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## **Conflict-Free Conflict Resolution (CFCR) Process and Methodology**

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### ***Abstract***

*Conflict-free Conflict Resolution (CFCR) is an emerging theory and practice of conflict resolution. Building upon traditions of innovation within the field of dispute resolution, as well as insights from a variety of disciplines including conflict studies, peace studies and developmental psychology, CFCR aims to be a unity-centered practice. Both the method and outcomes of CFCR are attempts to reflect the possibilities of helping to create conditions of unity between individuals and communities. The purpose of this article is primarily descriptive, aiming to give an initial overview of CFCR as a practice. This description is rooted in the initial applications of CFCR in a number of contexts. In this article, the theoretical underpinnings of the CFCR model are summarized, CFCR's connections with the contemporary conflict resolution scholarship are explored, and the three stages of CFCR are outlined.*

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## **Introduction**

The relationship between conflict resolution<sup>1</sup> theory and practice has been a vexing one. Joseph A. Scimecca argues, in reference to “alternative dispute resolution” (ADR) “...there is little, if any theory in the field of ADR” and similarly that “practitioners do little more than pay lip service to theory” (1993, 212). This lack of theory reflects the fact that the predominant trend in the field of conflict resolution has been for theory to follow practice. As Avruch, Black, and Scimecca state, “...theory follows practice,...or one can say that practice dominates theory. The implication of this, of course, is that *where* practice is situated *there* theory will be derived” (1991, 4).

While practice may dominate theory, it is also true that underlying any practice is implicit theory—sets of assumptions that justify, explain, and rationalize the shape of particular practices. Admittedly, the label “theory” should only be attached to a practice that has achieved a degree of explicitness and systematization. However, this rather formal qualification does not change the fact that practice always operates within architectures of ideas, assumptions, and meanings that shape and inform it. Practice and theory are always integrated and interrelated—we just might not be conscious of this fact or of the nature of the underlying theory in a particular instance.

As well, in many sectors of the conflict resolution field, the historic pattern of practice dominating theory—and leaving implicit the theoretical underpinnings of particular practices—has been giving way to those individuals who consciously work with both theory and practice to integrate them. As John S. Murray observes, “...conflict resolution theorists and practitioners operate within two independent cultures; yet they both understand and appreciate their interdependence.” He further notes that “many academics also conduct an active, albeit part-time, conflict resolution practice,” while “practitioners do not often accept theoretical models without question, nor do they apply those theories without shaping them to fit specific conditions” (1993, 222).

Perhaps the clearest examples of the growth of conscious integration of conflict resolution theory and practice are the number of explicit attempts at process and practice innovation in recent years. When innovation is the conscious object, a level of transparency concerning the relationship between theory and practice is often achieved. This is seen in such well-known innovations as transformative mediation (Baruch Bush and Folger, 1994), narrative mediation (Winslade and Monk, 2000), and the cooperative conflict-resolution model (Coleman and Fisher-Yoshida). For example, the International Center for Cooperation and Conflict Resolution makes explicit the importance of conscious integration of theory and practice. Peter T. Coleman and Beth Fisher-Yoshida write, “Our philosophy links theory and research closely with practice....we employ a ‘reflective scholar-practitioner model’ in our many scholarly, educational and practical endeavors” (undated, 3).

A similarly conscious process to integrate theory and practice has taken place over the last ten years with the development of Conflict-Free Conflict Resolution (CFCR). A small group of scholar-practitioners—primarily located at Landegg International University in Switzerland where both authors taught and conducted research—has articulated a particular set of assumptions and ideas about the nature of “conflict” and “resolution.” Based on these assumptions, those scholar-practitioners have critiqued current predominant practices and developed CFCR as an innovative practice reflecting

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those particular assumptions and ideas. The authors draw from their respective fields of expertise and practice—psychiatry with specialization in marriage and family issues, conflicts and violence studies and peace education (H.B. Danesh) and law with specialization in constitutional law and ADR. (R. Danesh).

CFCR can take a variety of forms, and be used in a number of contexts. As this paper aims to introduce the broad spectrum of applications of CFCR to a wide audience of scholars and practitioners in the fields of ADR, peace studies, and conflict studies, a single point of comparison is not chosen. Rather, at various parts of the paper, different points of reference found in current literature and practice are employed. In discussing the ideas and assumptions underlying CFCR, emphasis is placed on positioning CFCR within the context of the evolution of ADR, and in particular relational oriented approaches such as transformative mediation. In describing the process of CFCR, explicit comparisons are drawn to a predominant process – problem-solving mediation. This comparison was chosen to reflect the fact that CFCR is partially borne in reaction to problem-solving processes, and a critique of the outcomes they pursue. Finally, in discussing the practice of CFCR, emphasis is placed on the use of CFCR post-conflict societies, and its potential contributions to processes of social integration.

## **Core Ideas and Assumptions**

Many of the theoretical underpinnings of CFCR have been outlined in earlier publications (Danesh and Danesh, 2002a, 2002b). A synopsis of certain central themes is provided here as a foundation for the description of CFCR practice.

### ***Creating Conditions of Unity as the Goal of Conflict Resolution Processes***

An emphasis on creating harmonious relationships and communal patterns is a common theme in ADR literature. In some respects, a relationship-orientation was intimately connected with the beginnings of the ADR movement, particularly in its connection with movements for social justice, inclusion, and community transformation. Aspects of this orientation, it has been argued, have been co-opted by forces of professionalization, systematization, and efficiency concerns (Goldberg, 1997; Menkel-Meadow, 1997). As Carrie Menkel-Meadow writes:

The romantic days of ADR appear to be over. To the extent that proponents of ADR, like myself, were attracted to it because of its promise of flexibility, adaptability, and creativity, we now see the need for ethics, standards of practice and rules as potentially limiting and containing the promise of alternatives to rigid adversarial modes of dispute resolution. It is almost as if we thought that anyone who would engage in ADR must of necessity be a moral, good, creative, and of course, ethical person. That we are here today is deeply ironic and yet, also necessary, as “appropriate” dispute resolution struggles to define itself and ensure its legitimacy against a variety of theoretical and practical challenges.

