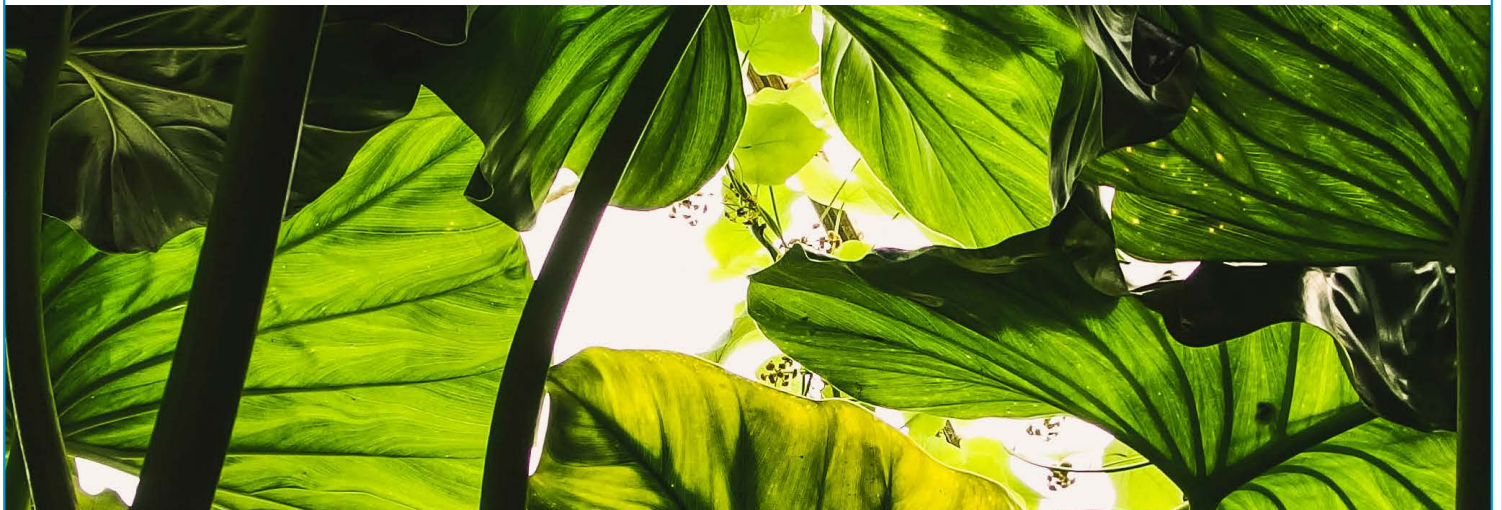


CMind

the center for
Contemplative Mind in Society



Contemplative Community in Higher Education: A Toolkit



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With appreciation for the generous support of Fetzer Institute, which made this project possible.

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Contemplative Community in Higher Education: A Toolkit

Last updated: February 28, 2019.

Check our website for the latest version:

www.contemplativemind.org/communitytoolkit

Produced by CMind, The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society



This toolkit is a project of CMind, The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society, a non-profit organization based in Northampton, MA. Since 1997, CMind’s programs have explored how contemplative practices—activities that help us inquire into our experience—can make a difference in people’s lives and in the environments, institutions, and systems we create together. Since 2008, we’ve primarily worked with faculty, staff, and administrators in colleges and universities. Again and again, we’ve seen people come together at our events and develop bonds based on shared experiences, ideals, and commitments. That sense of connection fuels inspiration, purpose, and possibility.

We have developed this toolkit to support the building of contemplative communities in higher education contexts. It would not have been possible to create it without the experience and wisdom of our network, including the Association for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education, a professional membership association which connects hundreds of education professionals worldwide. We hope that it will support the continued development of living and learning environments that support inquiry into meaning, purpose, and action.

The toolkit is organized into six sections, reflecting common phases and challenges:

1. Intention (Laying the Groundwork)
2. Invitation (Creating a Welcoming Community)
3. Sustainability (Building a Sustainable Community)
4. Meetings and Events
5. Conflict Transformation
6. Connecting the Dots (Being Part of a Larger Movement)

We invite you to dig in and let us know what you find useful here, what could be improved, and what questions and challenges you have that are not addressed in these contents; we are very grateful for your effort to [share your thoughts through this online survey](#).

May we find strength in one another,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Carrie".

