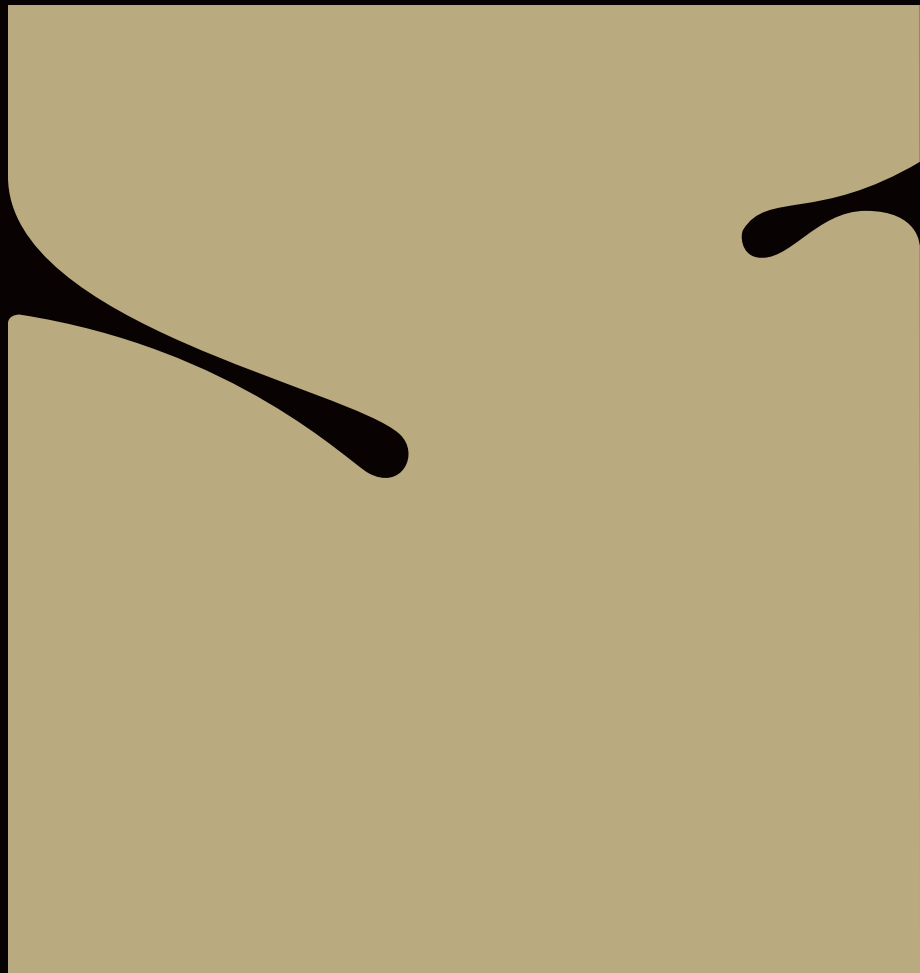


# DANCEMAKERS CONFLICT PRACTICE(S)



AT DANCEMAKERS, WE BELIEVE CONFLICT CAN BE GENERATIVE  
WHEN DEALT WITH SAFELY AND INTENTIONALLY.  
READ MORE ABOUT OUR PRACTICES AND BELIEFS INSIDE

# COMMITMENTS IN CONFLICT

## Dancemakers commits to:

- Staying with difficulty rather than rushing to resolution, while also respecting that tensions addressed when they arise helps make more intentional choices about escalation.
- Prioritizing the needs of those most impacted by harm
- Conducting post-mortems to capture conflict learning (while deeply respecting confidentiality)
- Regularly revisiting and evolving this policy through community feedback
- Investing in the skills, processes and approaches of those involved in the projects we support to help build more supportive networks.

# ASPIRATIONS IN CONFLICT

## Dancemakers moves through conflict grounded in these principles and ideas:

- We don't throw people away
- We prioritize personal and group safety as much as possible
- We believe that growth is possible through conflict and we support the learning of the necessary skills to be in conflict and learn from being in conflict
- The process of art-making can be messy and we encourage staying with the mess
- We hope that Dancemakers can be a place to work towards healing
- We acknowledge that our communities are vast and small. People may cross paths with each even if resolution has not been accomplished.
- We acknowledge that our responses may be shaped by our own intersectional identities and trauma-responses

# DEFINITION(S) OF CONFLICT

We define **conflict** as something that exists in the presence of differing needs, beliefs, expectations, and/or commitments.

When **conflict surfaces**, it can manifest as tension or the experience of discomfort based on real or perceived competing interests and/or needs.

**Interpersonally**, this might feel like difficulty understanding each other, misalignment in acted values or disagreements on elements inside or outside of the project.