While one strand of ADR... [the qualitative one]...has always associated itself with pursuing “the good” and the “just”, the other strand of ADR...[the

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quantitative one] has produced institutionalized forms of dispute resolution in the courts and in private contracts. To the extent that ADR has become institutionalized and more routine, it is now practiced by many different people, pursuing many different goals....thus, lawyers as “advocates” as well as “problem-solvers” and parties now come to the wide variety of dispute resolution processes with a whole host of different intentions and behaviors, many of which may be inconsistent with the original aims of some forms of ADR. (Menkel-Meadow, 1997)

While a rhetoric of co-optation has some resonance—especially in an age of extensive regulation and institutionalization of ADR, the predominance of particular interest-based models of negotiation and mediation that emphasize formal skills and technique over substantive engagement, and the ascendance of the legal profession in the conflict-resolution field—there nonetheless has been a resurgence of conflict resolution approaches that stress themes of social harmony, community building, and relationships. Robert M. Ackerman eloquently articulates this orientation:

At times of conflict, formal process can contain disruption. It can maintain equilibrium. But process alone cannot build community. Even more collaborative processes, like mediation, will build no more than a superficial, temporary truce unless the process is managed to allow the parties to discover a common bond that is deeper than process alone. Often that bond will be found in shared experience a shared history through which disputants recognize in each other common elements of the human condition. At its best, a dispute resolution process will help people to discover their common history and unearth commonly-held values. Often (all too often, it seems) shared experience will be in the form of shared pain. In the end, social capital is the product not of spontaneous combustion, but of history, experience, and effort.

And what remains of process? Process is important, as is technique. One must learn the fingering of a trumpet in order to make music. But there must be something of substance underlying the process; something to touch the soul after one admires the technique. Going through the motions and participating in dispute resolution processes without real engagement will produce notes, but not music. A pluralistic society, like a good jazz ensemble, requires the recognition and appreciation of differences, and the will to work and play together. (Ackerman, 2002)

Transformative mediation is perhaps the most utilized and examined effort to centre a dispute resolution process on positive relational outcomes. Baruch Bush and Folger state that the purpose of a “transformative orientation” is to “help transform the individuals involved” and their pursuit of moral development. (Baruch Bush and Folger, 1994) This development is achieved by looking, within the process, for opportunities for both “recognition” and “empowerment”. The values implicit in the transformative orientation are rooted in a “relational worldview” that “compassionate strength (moral maturity) embodies an intrinsic goodness inherent in human beings.” (Baruch Bush and Folger, 1994) It is the human capacity of integration, our ability to balance and integrate, which is at the essence of what it means to be human. As Baruch Bush and Folger state,

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“human beings are thus simultaneously separate and connected, autonomous and linked, self-interested and self-transcending. Furthermore, they are capable of relating these dualities in an integrated wholeness that makes them capable of genuine goodness of conduct.”

CFCR addresses these concerns about community, autonomy, relationships, harmony, substantive connection, and engagement by centrally positioning the concept of unity at the core of practice. Unity, in this definition, is a conscious, purposeful condition of convergence of two or more unique entities in a state of harmony, integration, and cooperation to create a new, evolving entity or entities, usually, of a same or a higher nature (Danesh and Danesh, 2002a). In this argument, states of unity underlie key life processes at the biological, psychological, and social levels. This emphasis on the connection between unity and life highlights a core proposition concerning the relationship between unity and conflict, namely, that conflict may be usefully considered as an absence of a state of unity. A conflict is a reflection of a lack of a conscious state of awareness of the levels of interdependence between the involved entities, and as such it is through tackling the challenge of unity—and fostering a higher degree of integration and cooperation—that conflict is both lessened and resolved.

Implicit within this concept is a partial critique of how conflict is treated in much ADR literature. On the one hand, there has been helpful shift from a preoccupation with the destructive nature of conflict to emphasizing the positive role conflict can play in life. On the other hand, this normalization of conflict has created a condition where the pervasiveness and inevitability of conflict in human life has a taken-for-granted quality that is not questioned (Danesh and Danesh, 2002a). While human life is filled with conflict, a unity-orientation argues that as life processes increasingly have a focus on creating patterns of unity, incidences of conflict may become both less prevalent and less severe. A unity-centered practice is a proactive one, which aims to help individuals gain the skills and insights to create patterns of relationships where the roots of potential conflict are recognized early, and individuals gain the skills to prevent the appearance of new conflicts through early conscious action.

This emphasis on unity demonstrates both the continuities and discontinuities with other dispute resolution processes. Similar to the transformative orientation, there is an emphasis on the human power of integration, and navigating the relationship between the individual and collective. Yet, the concept of unity—which in this definition emphasizes the relationship between unity and diversity—suggests a more essential re-configuring of how we position conflict in relation to human life processes. The implications are not only for a transformation in how we perceive conflict as a positive force in human growth, but also a call to privilege unity, as opposed to conflict, in our conceptualizing of the underlying forces driving forward individual growth, social practices, and social change.

### ***Modes of Conflict Resolution are Developmental in Nature***

In “Has Conflict Resolution Grown Up? Towards A Developmental Model of Decision Making and Conflict Resolution,” we presented the foundations of a developmental model of conflict resolution (Danesh and Danesh, 2002b). In this model, both disputant behavior and the processes themselves are understood as reflecting particular categories

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of worldviews. These categories of worldviews are seen as existing on a developmental spectrum that is generally analogous to the periods of infancy, childhood, adolescence, and adulthood in individual human life. Certain types of conflict, the incidence and frequency of conflict, and particular modes of resolution are seen as a greater ‘fit’ with certain worldviews, and a lesser ‘fit’ with other worldviews. The worldview of adulthood, it was argued, is one in which there is a meaningful shift in orientation that highlights the role and importance of unity in human life and challenges ideas of the inevitability and indispensability of conflict for human life and existence.