Carrie Bergman
Associate Director, CMind
carrie@contemplativemind.org

THE ORIGIN STORY OF THE COMMUNITY BUILDING TOOLKIT

On April 14-17, 2016, CMind and the Fetzer Institute convened 26 individuals for a meeting on creating contemplative communities in higher education at Seasons Retreat and Conference Center in Kalamazoo, Michigan. The meeting arose from a shared commitment between Fetzer and CMind to building connection between faculty, staff, students, and all members of campus communities for personal, institutional, and collective transformation. The intended outcomes of the meeting were:

1. consult with CMind on the creation of a new seed grant program intended to support such communities (the results of this program can be viewed at <http://www.contemplativemind.org/communitygrants>);
2. offer a space for the participants to provide their insight and experience with community building, to inform the creation of resources for those who are interested in initiating (or further developing) communities focused on contemplative practices and methods in higher education.

Whose wisdom was present at the meeting? Participants were invited by CMind staff (namely, Mirabai Bush, Senior Fellow; Daniel Barbezat, Director; Carrie Bergman, Associate Director; and Jennifer Palmer, Program Manager), based on their experience organizing retreats and conferences, student groups, concentrations and degree programs, faculty learning communities, and other academic initiatives, all known to us through the activities of CMind and its initiative, the ACMHE (Association for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education). We invited participants from a range of institutions, regions, academic disciplines, and professional positions, while also paying attention to racial, national, and gender identity and representation. Several members of CMind's Board were also present.

The primary resource we sought to create was a toolkit for campus community building; that is, the document you are now reading! It was developed by Maia Duerr based on notes that Jenn Palmer and Carrie Bergman took at the meeting. Maia selected pieces to illustrate the points highlighted by meeting participants, who also provided valuable feedback on the toolkit draft.

We hope that the resulting document contains a wealth of experience to inform your planning. Of course, no single document can encompass all our collected wisdom on community building. With that in mind, we intend this toolkit to be a living document, able to receive contributions from those who are doing the work.

*If you feel that any important pieces are missing,
we encourage you to tell us [through this online survey](#).*



INTENTION

LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

Community is not a goal to be achieved but a gift to be received.
— Parker Palmer

While it's tempting to jump right in and start planning meetings, events, and other activities, beginning by bringing awareness to how you understand "community" will enable contemplative values to permeate every aspect of the group.

The stated need for "building community" in higher education has become commonplace. However, Dr. Linda Slakey, former board member of the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society, notes that building contemplative community may be foreign to the corporate, industrial and professional cultures that pervade our society and its institutions. The contrast between many stated values and goals in university mission statements, and the realities of individualism, competition, achievement, and utility in the Academy, is persistent and pervasive. Research is often conducted in isolation, promotion and tenure policies may de-emphasize teaching and service work in favor of research, and faculty and staff divides endure.

The sort of contemplative community building described and aspired to in this toolkit aims to move our academic institutions and spaces toward *integrity*: aligning stated values and goals with the actual practices, attitudes, and atmospheres that define the lived and living experience of an institution and its individuals.

Contemplative practices, which have always deepened, developed, and flourished in community contexts, offer us a way to transform the self-centered and outcome-based aspects of academic culture. bell hooks suggests that we focus on the process of "communing" and understand that "community" is always in the making. With this understanding, it is clear that we seek not merely to foster community for its own sake, but as a part of a broader intentionality of our mission and vision for a more just and compassionate society. The intimacy with which we connect with ourselves and with others through these practices fosters a community fabric woven with passionate, genuine concern and love. From this intimacy we gain insight into each other's struggles, perspectives, and experiences, and a rich sense of the issues at hand in working for justice. In short, our practices, our communities, and our collective work towards justice and transformation are all inextricably connected.

With this in mind, during the inception stage of a project or initiative, we encourage a visioning process where your organizing team dedicates several in-depth conversations to the following three areas:

I. INTENTION

Consider these questions:

a) What values form the basis for your community?

If you need a place to begin, we suggest that you consider this list of values that we've identified as emerging from engagement with various contemplative practices:

Core Values/Qualities Associated with Contemplative Practice

- Patience (acceptance, commitment, sustainability)
- Wisdom (understanding, perspective-taking, clarity of thought)
- Honest self-reflection
- Calmness (grounding, centeredness, a sense of ease of being, equanimity)
- Integrity in the midst of complex situations
- Compassion (sensitivity, care, wholesome attitudes and intentions)
- Focus (lucid, attentive awareness, presence)
- Skillful listening and communicating
- Creativity

Have each person on your team rank order your values, from 1 for most important to 10 for least important, and then talk about how each of you made those choices.

You can also check out [this example](#) of a well-considered values statement from Gratefulness.org.

All of this can help your group to draft a statement of your own community's values. Remember that it will be a "living document" that will evolve along with your group.

b) How will you know if those values are being embodied as you progress?

What are the behaviors that are evidence that those values are being practiced in your group? For example, if you choose "compassion" as a value, what actions or behaviors do you associate with that quality?

c) How open will you be to feedback if there is dissonance between espoused values and actual behavior/actions?

