyone in the group.
6. **Innovation:** we hope to be innovative in our approach to issues needing our attention.

ADDENDUM

Specifics of the Consensus Decision Making Process

1. **Decision Making Process:** the Consensus Decision Making Process is designed to encourage agreement on actions to solve challenging problems. We work together to find mutually acceptable solutions, believing this to be the best way both for our group to work in harmony and for the groups which we endeavor to serve. Intergroup uses this process to put into practice the Augustine Fellowship program principles of the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions in all our activities. Every six months this Consensus Decision-Making Process will be revisited by Intergroup to confirm ongoing consensus for it, and/or to make adjustments by consensus as we progress.
2. **Facilitator:** the facilitator is accountable for managing the process, ensuring that ground rules are understood and followed, and strives to maintain a productive climate for maximum communication and best practices regarding implementation actions for

problem solving. It is our responsibility to keep the facilitator accurate. We each are attentive that the facilitator accurately reflects what we meant to say. After each agenda item is completed, the facilitator will summarize and ask that any clarifications be made at that time. We rotate our facilitators frequently in six month terms of service. All members are willing to take turns at facilitation, and will be trained and then supported in meetings by those who have served as facilitators before them.

3. **Ground Rules/Shared Control:** a) we jointly share responsibility for maintaining our ground rules for the process. b) new members that join Intergroup will be trained on the consensus decision-making process, and asked to agree to it and to adhere to it. c) we briefly review our ground rules before each meeting. d) we address the issues seen as most suitable to the situation, dividing the issues as large or small.
4. **Large vs Small Decisions:** the facilitator takes the group “temperature” to determine if the decision is large or small. a) a small decision is one where the group believes that consensus can be reached in no more than 5 minutes.
b) for a large issue the full consensus based process is used: 1) set the agenda together, all may make suggestions; 2) allocate time for each discussion item, assuring that all speak their minds; 3) rotate the order of speaking; 4) summarize after each item is discussed finding areas of agreement as well as areas where further discussion is needed; 5) set up working groups with clear timelines, tasks and accountabilities.
5. **Levels of Consensus within the Group:**
 - a. Highest level agreement is I give an unqualified “yes”
 - b. I accept the decision
 - c. I can live with the decision
 - d. I do not fully agree with the decision; however, I will not block it and will support it
 - e. I wish to block the decision
6. **Variations on Basic Consensus**
 - a. **Silence is agreement:** We agree that silence on decisions is agreement. No one can read our minds. Therefore, if it appears that we are reaching consensus, if no one expresses disagreement, the facilitator may assume that we are all in agreement. This is best done by expressly asking one more time.
 - b. **Members may “stand aside”** on any decision, and consensus can still be reached.
 - c. **If one-third or more** of the members present for any decision elect to “stand aside”, then the item is sent back to the working group for refinement. Consensus on the item may be sought again once refinements are made.
 - d. **Blocking a decision:** Any member may “block” a decision. However, this should be done extremely rarely and only when a member is convinced a core value of the group is not being adhered to. Blocks are not to be made if a member dislikes a decision, but only if a core value is violated. If a block is called that member gets five minutes to make their case for a value breach, and then the group will discuss and seek consensus on whether it is actually a values breach with the blocker standing aside.
 - e. **Quorum:** For a meeting of Intergroup to have the ability to reach consensus, there needs to be in attendance a “quorum” of Intergroup members. A quorum

consists of having more than 50% of Intergroup's total membership in attendance at any given meeting.

7. The Final Step in Our Agreement Process

- a. I've heard your positions
- b. I believe you have heard my position
- c. The decision does not compromise my values, and
- d. I can accept the decision and its implementation

8. Commitment to Implementation:

All agree with the proposed decision and are willing to carry it out; no one will block its implementation; and everyone will support and implement the decision.

Ground Rules

1. It's our show. This is our process. Our facilitator takes us where we have agreed to go. It is our agenda, our ground rules, our process and ultimately, our decisions. We agree to attend, coming to the discussion with an open mind, willing to consider others' perspectives, and to fully participate in all meetings.
2. Everyone is equal. There is no hierarchy here.
3. No relevant topic is excluded. In setting our agenda, we include all topics unless we agree to defer. We may decide to prioritize an overage of topics given time constraints for forthcoming meetings.
4. Our discussions never end. No discussion is ended, including process discussions, ground rules and the rule of decision. Agreements reached at prior meetings, unless implemented or well into implementation, are always open for further discussion.
5. Before the discussion of each topic, a one minute period will be given for contemplation, writing, gathering thoughts on the topic.
6. We respect one another's opinions. We listen actively. We use gentle and loving candor in our comments to one another. We do not interrupt.
7. We respect that we never have enough time. No one will dominate our discussion. All have an opportunity to express their views.
8. Non-attribution is that we will not attribute ideas or comments to anyone outside the process. We respect one another's anonymity.
9. We will blend fun into our work. We will work to enjoy the process and the improved decision-making which results.

Characteristics of our Facilitators

1. Our facilitator is responsible to ensure that everyone is heard.
2. Works to incorporate all ideas as they are expressed and modified through discussion.
3. Is the servant of the group and draws out and focuses the best thinking of the group.
4. Never shows impatience or disfavor towards an idea or member.
5. Remains neutral and (to the extent possible) stays apart from the discussion.
6. Is patient, intuitive, articulate, a good synthesizer, able to think quickly, and has a good sense of humor.
7. Keeps track of time and moves us through our agenda appropriately.
8. Encourages a calm atmosphere by behaving calmly.

9. Creates a safe and productive environment
10. Encourages mutual respect
11. Educates participants on best practices
12. Models best facilitation practices
13. Performs face-saver roles protecting us all
14. Allows time for collaborative problem solving as nuances show up during meetings
15. Takes the “temperature” of the group on whether an item is ready to seek consensus on

What Facilitators Do NOT Do In This Process

1. Do not assume
2. Do not violate confidential communication
3. Do not dictate agreements
4. Do not impose their own values
5. Do not function as therapists
6. Do not make promises they cannot keep
7. Do not enforce agreements
8. Do not lose self-control