The idea of worldview, in this model, is seen as having three components: perspective, principle, and purpose. In general terms, perspective refers to one’s understanding of the structure of reality; principle refers to one’s understanding of justified and ethical action; and purpose refers to one’s perceptions of the objectives and goals of one’s existence. The predominant worldviews placed on a developmental spectrum were outlined in the following manner:

<b>Decision Making</b>	<b>Stage of Development</b>	<b>Perspective</b>	<b>Principle</b>	<b>Purpose</b>
<b>Level 1</b>	Infancy	World is... Me	Self- Interest	Instinctual Self- Preservation
<b>Level 2</b>	Childhood	World is... Dangerous	Might is Right/Domination	Conscious Self-/Group Preservation
<b>Level 3</b>	Adolescence	World is... Jungle	Survival of the Fittest/ Competition	To “Win”
<b>Level 4</b>	Adulthood	World is... One	Truth and Justice	Unity in Diversity

Table 1. The Developmental Stages of Decision Making

When applied to conflict-resolution processes, the general conclusion offered is that the rise of mediation models and practices in the past fifty years is a central transition from authoritarian modes of conflict resolution (which reflect the worldview of childhood) toward consultative modes of conflict resolution (which reflect the worldview

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of adulthood). However, in this period of transition, some of the predominant structural elements and intervention practices of problem-solving mediation remain primarily reflections of the power-struggle modes of adolescence. The current challenge to the contemporary conflict-resolution movement at the level of process design is thus seen as the movement from power-struggle conflict resolution to consultative conflict resolution. CFCR is one attempt to encourage movement in this direction. The general matrix of modes of conflict resolution plotted on the developmental spectrum was described as follows:

<b>Decision Making</b>	<b>Stage of Development</b>	<b>Nature of Conflict Resolution</b>	<b>Mode of Conflict Resolution</b>
<b>Level 1</b>	Infancy	Survival Based	Self-Centered (S-Mode)
<b>Level 2</b>	Childhood	Force Based	Authoritarian (A-Mode)
<b>Level 3</b>	Adolescence	Power Based	Power Struggle (P-Mode)
<b>Level 4</b>	Adulthood	Unity Based	Consultative (C-Mode)

Table 2. The Developmental Modes of Conflict Resolution

This brief summary of the developmental model of conflict resolution is at the core of the conceptual foundation of CFCR. It is by engaging disputants with such concepts as

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worldview and unity that CFCR attempts to offer alternate ideas about the purposes of intervention in conflict situations. The use of the category of “worldview” is not unique to CFCR. It is employed by Baruch Bush and Folger, amongst others. However, as the above discussion illustrates, the understanding of worldview in CFCR, has two aspects which somewhat distinguish it from current usages in dispute resolution literature. First, is the effort to map, although in a preliminary form, the pattern of the development of worldview within the cycle of human life. Second, is an attempt to articulate a pivot—unity—around which the development of worldview can be seen to both revolve and evolve.

### ***Educative Conflict-Resolution***

A third foundation of CFCR is that it views conflict resolution through an educative paradigm. In particular, there exist benefits to processes encouraging individuals to reflect on how their own worldviews (a) shape the conflicts they experience and (b) impact their behavior and choices in attempting resolution. Further benefits flow from encouraging reflection on how their own worldviews may expand and evolve to justify and motivate alternate sets of behaviors and choices. Problem-solving mediation typically not only fails to engage the participants to explicitly focus on their worldview but also favors a particular worldview, which highlights distinctive values of individualism and liberalism, modes of assertiveness, and understandings of autonomy (Winslade and Monk, 2000). As such, the process is often biased toward individuals who best adopt and reflect a particular and exclusive worldview.

An educative orientation within a conflict-resolution process has two main features. First, it involves building opportunities for critical self-reflection by participants, in particular around issues of worldview and orientation. Second, it requires that conflict resolution processes make transparent to participants their own assumptions about the nature of conflict and the character of resolution, and how the process tries to reflect these assumptions. The benefit of critical self-reflection and transparency is that both can translate into substantive empowerment for participants. Critical self-reflection on matters of worldview and unity allows participants to gain insights into how their own life processes contribute to conflict situations, and then allows for choices in the types of behaviors they wish to perpetuate and manifest in conflict situations. As well, providing a framework for self-reflection within a process heightens the opportunity for meaningful proactive outcomes to occur and situates individuals to diagnose and deal with future conflict situations without the need for intervention. Transparency is essential as a tool for empowerment, as it helps circumvent the disempowering effects of the values and cultural biases that often remain implicit and unspoken within processes. The issues of critical self-reflection and transparency require attention to a person’s emotions, interests, thoughts, and decisions. The suggestion by Fisher and Ury (1991, 21) that people separate themselves from the problem, is neither necessarily desirable nor wholly possible: As Avruch et al. observe:

Emotions, in Fisher and Ury’s world, comprise something one must “get past” (by allowing to “ventilate,” for example) in order to get to underlying layers of interests. This, of course, is how one gets to the underlying stratum of rationality,

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where “efficient” problem solving is possible (Raiffa 1982:139). Separate the person from the problem, they advise. This is as much to say that one ought to separate the person from emotions. Such a prescription assumes a human nature—and a resulting conception of the person—in which the two, person and emotions, are in fact separable.(1991, 7)

This emphasis on an educative orientation is not unique to CFCR, but merits being highlighted for the simple fact that is not an orientation which predominates in the dispute resolution field. While the elements of “recognition” and “empowerment” in transformative mediation similarly encourage a process of critical self-reflection, most problem-solving approaches do not. Rather, many predominant ADR approaches, and in particular the ways in which these approaches are taught and utilized, reinforce a skills orientation in which mastery of “form” is privileged over the long term benefits that can be gained from the substantive engagement with self and others that occurs when one is engaged in conflict and its resolution.