What mechanisms will you have for inviting feedback and becoming aware of places of resonance and dissonance? (One practice you may want to consider is Council Circle—see more in the Conflict Transformation section of this toolkit.)



RESOURCES

Here are some more resources to help you explore how "community" can be envisioned, developed, defined, and nurtured.

[Jemez Principles for Democratic Organizing](#): "On December 6-8, 1996, forty people of color and European-American representatives met in Jemez, New Mexico, for the 'Working Group Meeting on Globalization and Trade.' ... The following 'Jemez Principles' for democratic organizing were adopted by the participants."

Bruce Tuckman's [stages of group development](#)—Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing, and Adjourning—can be a helpful framework for understanding group dynamics (see "Developmental sequence in small groups," *Psychological Bulletin*, 63(6), 384-399. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/h0022100>).

II. PURPOSE

What is the primary purpose of the community, the one to which you want to dedicate the most time and energy? What is its secondary purpose? Here are some possibilities:

- Honoring the interconnectedness of individuals, groups, and environments on campuses and in local communities;
- Creating spaces and opportunities for inquiry into meaning, purpose, spirituality, and the sacred;
- Demonstrating openness to contemplative methods and practices from a variety of traditions, systems, and disciplines;
- Fostering capacities that are needed to meet the challenges we currently face, on local to global levels;
- Engaging in group processes that foster inclusiveness across disciplines, roles, and/or social identities (e.g., race, ethnicity, religion, gender, socioeconomic status, ability, sexual orientation);
- Supporting the integration and retention of students, staff, and/or faculty who have traditionally been marginalized in higher education (low-income students, first generation students, students with disabilities, etc).
- What is possible and practical as a reasonable initiative or project?

[Systems-Centered](#) theory and training (see also Agazarian & Gantt, [SCT® in Action: Applying the Systems-Centered Approach in Organizations](#)) emphasizes the importance of boundaries and functional subgrouping to help groups and organizations set and meet goals.

[10 Principles for Creating Healthy Communities](#), from Margaret Wheatley. In this [video](#), Margaret Wheatley talks about her 10 principles.

[Exercises for Determining Your Organization's Values](#) was developed by Help 4 NonProfits & Tribes for use in nonprofit organizations, but has many helpful questions that can be adapted for smaller groups and communities in other settings.

The film [Black Is...Black Ain't](#) by Marlon Riggs asks, "Is there an essential Black identity? Is there a litmus test defining the real Black man and true Black woman?"

III. UNDERSTANDING YOUR LARGER CONTEXT

Given the particular dynamics and structure of the intended community (institution, faculty, staff, students, broader community, cross-institutional community, administrators, educational leaders, etc.), consider these questions:

- What is possible and practical as a reasonable initiative or project?
- Who are natural allies?
- What language is appropriate?
- What values are worth emphasizing and fostering?
- What activities or events are most appropriate?
- What can be learned from past attempts at community building in your institution?

We encourage you to also consider how your community is embedded in a wider network of systems, which are impacted by privilege related to race, class, gender, physical and cognitive abilities, and more.

In his essay [The Ethical Space of Mindfulness in Clinical Practice](#) (2013), Don McCown uses examples from mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) in clinical practice to discuss definitions of mindfulness, group curricula, relationships and other aspects of the ethical space created through mindfulness-based group experiences.

[13 Ways of Looking at Community](#) by Parker Palmer

[Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope](#) by bell hooks



INVITATION

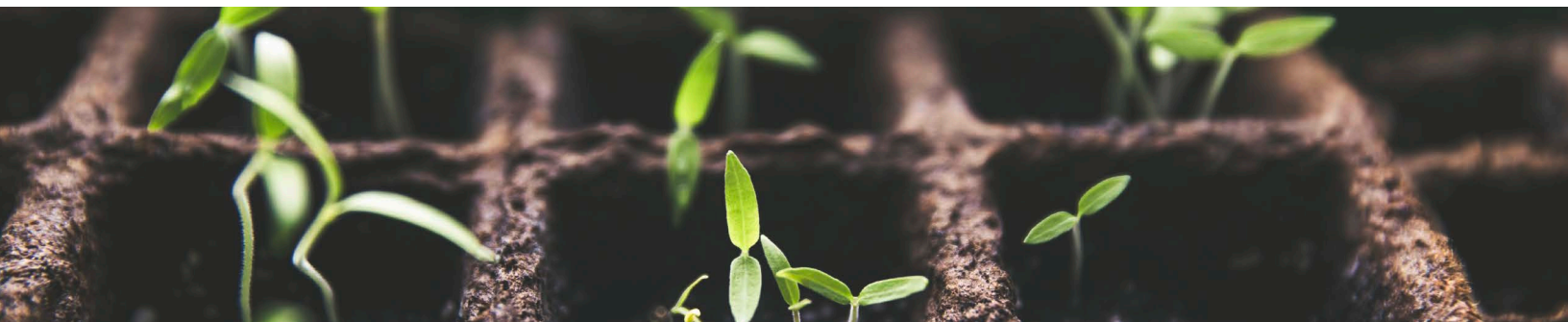
CREATING A WELCOMING COMMUNITY

“To build community requires vigilant awareness of the work we must continually do to undermine all the socialization that leads us to behave in ways that perpetuate domination.”
— bell hooks, *Teaching Community*