We define **hurt** as negative outcomes from un-intentional behaviours. We define **harm** as negative outcomes from intentional (or negligent) behaviours.

Sometimes escalation and conflict is necessary and generative.



Harassment and/or abuse is incessant and continued harm. If this is your experience, please see our **Anti-Harassment Policy**.



To learn more about our influences visit Mariam Kaba's "**In It Together**"



and Pam Tzeng's "**Ripples of Relation**"

# DEFINITION(S) OF CONFLICT

## **Accountability over punishment:**

We commit to providing an intentional, care-filled approach to conflict and facilitate accountability rather than punishment. Sometimes, we can harm others without our knowledge or awareness. We understand the effect of harm as valid even if there wasn't malicious intent and we expect artists to take accountability for their actions within these contexts.

## **Plurality (and associated access):**

In welcoming a variety of different viewpoints, wisdom and experiences as integral and respected in our organization, we commit to creating processes that value diversity. This includes accommodating different needs, communication styles, cultural backgrounds, and access requirements, ensuring everyone can meaningfully participate regardless of ability, language, position, or resources.

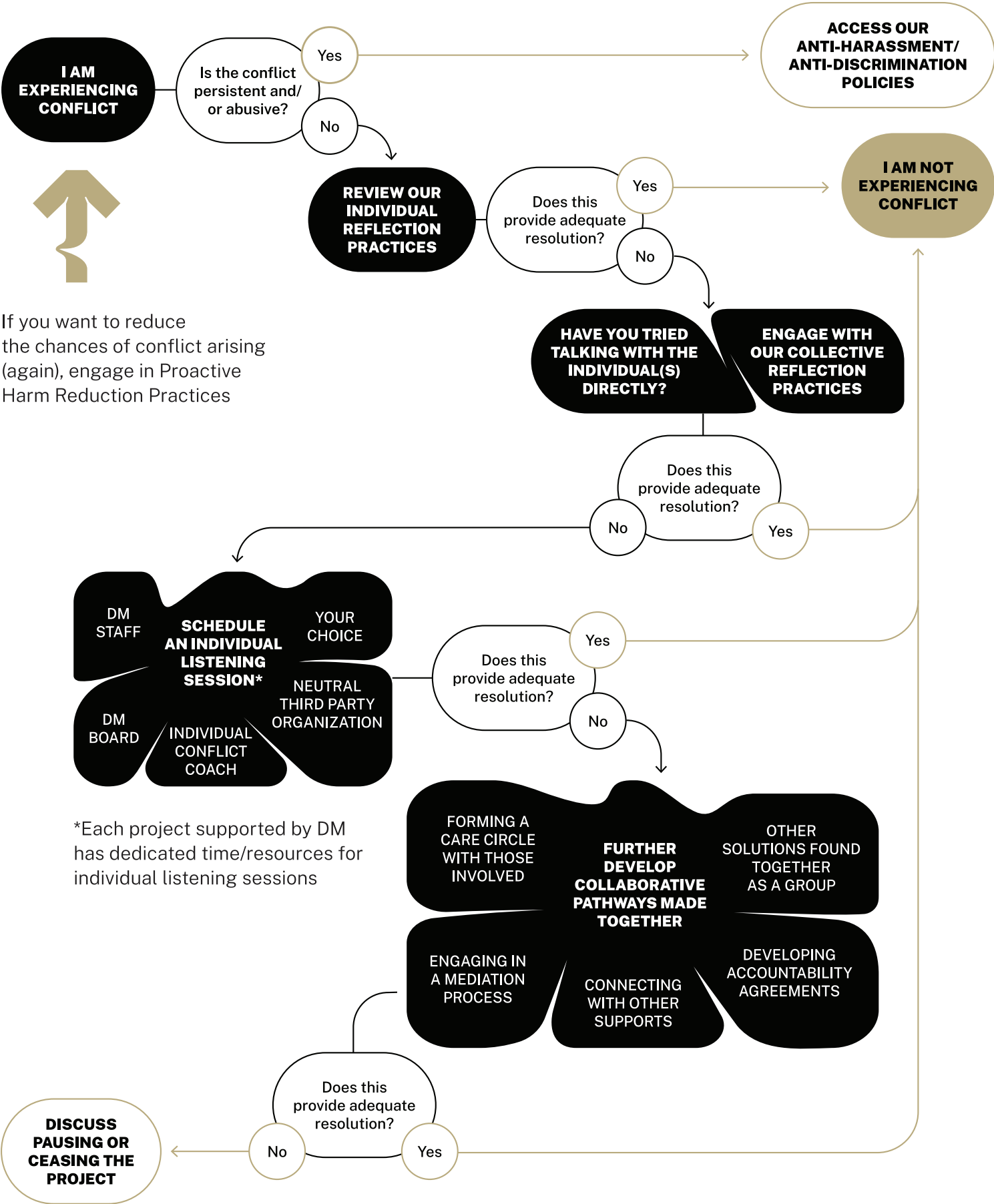
## **Safe(r) Spaces:**

We prioritize the desire to be as safe as possible in Dancemakers environments. We also acknowledge that no space of relation with others can be perfectly safe and so rather than aim for the impossible, we prepare for possibilities of harm through connection and relationship building.