The practice of CFCR, however, has also highlighted another important dimension of the educative dimension of dispute resolution processes. One of the main applications of CFCR has been the adoption of its main principles as a foundation for the Education for Peace (“EFP”) project in Bosnia and Herzegovina. EFP, as will be discussed later in this paper, utilizes the concepts of worldview and unity found in CFCR, as well the steps of the CFCR process, to design a multi-dimensional and sustained program for peaceful and integrated school communities. In this respect, a dispute resolution process has been institutionalized as part of an education system and culture. Martha Minow of Harvard Law School has pointed to EFP as an example of the use of conflict resolution methodologies as the basis for a program of “education for co-existence.” (Minow, 2002) Minow writes that some “conflict-resolution and peace education [such as EFP] programs teach students examples of successful peace building efforts, less to enhance skills than to alter students’ aspirations and understandings of political processes and nonviolent dispute resolution possibilities.”(Minow, 2002)

This integration of peace building and conflict resolution approaches reflects important evolution in how peace and conflict studies are conceived. Social integration, the relationship between community self-sufficiency and global interdependence, and the fact that “obstacles to dialogue need to be removed by a profound love for the world” (Jeong, 2000) are increasingly significant themes in peace and conflict studies. In many respects this is parallel to the emergence of processes such as transformative mediation and CFCR which emphasize worldviews of integration, and using processes so that individual and groups are developing the building blocks of less conflicted and more unified future.

## **Components of CFCR Practice**

CFCR is one attempt to design a process that is group focused, unity based, educative, and reflects the Consultative (C-Mode) worldview. This section describes the main participants, structure, and components of the CFCR process, using problem-solving mediation as a reference point.

*The Participants in CFCR—A Group Orientation*

Embedded within the C-Mode worldview is a commitment to the centrality of unity. The C-Mode privileges unity as a paradigm of social relationships that holds the greatest potential for individual satisfaction and a collective state of peace. The C-Mode also positions unity as a lens through which individuals justify and mediate their choices and actions, particularly in situations of conflict and resolution.

Translating this centrality of unity into the design of a conflict-resolution process implies a need to turn toward a group orientation and away from the paradigm of individual, autonomous agents who are participating in a process solely in their individual capacities and individual interests. The simplest and most direct way to illustrate and act upon this shift is to transform the language used within conflict-resolution processes. One current tendency is to import terms of reference from the legal paradigm of adversarialism, such as “parties and “disputants.” These terms are rooted in the values of competition and winning that are embedded in Anglo-American models of adjudication.

While there are very good rationales for the importation of this language, it nonetheless must be viewed as antithetical to the C-Mode. Such language reinforces distance and separation between the individuals involved in the conflict, implies the process is aimed at removing a condition of dispute between them (as opposed to constructing a positive state of unity), and deepens the perception that they are in the process as individual, autonomous agents who are in a contest with other individual, autonomous agents.

The use of such language highlights the broader issue that processes such as mediation position the third-party neutral as intervening between a set of individuals, and the mediator is trained to focus on the individuals solely in their individual capacities. Within such a model of intervention, effects conducive to the appearance of unity will be very hard to achieve primarily because the collective dimension of conflict resolution is ignored. Almost every step in problem-solving mediation acts to reinforce the individualistic dimension of the conflict and to negate the collective—whether it be the recounting of the competing stories of the parties, or the practice of parties talking to each other through the mediator, or the practice of caucusing, which positions information as an individually possessed tool and device.

This individualistic orientation is also reflected in the principles underlying problem-solving approaches. For example, core principles such as “separate people from the problem,” “focus on interests not positions,” and “know your BATNA” all assume that individuals within conflict situations should focus on the consequences of choices and actions for themselves and their positions (Fisher, Ury, and Patton, 1991). As Sally Engle Merry writes, the assumed disputant in predominant mediation models is

autonomous, legally constituted self-defined in important ways by the relationship between the individual and the state. The self is a legally privileged entity to whom the courts represent one recourse, if difficult and incendiary to the other party, for the protection of that self. These rights take precedence over obligations to others except when the others

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are intimates....The self is an individual, endowed with rights which the state protects, and insofar as possible, self-reliant and autonomous. The self-respecting person is one who stands up for these rights and resists exploitation and abuse from others. (Merry, 1987)

Within this paradigm the legal model of a bargain or contract between two individuals is positioned as the norm.

The C-Mode demands a movement away from this individualistic practice's focus and toward a focus on the individuals involved attempting to resolve conflict as a group enterprise. This group orientation would necessarily affect most major aspects of a process, including:

- The abandonment of language of “parties” and “disputants”;
- The express orienting of individuals involved in the conflict toward the reality that this process involves making a decision together, and as such a recognition that they are in a group undertaking which places certain demands on them as individuals in order to be successful;
- A more explicit focus on strategies of intervention that create an environment where face-to-face communication between individuals is facilitated and encouraged, as opposed to a tripartite structure in which dialogue occurs through an intervenor; and
- The training of intervenors in group dynamics and group decision-making so that they are more attuned to signposts within the process that highlight particular group achievements or needs.

This group orientation is also reflected in how the participants in CFCR are organized and labeled. CFCR is structured around two types of participants:

- **The Moderator:** “The Moderator” is the term used in CFCR for the intervenor in a conflict situation. The term is used to connote the main roles associated with the moderator:
  - Keeping the process moving;
  - Helping with the identification and solidification of points of unity; and
  - Constructing a substantive framework in which values of sharing and unity building are expressed.
- **The Consulting Group:** “The Consulting Group” is the term used in CFCR for all of the individuals involved in a conflict situation and who are part of the resolution process. The emphasis on the group is meant to encourage the collective group to take on decision-making tasks and to reinforce the sense of connectedness and unity among the members. The consulting group is:
  - The decision-making body; and
  - Has full decision-making authority.

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This language reflects a conscious choice to focus attention on the group decision-making aspects of conflict resolution. It is also meant to breakdown processes of labeling and identification that highlight themes of opposition and privilege existing between the parties in the state of conflict.

It should be noted that many processes would imply the necessity for a change in language and the organization of the participants in the process. For example, using the categories of transformative mediation, the language and structuring of participation of problem-solving mediation embodies the “individualist worldview”, and as such in some respects could be said to be counter-intuitive to the “relational worldview”. In the culture of dispute resolution practice, however, our observation has been that language reflecting an individualist worldview often permeates far beyond the confines of a process, such as problem-solving mediation, which explicitly reflects that worldview.<sup>2</sup> CFCR tries to break this tendency by clearly articulating a language and structure that moves beyond a party-party bias.