A welcoming community is not merely comprised of people from different backgrounds (age, gender orientation, ethnicity, economic class, physical ability, etc). It is a community that intentionally promotes and sustains a sense of belonging and empowerment for all of its members.

A contemplative approach to diversity and inclusion derives affirmation from awareness of our individual perspectives, experiences, identities, and the differences and commonalities between us. It invites us to look at ourselves and become aware of our own biases—which each of us has, no matter how progressive we may think we are. We can also develop and refine our awareness of privilege and how we may act from positions of privilege, as well as ways in which others we wish to be welcome in our community may not be privileged or acting from positions without privilege. One indicator of this disparity may be found in disparities of vocality: who is more or less comfortable being vocal, to share their opinions with the group? Another indicator may be found in terms of location in the room: who situates themselves toward the front of the room, or at the back, and with whom? Being mindful of such dynamics is one thing; attempting to address and improve them is another.

Thus, as a group, how can we commit to becoming mindful of ways in which we may unknowingly be creating conditions that prevent people from feeling welcomed and included? What might be the barriers—physical, social, and emotional—that make it difficult for people to access, feel completely welcome in, and fully participate in our community? How might the way we are talking about and presenting contemplative practices be meaningful for people from diverse backgrounds, or how might they feel “shut out”?



As Rhonda Magee (2015) writes,

Though it sounds simple, actually creating and maintaining inclusive classrooms is multifaceted, if not daunting work. It requires understanding of both inclusivity, and of the common barriers to it—including explicit and implicit bias, the lack of a sense of safety around identity in learning communities, and the tendency to be reluctant to discuss race and other potentially divisive identity issues in mixed groups. And it requires not merely the development of strategies for addressing these barriers and ameliorating them, but also the development of skills and capacities in ourselves and in our students for increasing the sense of inclusivity and identity-safety in any given learning community.

**These questions can be a helpful guide
as your group considers inclusivity:**

Have you reflected on who you are inviting into your community?
Who have you not invited?

What are possible obstacles for those you may want to invite? Often there are structural barriers that organizers fail to take into account, such as no interpretation of language (including sign language), no gender-neutral washrooms, no childcare, not accessible to wheelchairs/scooters, no access to the meeting or event location by public transportation.

What are you willing to risk in order to include the people you want to include? What can be gained from creating a wider circle of inclusion?

How can you make accommodations so that your community is accessible (e.g. access for mobility needs, scheduling issues for staff/faculty/students)? Once you understand certain limitations, are you able and willing to accommodate them or not?

If you already have an existing center, concentration, or major focused on contemplative studies, how do you extend your community beyond that to include anyone on campus who might be interested in exploring contemplative practices?

How do you frame your communication with others? As an offer? An invitation?

How are you defining the terms that you use (e.g. contemplative, mindfulness, etc.)? How might the language you are using be exclusionary? Inclusive? Pluralistic?

RESOURCES


Tools

[The Implicit Association Test](#) (IAT), developed by three university professors, measures attitudes and beliefs that people may be unwilling or unable to report. The IAT is an online test that comes in a number of different versions, including Gender, Race, Disability, and Age.

[White Awake](#) is an open source curriculum that brings mindfulness, critical inquiry, and embodied forms of practice to white affinity work and the development of white racial awareness. The work is evolving, collaborative, and responsive to the needs of white individuals and white-dominant communities who want to increase their understanding of racism and leverage their privilege to end it.

[The Big Wind Blows](#) is an exercise developed by [Tools for Change](#) that can warm up a group for deeper conversations or activities on themes of diversity and identity, and to release tension or anxiety around self-disclosure on these topics.

Ruth King's [Racial Affinity Group \(RAG\) guidelines](#). (See also Dr. King's book [Mindful of Race](#), listed below.)

 [Tree of Contemplative Practices](#), a tool of The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society, illustrates the diverse forms that contemplative practice can take. It's a helpful tool for talking about contemplative practices in an accessible way.

Readings

[Mindful of Race: Transforming Racism From The Inside Out](#) by Ruth King (Sounds True, 2008)

[How Mindfulness Can Defeat Racial Bias](#)
by Rhonda Magee

[The Way of ColorInsight: Understanding Race and Law Effectively Through Mindfulness-Based ColorInsight Practices](#) by Rhonda Magee, *The Georgetown Law Journal of Modern Critical Race Perspectives*, Spring 2016. Quoted from a draft dated December 20, 2015.