## **Documentation, Learning and Confidentiality:**

We document patterns and outcomes (while respecting privacy) to build organizational memory and improve our practices.

# CONFLICT MAP



If you want to reduce the chances of conflict arising (again), engage in Proactive Harm Reduction Practices

\*Each project supported by DM has dedicated time/resources for individual listening sessions

# PROACTIVE HARM- REDUCTION PRACTICE(S)

**Do you want to reduce the chances  
of experiencing conflict during your  
time at Dancemakers?**

We encourage these approaches  
to nurture healthy connections and  
address tensions early:

- Learning about and respecting each collaborator's accessibility needs, communication preferences and working-styles by making time for 'expectation meetings' and 'check ins'.
- Establishing communication parameters that attempt to honor a diversity of communication needs and styles, which may include direct conversation, written exchange, certain pacing or supported dialogue when possible and safe.
- Creating intentional pauses to remind collaborators that this allows for more intentional choice making.

# INDIVIDUAL REFLECTION PRACTICE(S)

**Are you experiencing the beginnings of conflict during your time at Dancemakers?**

We encourage those involved to take care of their own needs (as they know themselves best):

- Take time for self-reflection and embodied awareness of your needs
- Seek perspectives from a personal trusted peer in your own network (someone outside the situation like a friend or chosen family member) in order to be able to reflect on the situation and gain trustworthy advice
- Seek appropriate support from Elders and/or therapists... etc, if required\*

\*We recognize that Dancemakers works on a project-by-project structure that does not provide artists access to traditional health benefits. Project budgets can include care support for artists during the project timeline if required. In Toronto, the **Artists Health Centre** is one resource that offers mental health support at a discounted rate.



# COLLECTIVE REFLECTION PRACTICE(S)

We believe that many moments of conflict can provide us with opportunities to address others directly with honesty and respect. This allows us to strengthen our communication together.

Check in individually and/or collectively with those involved to help build better understanding (try **nonviolent communication** strategies and using “I” statements)

Be humble and offer **sincere apologies** when mistakes have been made (we use Rania El Mugammar’s ‘Anatomy of an Apology’ as a guide)



# LISTENING SESSION(S)

Artists working with Dancemakers can request an active listening session. This initial conversation creates space to be heard without immediately involving others or expecting solutions.

Find bios and conflict approaches (as well as training DM staff has engaged with) here.



You can reach out to:

- Christina at **artistic@dancemakers.org**
- Cara at **producer@dancemakers.org**
- Individual Conflict Coach: contact **board@dancemakers.org** to set up a session
- Neutral Third Party Organization: contact **board@dancemakers.org** to set up a session
- Someone of your own choosing

Each project that Dancemakers supports are provided 2 hours of paid, confidential active listening sessions with the person of their choosing.

# COLLABORATIVE PATHWAY(S)

For situations that need additional support:

**Co-creating a process together:** Those involved in the conflict collaboratively determine what support would be most helpful, who should be included, and what resources might be needed.

Based on the collective needs, possibilities may include:

- Forming a care circle to hold space for addressing the situation (with or without the supports available listed above)
- Connecting with external resources or additional support people
- Creating space for sharing impacts and extending/receiving apologies
- Developing specific accountability and support to move towards repair
- Pausing or ceasing the project if safe agreements cannot be made



# TRAUMA-AWARE APPROACH(ES) TO CONFLICT

At Dancemakers, we recognize conflict as a natural part of human relationships and working together. Rather than avoiding conflict, we view it as an opportunity for growth, deeper connection and organizational transformation when approached with care and intention.

We believe that when conflict is tended to under supportive conditions, it can be generative — creating space for growth, deeper understanding, and the emergence of new possibilities that might otherwise remain undiscovered.

Though being in conflict can be difficult, we believe it to be an opportunity to better understand and invest in the ongoing (life-long) iterative, internal work required to better know ourselves and how we relate and respond to those around us.

To learn more about the processes and voices that have contributed to our values and worldview, you can read the report conducted by the Laboratory for Artistic Intelligence.