### *The “Rhythm” of CFCR—Beginning and Ending with Unity*

The C-Mode suggests that conflict-resolution processes should begin and end with unity. In other words, a process should begin by identifying a point of unity between the participants. It should also be designed to multiply and consciously acknowledge the multiplication of these points of unity as the process proceeds. The assumption is that as points of unity are multiplied and as participants gain an understanding of the levels of unity that have been achieved, they will find it easier to reach final distributive outcomes, and the degree of active intervention necessary to achieve these outcomes will gradually lessen.

A simple pictorial image of the idea of conflict-resolution processes as expanding points of unity is as follows:

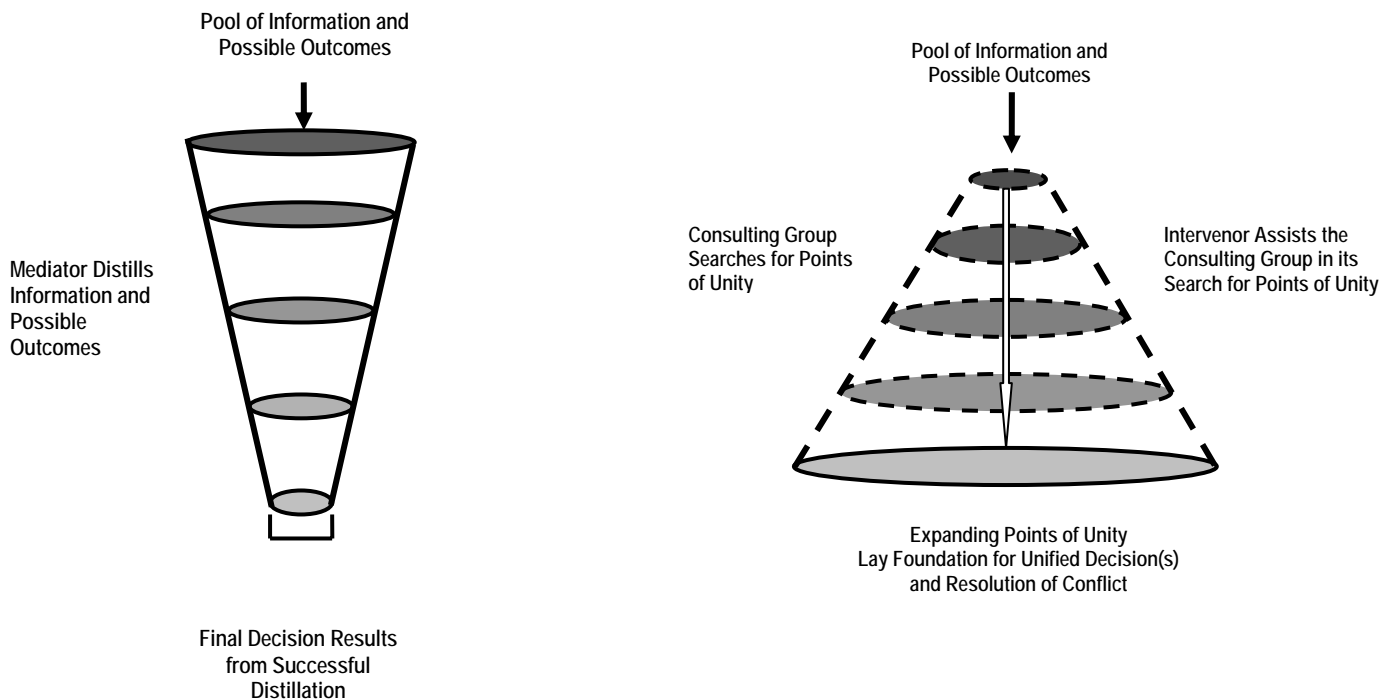


Figure 1. Problem Solving Mediation

Figure 2. Conflict-Free Conflict Resolution

Implicit within this model is the idea that unity cannot be built upon a foundation of conflict but rather must find its roots within acknowledgement of some point of identification and harmony, no matter how remote and minimal that point might be. In terms of process design, this suggests that there might be merit in engaging participants from the outset of the process in identifying a common starting point. Potentially, this would be distinguished from the many models of mediation that structure the opening of processes around a focus on what is driving the conflict—the typically competing understandings of the facts and events that brought the participants to the mediation.

### ***The Structure of CFCR—The Three Components***

CFCR consists of three components:

Component 1: Forming a Unity of Purpose

Component 2: Consultative Discourse

Component 3: Solidification

CFCR applications and methodologies thus far have tended to perceive these three components as stages within the process, with a general movement from forming a unity of purpose through consultative discourse and ending with solidification. This article will similarly describe CFCR in these relatively sequential terms, primarily, because a sequential description is particularly helpful for comparative purposes. A note of caution, however, is that a dynamic and cyclical interplay often takes place among the various components—particularly forming a unity of purpose and consultative discourse. Later articles on the CFCR process will explore these advanced practice dynamics.

#### **1. Forming a Unity of Purpose**

Forming a unity of purpose is a focal point of the CFCR process and the aspect of the process that most clearly separates it from traditional mediation models. In some respects this component may be thought of as analogous to the beginning stages in mediation processes.

The goal of forming a unity of purpose is to create a framework that assists participants to seek out points of unity and establishes an initial foundation of unity from which the process can proceed. In CFCR, this framework is established through presentation (in context-sensitive form) of the developmental model of conflict

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resolution. For example, in a micro dispute, the moderator might present the process to the participants by sharing with them a version of the developmental model. By doing so, presentation of the process as a unity-building process will become explicit, and participants will also be challenged to reflect on their own behaviors and worldview and how these affect the process. In a macro dispute such a presentation may be very different, involving many interventions, workshops, and sessions aimed at bringing the participants together for consultation within a certain degree of shared orientation to the conflict before them and the challenge it represents, as well as orienting them with a language of unity and explaining how it might be instrumental to resolution and also to the substantive values and outcomes that this process seeks.