[Identity Safe Classrooms: Places to Belong and Learn](#)
by Dorothy M. Steele and Becki Cohn-Vargas


While the content and activities in this book are geared toward early childhood education, the principles remain the same for all groups.

CMind's Contemplative Education Webinars


All of our webinars on contemplative higher education are archived [here](#).

 [Towards an Embodied Social Justice: Integrating Mindfulness into Anti-Oppression Pedagogy](#)
with Dr. Elizabeth Berila


How does embodiment play a role in unlearning oppression? How might our identity locations and our lived experiences shape our responses to mindfulness practices? What kinds of consequences from oppression might arise for students when we integrate contemplative practices into the classroom? How can professors be prepared for these diverse responses and effectively support students?

 [Using Contemplative Practices to Promote Well Being and Social Justice Awareness](#)
with Dr. Michelle Chatman

In this webinar, Dr. Chatman shares some of the contemplative practices she uses in her classes to deepen student learning, enhance well-being, and inspire a commitment to social justice. These practices include Well-being and Diversity Days, The Mindfulness Challenge, and The Coltrane Meditation.

 [Trauma-Sensitive Mindfulness: Practices for Safe and Transformative Healing](#)
with Dr. David Treleaven

Webinar participants can learn about modifications designed to support survivors' safety and stability that can be applied to higher education settings. The result is a groundbreaking and practical approach for practicing mindfulness in a safe, transformative way.

 [Contemplation, Reflexivity, and Gender/Sexual Diversity in the Classroom](#)
with Dr. Kerr Mesner

This webinar offers an introduction to Dr. Mesner's work developing contemplative and anti-oppressive approaches to addressing issues of gender/sexual diversity in higher education contexts.



Tip: Throughout this toolkit, the star symbol indicates that a resource is provided by The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society.



SUSTAINABILITY

BUILDING A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY

If you want to build a ship, don't drum up people to collect wood and don't assign them tasks and work, but rather teach them to long for the endless immensity of the sea.
— Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

Paying attention to leadership structures and models is important to fostering vibrant, sustainable community. In organizing “new” groups and communities, our default setting can be to think in terms of hierarchical structures, with one person as leader (and usually with unrealistic expectations about what that one person can do, and how they should be). With such a structure, initiatives can be abandoned if that one person, who may be the founder of the project or a primary champion of the cause, moves on.

How can your organizational structure and leadership model reflect the values you hold for your community? What are some more equitable organizational models that reflect contemplative values, foster inclusiveness, and support sustainability?

We've included a number of resources on the following pages on organizational and leadership models that offer a chance to embody a contemplative perspective.



QUESTIONS FOR YOUR GROUP'S REFLECTION

How might our community create a culture that is generative, energizing, and supports each of its members' well-being, growth, and flourishing? As we consider organizational structures, are we adhering to a dominant framework in a way that replicates oppression? What processes and structures might enable a different result?

What language do we use to describe the person or persons who drive the contemplative initiative in our community? Leader? Facilitator? Contemplative wisdom carrier? Other? What impact does that language have on the whole group? How might people feel included or excluded based on this language?

What responsibilities need to be taken care of by the group, and what is the most sustainable form to do this? Can leadership be shared, and/or rotated?

How can we encourage each member of our community to exercise personal leadership even if they aren't in a formally designated leadership position? How can we support them to express their insights and wisdom on the activities and direction of the community, and know that they have been heard?

Whatever your role within this community, can you consider questions like these: What can I give away? What can I let go of? What can I offer others? Can the community hold me as much as I hold them?

How are power and control expressed in our community? *It's essential to be conscious of what kind of power is operating in a group, and how people give (or don't give) consent to it. The Decision-Making Matrix (included in the resources on the following page) can be a helpful awareness-building exercise for this process.*

RESOURCES



[Creating the Contemplative Organization: Lessons from the Field](#)

This report from The Center for Contemplative Mind in Society summarizes the lessons learned by three organizations in their efforts to integrate contemplative values and practices in the workplace. Includes ideas for workplace/community practices.

[Decision-Making Model](#)

The Vroom-Yetton-Jago Normative Decision Model identifies five different styles (ranging from autocratic to consultative to group-based decisions) that can be used depending on the situation and level of involvement. To learn more, see Vroom, Victor H.; Yetton, Phillip W. (1973). *Leadership and Decision-Making*. Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press.

[Decision-Making Matrix](#)

Use this exercise (developed by Maia Duerr) as a starting point to talk about decision-making models. As a group, look at the scenarios that are described at the bottom of this handout (you can also add scenarios that your group is facing in “real time”). Each person places the number of that scenario in the grid, in the associated decision-making style they would find most appropriate. Then have everyone share their matrix. Notice where members of your group agree around scenarios/models and where there is disagreement. This can be a rich opportunity for uncovering different approaches to making decisions. Even if full agreement can’t be reached, it’s important to come to this level of transparency around decision-making within a group.

[Nuts and Bolts of Building an Alliance](#)

In the early stages of community building, a number of “stuck points” can emerge in relationship to governance and leadership. This toolkit from the [Movement Strategy Center](#), particularly pages 15–17, offers very practical guidance on getting unstuck.

Alternative Organizational Models

[Teal](#)

Teal organizations focus on their members’ abilities to self-organize and self-manage to achieve the purpose of the organization. Positions and job descriptions are replaced with roles, where one worker can fill multiple roles. This website is full of useful resources to learn more about this paradigm and implement it.

[Holacracy](#)

Holacracy replaces the traditional management hierarchy with a new peer-to-peer “operating system” that increases transparency, accountability, and organizational agility.

Leadership

[Contemplative Leadership: Power, Passion, and Hope](#) by Leah Rampey of the Shalem Institute.

[Empathy 101](#) by Daniel Goleman, explains the three types of empathy that leaders, teachers, and parents should have.

[Creative Social Change: Leadership for a Healthy World](#), edited by Kathryn Goldman Schuyler, John Eric Baugher, Karin Jironet.

[Leading with Spirit, Presence, and Authenticity](#), edited by Kathryn Goldman Schuyler, John Eric Baugher, Karin Jironet, Lena Lid-Falkman.



MEETINGS AND EVENTS

There is no way to peace, peace is the way.
—A.J. Muste

In a community, especially one based on contemplative values, *how* we do things is just as important as *what* we do—if not more so. The actual activities of the group—from meetings to events to marketing and more—can be a wonderful vehicle to practice and embody your values and intentions.

In a guide to running “contemplative meetings,” Mirabai Bush (a founder of the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society) writes:

Meetings can create familiar group dynamics—ways of collective communicating, sharing, and understanding. These ways can provide us with useful information and tools to help us get our work done. They also have their shadow sides, which can prove challenging to overcome. For example, in a traditional meeting format it can be easy for a group to become easily distracted by cross-talk, for participants to take rigid positions, and for the voices of less-outspoken people to be drowned out by others. Investigating new forms of group process may help us to overcome some of these pitfalls and give us access to new kinds of information and ways of knowing.

One exercise you may want to go through early in the process of forming community is to generate group agreements that will help guide how people participate in meetings and events. Here’s an example of a set of agreements:

1. Bring your whole self (emotional, intellectual, spiritual, physical).
2. Stretch yourself.
3. Step up / step back (practice active listening as much as active speaking).
4. Check yourself (W.A.I.T. — Why am I talking?).
5. Seek to understand (ask questions, don’t make assumptions, or at least be aware of assumptions).
6. Expect unfinished business (use the “parking lot” for this: topics which require attention at a later time are put “in the parking lot” for future consideration).
7. Trust the process.

Even the process of coming up with agreements like this can surface dynamics in your group that need to be addressed. Remember to approach all of it with an open mind and heart, and a spirit of loving curiosity.

RESOURCES

Readings



[Contemplative Meetings](#)

[10 Tips to Run a Mindful Meeting](#) by Ray Williams

[Listening as a Transformative Practice](#) by Jaime O'Connor, MA, describes the practice of deep listening as an essential piece of community building.

[Meeting Facilitation: The No Magic Method](#) by Berit Lakey (of Training for Change) includes helpful guidance on how to plan and review an agenda and effectively facilitate a meeting. [More tools for meeting facilitation and activities can be found here.](#)

See suggested practices starting on page 37 of Rhonda's article on ColorInsight, "Forming the Learning Circle." [The Way of ColorInsight: Understanding Race and Law Effectively Through Mindfulness-Based ColorInsight Practices](#) by Rhonda Magee, *The Georgetown Law Journal of Modern Critical Race Perspectives*, Spring 2016.

Contemplative Education Webinars

All of CMind's webinars on contemplative higher education are archived [here](#).



[Fostering Contemplative Life Skills on a College Campus Outside the Classroom](#) is a case study of a community at Dartmouth College; a webinar with Helen Damon-Moore, Nancy Vogele, Mark Kutolowski, and Kathleen Moore.



[Knowing & Growing: Creating and Sustaining Contemplative Communities](#), presented by Stephanie Briggs, investigates event design and facilitation through the example of a campus community at the Community College of Baltimore County.





CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

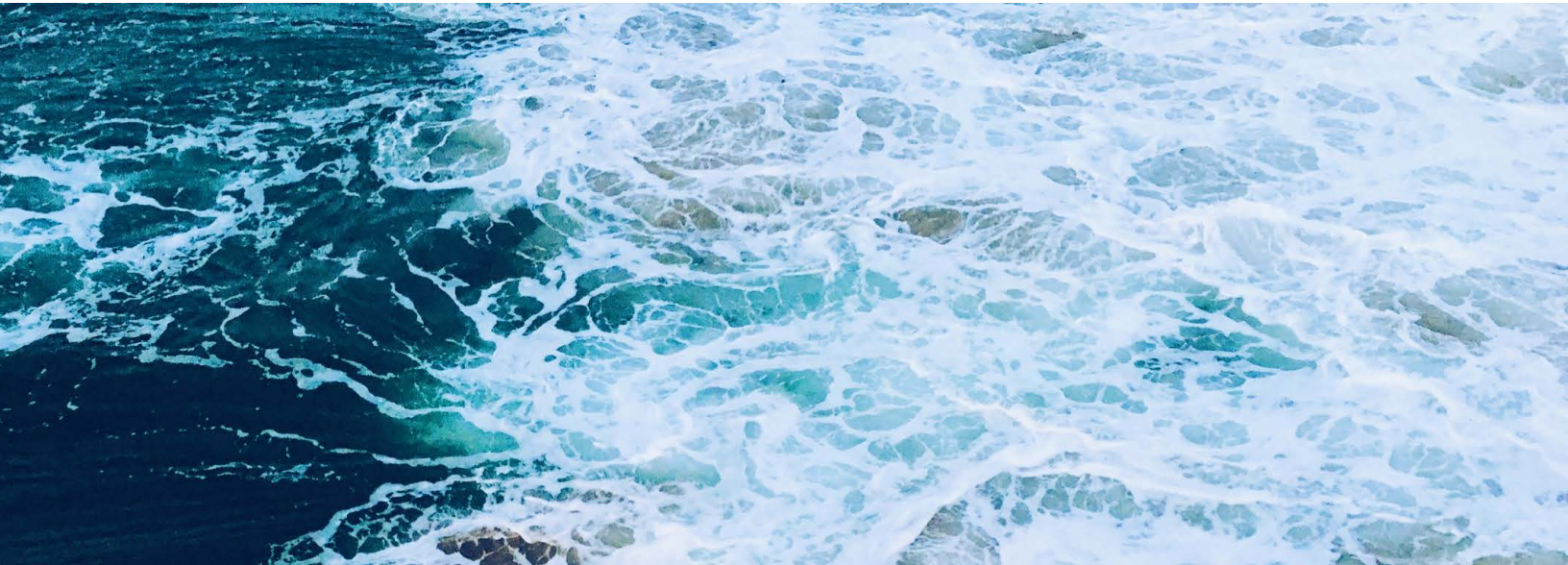
We are not going to deal with the violence in our communities, our homes, and our nation, until we learn to deal with the basic ethic of how we resolve our disputes and to place an emphasis on peace in the way we relate to one another.

— Marian Wright Edelman

In any group, differences of opinions and even conflicts are inevitable. How can we make space for fear, discomfort, and discouragement as the community building process occurs? How can contemplative approaches help our communities view conflict as a doorway to deeper insights and connection rather than as a threat?

The very phrase “conflict transformation” signals that we are interested in an approach that doesn’t seek to “resolve” differences too quickly, which may result in overlooking deeper issues that are affecting community members. John Paul Lederach, who coined the term, writes, “This perspective understands peace as embedded in justice. It emphasizes the importance of building right relationships and social structures through a radical respect for human rights and life. It advocates nonviolence as a way of life and work.”

As a first step when a group wades into conflict, it can be helpful to use founding values as a compass. What have you, as a community, agreed is most important? Can you use these values to help you navigate different viewpoints?



RESOURCES

[Just Like Me](#), a practice developed by Mirabai Bush, is a means to develop empathy and compassion by considering our variations of shared experience. The vulnerability of this practice can be emotionally intense, and so it is often (but not exclusively) well-suited to groups with some familiarity.

[The Little Book of Conflict Transformation](#)
by John Paul Lederach

NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION

The Nonviolent Communication (NVC) model can support a reflective approach to conflict. NVC includes a simple method for clear, empathic communication, consisting of four steps: observations, feelings, needs, and requests.

Many of us have been educated from birth to compete, judge, demand and diagnose—to think and communicate in terms of what is “right” and “wrong.” NVC aims to find a way for all present to get what really matters to them without the use of guilt, humiliation, shame, blame, coercion, or threats.

NVC Resources

[4-Part NVC process](#)

This handout guides you through a simple process to identify your emotions, the needs related to them, and then communicating your request to others.