The offering of a substantive framework, such as a version of the developmental model, early in the process is important for a number of reasons. First, it offers a common framework within which the parties can operate. This common framework has both formal and substantive implications for their choices and behaviors within the process. Second, it forms a template emphasizing unity to which the participants can be reoriented as challenges and obstacles arise in the process. Third, it forms a starting point of unity around which the parties can operate. Fourth, it encourages self-reflection and critical reflection by the participants about their role in the conflict.

This substantive component is clearly educative, but it is not intended to be a didactic process taking the form of a seminar or lecture. Rather, it is to be structured around the idea that there are different approaches to conflict resolution and that these approaches have foundations in the general categories of worldviews. This substantive component could be referred to as an element of worldview self-education and group orientation. Presenting the developmental model to the consulting group is, in essence, placing a mirror before the participants whereby they choose to objectively analyze their own worldview as reflected in a developmental mirror. The presentation of the model should be such that the participants are drawn into contemplation of what process, methods, personal choices, and behaviors would lead to the most satisfactory resolution for all concerned. If all participants are prepared to commit to CFCR as a C-Mode process, then the process continues beyond the first stage. If they are not prepared to continue, then the process ends at that point.

In some respects, this first stage of CFCR, especially as it has been utilized in post conflict societies such as the EFP project in Bosnia and Herzegovina, reflects research regarding the place of “superordinate goals” in the reduction of conflict. The idea of a “superordinate goal” as “goals which are compelling and highly appealing to members of two or more groups in conflict but which cannot be attained by the resources and energies of the groups separately” is somewhat parallel to that of “forming a unity of purpose”. (Sherif, 1958) Just as Sherif demonstrated that the introduction of superordinate goals was “effective in reducing intergroup conflict” by encouraging tendencies towards co-operation, reducing friction, and unfavourable stereotypes, (Sherif, 1958) in CFCR “forming a unity of purpose” is designed to focus the participants on what they share, as a starting point for encouraging co-operative behavior and a group identity

An additional crucial aspect of “forming a unity of purpose” is clarifying the roles and responsibilities within the process. There are two actors in CFCR—the Moderator and the Consulting Group. CFCR is analogous to mediation in that it can be practiced

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through a third-party intervenor who does not have decision-making authority. However, there are two main differences in role definition.

First, the prime objective of the moderator in CFCR is to assist the participants to recognize the points of unity that are emerging between them and to assist individuals to build upon these. A good analogue may be found with transformative mediation. While transformative mediators assist the parties in the traditional ways that problem-solving mediators do—organizing the facts, exploring options, keeping the process moving—they also seek out opportunities for recognition and empowerment between the parties and focus attention on those as they occur. Similarly, a moderator offers many of the traditional forms of assistance that a mediator does, but the moderator primarily focuses on making conscious the underlying foundation of unity between the parties. The moderator, using a variety of techniques, does this within a process that is framed by a developmental model and leads toward the creation of unity.

Second, the role of moderator can only be understood by clarifying the unique way in which the participants in a conflict are positioned in relation to each other in CFCR. It is counterintuitive for a process aimed at creating unity to structure itself primarily around the idea of distinct, autonomous entities. Reflecting the idea that conflict resolution can effectively be thought of as a group decision-making process, CFCR positions the participants as part of a conjoined “consulting group” engaged in a collective enterprise to reach the best possible outcome to the situation that has brought them to the process in the first place. The moderator is separate and distinct from the group but has the role of assisting the group in moving through the stages of the process, reorienting them to the C-Mode framework, and addressing issues of group dynamics as they arise that might require some assistance and input.

These two aspects of the moderator’s role are obviously interrelated. As the moderator reinforces points of unity, he or she also intends to strengthen and improve the group dynamics, with the hope of making the group more autonomous and empowered. Similarly, the process of moderator assisting the consulting group as issues arise, would empower the group and help it to reach and identify points of unity as they occur.

Beyond the worldview self-education and the introduction of the very distinct roles and responsibilities of the moderator and the consulting group, the purposes and elements of the opening phase of CFCR are analogous to mediation. The moderator will discuss necessary issues of confidentiality, timing, and their own impartiality. Also, where appropriate, he or she might stress the voluntary nature of the process and the role of self-determination in its continuation.

In addition to opening the process through structuring a framework for substantive engagement, opportunities for the participants to prepare for the process are also instrumental to forming a unity of purpose. The top-heavy nature of CFCR, and in particular the challenge that is placed before the consulting group to operate according to the requisites of the C-Mode is evidence of the general orientation of CFCR to conflict resolution as a creative and educative process, as opposed to being primarily conceived of as a set of techniques and skills. It also highlights that CFCR is at least partially in harmony with approaches to conflict resolution that stress the potential for participation to be a source of change, transformation, healing, and relationship building.

Consistent with this is the reality that participation in a voluntary conflict-resolution process—whether it be mediation or CFCR—often demands a lot of individuals and

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places considerable expectations on them. These expectations concern not only praxis but also the modes of expression of emotions, attitudes toward the sharing of information, and a good-faith intention to work in a cordial manner with the other participants. In CFCR, the demands on participants are arguably even greater. The introduction of an external model to frame the conflict and the likely challenges the participants' worldviews impose on them require a considerable degree of commitment and engagement, which is indeed demanding. In CFCR, participants are usually offered time and space to prepare to meet these demands of the process. This preparation can take two forms: individual or group, and typically opportunities for both forms will be offered.