[An illustrated guide to practicing the four steps of NVC](#)

[Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life](#) by Marshall Rosenberg, founder of NVC

[Trainings in NVC](#) (online and in-person)

COUNCIL CIRCLE PROCESS

The ancient process of Council fosters attentive listening, authentic expression, and creative spontaneity. Council practice can build positive relationships between participants and neutralizes hierarchical dynamics fostered by inequality of status, race, economic stature or other social factors. The practice has been applied to diverse group settings, including schools and prisons, by the [Center for Council](#).

Council Process Resources

[The Way of Council](#) by Jack Zimmerman and Virginia Coyle

[The Circle Way](#)

[Trainings in Council Circle process](#) by the Center for Council



CONNECTING THE DOTS

BEING PART OF A LARGER MOVEMENT

*Some day, after we have mastered the winds, the tides, and gravity
we shall harness the energies of love. Then for a second time
in the history of the world we will have discovered fire.*
—Pierre Teilhard de Chardin

Your community-building efforts connect to a larger movement to cultivate a contemplative perspective in higher education and effect social change. How can you be part of and contribute to this movement? How can you place the work of your community in a larger context of emancipatory practices that move us toward social, racial, environmental, and economic justice? And if you offer opportunities for practice in your community, how can you do so with integrity?

We've included resources here to help you understand what ACMHE and CMind can offer in support of your efforts, as well as how you can connect with this larger movement in strategic and sustainable ways.

RESOURCES

On connecting with the larger movement

[How to Stop Competing and Start Building Community](#) by Charlotte Millar

[Movement Pivots: Five Steps to Collective Impact and Transformative Social Change](#) from the Movement Strategy Center.

Networking Opportunities



Membership in the [Association for Contemplative Mind in Higher Education \(ACMHE\)](#) connects you to a worldwide, interdisciplinary network. The ACMHE offers member benefits in the form of resources, ways of finding and communicating with other members, and event discounts, such as to the annual ACMHE conference.

The ACMHE listserv is one way to reach like-minded colleagues ([only for members, so here's a link to the ACMHE page](#)). Conferences and other events are listed here: <http://www.contemplativemind.org/upcoming-events>. The ACMHE also has a [searchable member directory](#).

The UK-based [Contemplative Pedagogy Network](#) evolved after a meeting in London of six educators, trainers and lecturers with a shared interest in contemplative practice. The network functions as a JISC mail list that anyone can ask to be added to.

[Mindfulness and Contemplative Education](#) is a website that aims to provide an international hub for scholars, researchers, teachers and students who are working in the rapidly growing field of contemplative education.

The [Mindfulness in Education Network](#) was founded in 2001 by a group of educators, students of the Buddhist teacher Thich Nhat Hanh. The network serves connects many in K-12 and other levels, as well as higher education.

Publishing Opportunities



[The Journal of Contemplative Inquiry](#), published by the Center for Contemplative Mind in Society, is an online, peer-reviewed, scholarly journal for all those who create, research, use, and assess contemplative and introspective methods and practices in college and university settings. Submissions about the impact and benefits of contemplative academic communities are welcome.

[The Arrow: A Journal of Wakeful Society, Culture & Politics](#) explores the relationship between contemplative practice, politics, and activism. Inspired by Chögyam Trungpa Rinpoche, it investigates topics in politics, economics, ecology, conflict transformation, and the social sciences. Calls for submissions are listed on their website.

[MindRxiv](#) is an open archive for research on mind and contemplative practices hosted by the nonprofit Center for Open Science (COS) and managed by the Mind & Life Institute. MindRxiv provides a free and publicly accessible platform for contemplative researchers within the sciences and humanities to upload working papers, preprints, published papers, data and code.

Funding Opportunities

Hemera Foundation's [Contemplative Fellowships](#) support individuals in retreats to cultivate mindfulness, compassion, personal well-being, and professional efficacy.

Mind & Life Institute's [P.E.A.C.E. Grants](#) support research on investigating and nurturing wholesome mental qualities related to Prosociality, Empathy, Altruism, Compassion, and Ethics (P.E.A.C.E.).

Mind & Life Institute's [Varela Grants](#) fund rigorous examinations of contemplative techniques, so that findings derived from such research will provide greater insight into practice's role in reducing human suffering and promoting flourishing. Grants of up to \$15,000 are awarded to graduate students, postdocs, and junior faculty through a competitive application, review, and selection process.

Mind & Life Institute's [Think Tanks Program](#) offer grants of up to \$15,000 to support the travel, accommodations and general organization of small groups of collaborators including scientists, scholars, humanitarian leaders and changemakers, contemplative practitioners, educators and applied professionals to workshop a coherent topic with well-defined outcomes and potentially high impact.



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