The prime purpose in offering space for individual preparation is for participants to have the opportunity to internalize the C-Mode and to reflect on how it will guide their participation in the process. The secondary purpose is more traditional, to ensure that the information, documents, potential additional parties, and other relevant factual material are all properly accessible. The role of the moderator in individual preparation is minimal, beyond explaining that space and time for this preparation exists and encouraging the consulting group to reach agreement about whether such time and space for preparation should be allocated. There are benefits to placing preparation before the consulting group as an issue to be decided. For the group, it is an opportunity to make a group decision (typically their first one) about an issue that is dissociated from the conflict which brought them to the process. As such, there is the potential for the group to achieve an initial point of unity that can be built upon later, without having to engage the entrenched issues that are intimate to the conflict. For the moderator, placing the issue of preparation before the group allows the moderator to observe the individual and group dynamics in play and to gain some early insights that might be of assistance later in the process. The second form of preparation is group preparation. This allows the group to internalize the notion that all are involved in a group decision-making exercise, which has a specific quality separate from individual decision-making. Group preparation is highly contextually bound. In a marriage and divorce context, group preparation is often facilitated through the wide and substantive body of shared experiences among the members of the group. In other micro contexts, group preparation may be effected by a simple group task or undertaking. In larger multiparty disputes, preparation may require a multiplicity of activities in a range of forums that gradually prepare the participants to come together as a group to consult on the core issues at the heart of the conflict.

Preparation may also be thought of as an adjunct to the worldview self-education of the opening by reiterating to the participants that when they begin to resolve the conflict, they are engaging in a task that is personally challenging and demanding. It will be more satisfactory if they are more comfortable with the process and feel that they have had the opportunity to make it their own. Preparation stages are intended to add to this sense of empowerment and ownership, and to allow participants to see if they can truly envision themselves within the process.

## **2. Consultative Discourse**

The second component of CFCR occurs when the consulting group, aided by the moderator, begins to explore facts and views concerning the dispute. This component, called consultative discourse, is broadly analogous to particular steps in the mediation

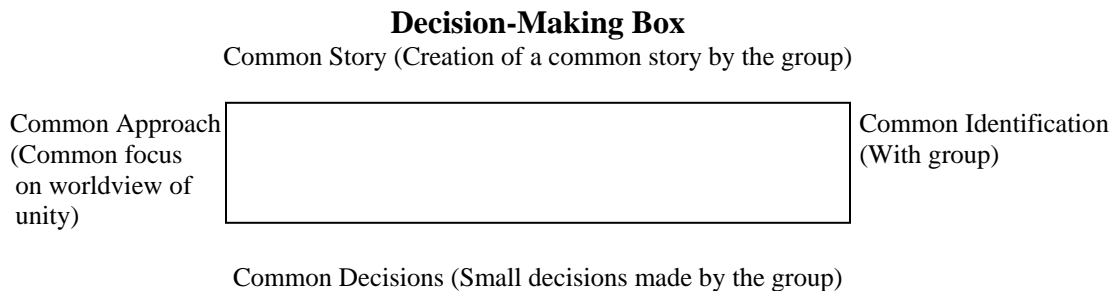
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process when discussion of the facts and brainstorming for solutions occurs. It is the stage where the participants engage with one another directly and seek out pathways to an outcome. At the same time, however, there are significant differences between this stage of CFCR and the analogous stages of mediation.

As in mediation, the moderator will typically invite the members of the consulting group to begin the process by telling their story—recounting what has occurred that has resulted in their being present today. Each member of the consulting group is invited to tell his or her story.

The central role of the moderator during this process of story telling and the resulting dialogue among members of the consulting group is to guide the construction of a “Decision-Making Box” (DMB) within which final decisions and outcomes might be made. A DMB is made up of four types of unity and sharing that the moderator should be working to build throughout the process: common approach, common decisions, common identification, and common story.



“Common Approach” refers to a shared conscious focus on trying to engage in a unity-oriented process of decision making and conflict resolution. This approach is offered to the participants in Stage 1 though the presentation of the themes of worldview, conflict, and the developmental framework. By proceeding with the process, the participants are urged and helped to adopt a unity-centered framework within which to try to think about and analyze their conflict. The role of the moderator throughout the process—and in particular during consultation—is to keep this framework at the forefront of the group’s consciousness, reminding the group that it is their choice to proceed through a particular unity-orientation and reiterating the requisites of such an orientation as the process continues and challenges arise.

One tool the moderator will use to deepen understanding of the common approach throughout the process is that of *reorientation*. By offering a substantive framework for conflict resolution early in the process—and in particular the theme of worldview—the moderator has constructed a template that can be returned to later in the process when challenges arise. At various points in the process, the moderator can remind the consulting group of the framework, seek out opportunities to deepen understanding of the C-Mode, or challenge the participants to think about how their own behaviors and choices reflect the C-Mode. Through such reorienting to the worldview of unity and the developmental ideas that underlie it, impasses can be broken, the consulting group kept

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on track, and their understanding of unity and how it manifests itself in their own life circumstances better understood.

“Common Decisions” refers to how small achievements and decisions are treated during the process. In any process of conflict resolution, many small decisions and understandings are achieved on the pathway to a final resolution. In CFCR, these small decisions and understandings are treated as small points of unity established between the members of the consulting group that can be used to reinforce a sense of mutual interdependence within the process, progress, and their ability to work together on the more difficult questions yet to come. As such, throughout the process the moderator should take opportunities to make the consulting group aware of any incremental achievements and how far they have come in making decisions that might ultimately contribute to a positive final outcome.

There is a similar focus in transformative mediation, where mediators endeavor to make conscious points of recognition achieved between the parties, and to use techniques such as reframing to help make this recognition explicit to parties. Such moments of recognition form a type of shared decision or understanding that a moderator in CFCR should work toward and highlight. In addition, the moderator should, as much as reasonably possible, reinforce in the consulting group the sense that they are moving through a series of small successes (i.e., reaching points of unity) on the pathway to dealing with issues of final outcomes. This is done by not only highlighting points of recognition but also making conscious for the consulting group any decisions or understandings they make along the way about a range of issues—including, for example, the facts of the conflict, the process they are engaged in, the worldview framework that has been offered, and the challenges and issues before them.

“Common Identification” refers to the identification of the participants with the consulting group and with the group decision-making tasks before them. In some respects, this might be considered one of the most challenging aspects of the process—one that has not received significant attention in conflict-resolution literature. In any process where decision-making power rests with the individuals who are a part of the dispute, the reality is that individuals who are in a state of tension must seek out a mutual solution and make final decisions together. The collective decision-making that the process requires can be facilitated through the participants being conscious that they are engaged in a group decision-making exercise. As well, by recognizing that there are specific dynamics that may assist or hinder successful collective decision-making, participants are empowered to take responsibility for moving the process along.

There are a number of techniques that might be used in CFCR to reinforce common identification. A foundation for shared identification is the abandonment of the trappings of adversarialism that often seep into mediation processes—such as a language of disputants and factions. At the same time, a moderator will offer explicit group-oriented language (e.g., “consulting group”) to reinforce the identification process. Group preparation early in the process will mirror this shift in language and help participants engage as a group. During the consultation stage, a number of opportunities will arise for the moderator to help the consulting group develop identification by encouraging reflection on the group’s level of functioning, how group dynamics might be improved, and reorienting participants to the group decision-making tasks that lie before them. The purpose of such group identification is that it consciously exposes participants to

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constructive attempts at working together, even in situations of high tension where strong differences may exist among those involved. Group identification also can help facilitate the making of small decisions by imparting a sense of a positive dynamic of working together, which may often be in contrast to how the interactions between the participants were perceived prior to the process.

“Common Story” refers to the process of sharing perceptions of the facts of the dispute by the members of the consulting group and the constructing of a common understanding of the situation around those perceptions and facts. This process happens gradually throughout the consultation stage. First, all participants in the consulting group are given an opportunity to share their perception and understanding of the dispute and what is at stake for them and each other. As the consulting group begins to engage with one another around their respective stories, the moderator will take the opportunity to help highlight the unifying elements in the perceptions and stories, describing how those may be built upon. These unifying elements become the foundation for a “shared story” through which the remaining differences can begin to be engaged with and understood.

A number of techniques may be used in helping construct the shared story, none of which are unique to CFCR. The constructing of a shared story is a common element of many processes and has parallels to methodologies such as that of managing the “difficult conversation” (Stone et al., 2003). Indeed, some processes, such as narrative mediation, emphasize the process of story telling itself as a key to resolution—narrative construction serving as a bridging mechanism to provide new insights and understandings to the participants (Winslade and Monk, 2000). Many of the techniques used in these other processes and contexts can aid the shared story process—including reframing, seeking out opportunities for recognition, and constructing the third story. In CFCR, additional emphasis is placed on the task of constructing a shared story as a core goal toward which the consulting group works. A number of valuable outcomes can result from making this explicit. If the group is able to function relatively harmoniously, group decision-making capacities and sense of empowerment may be enhanced. If the group is unable to function harmoniously, the moderator will gain valuable insights into the fault lines that have to be overcome if resolution is going to emerge. As well, while it may be disempowering for the participants if the process of constructing a shared story becomes especially acrimonious, it may also provide an opportunity to clarify the importance of challenging themselves and engaging with their own worldviews and the related attitudes and behaviors, if they want to reach an outcome in this forum.

The construction of the DMB provides a framework within which the consulting group can make final decisions and outcomes. By emphasizing the four commonalities built through the process, the aim is to create conditions and consciousness of the types of interrelatedness and unity that characterize the specific circumstances of the participants. Through these conditions and consciousness of unity, the hope is that a final outcome will become possible because of the reservoir of understanding and goodwill that have been built up throughout the process. As well, a significant amount of learning about one’s own worldview, the process of building unity, and the nature of conflict may be gained that might have proactive effects into the future.

CFCR’s emphasis on constructing the DMB often leads to a different rhythm than in problem-solving mediation. Through reorienting, highlighting points of unity, giving room for preparation, and taking opportunities to deepen group dynamics and

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understanding, considerable time is spent on the worldview orientations and relational dynamics of the participants. At the same time, many of the usual activities that a mediator undertakes will also be done by a moderator. A moderator, however, will often help organize information, identify core issues, encourage brainstorming, or use particular tactics to move the process along.

In the event that agreement is not reached during consultative discourse, the process ends—just as it would in mediation. The only feature particular to CFCR in ending a process is that the moderator will take the opportunity in making closing comments to reiterate and summarize the points of unity that have been achieved, and offer reflection on how these points of unity may be built on at a later date. Similar to mediation, a moderator may also leave the door open to returning to the process if the participants feel it may be of use at a later date, as well as indicate the other avenues of resolution that are open to the participants.

### **3. Solidification**

Solidification, the third component of CFCR, refers to post-decision actions. The purpose of solidification is to focus attention on the issue of the implementation of decisions and evaluation of their effectiveness. It is not unusual for decisions to break down when the participants try to implement them. For CFCR, however, the issue of post-decision actions is beyond simply clarifying agreements about details of implementation. In CFCR there may be appropriate contexts where a moderator may encourage the members of the consulting group to consider returning to meet with the moderator. The purpose of this meeting is not to re-open the agreement—indeed this would introduce a degree of uncertainty into the process that is bound to undermine the agreement itself, as well as having legal and other complexities and problems. Rather, the “Solidification” process offers to participants the opportunity to view their engagement in CFCR as an occasion for developing proactive attitudes and skill-sets for managing and responding to conflict within the framework of a unity-based worldview in their own lives. The pillar of CFCR is a commitment to unity-based worldviews as a key force in creating a culture where the frequency and degree of conflict is minimized. Furthermore, discussion and exploration of this worldview outside the context of a specific conflict, alone or as a group, are all agents of effecting this broader cultural change.

Such a vision of “open-door” conflict resolution is clearly not going to be appropriate or desired in certain circumstances. However, as a matter of general policy for community justice centers and conflict resolution professionals, the vision of integrating opportunities for on-going training and reflection into prevention and intervention models is potentially a good one. It may spread awareness of the benefits of consensual processes more concretely into the culture at large and maximize the possibilities that situations which might have once been referred to intervention will instead be wholly self-determined and self-managed.

## **CFCR in Practice – Anecdotes and Applications**

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CFCR has been primarily applied on a small scale in three contexts: marriage and family conflicts; conflicts within schools; and management and administration conflicts in businesses and organizations. As well, CFCR is the foundation for one major peace-building and social integration initiative in a post-conflict society. The following examples and anecdotes of the application of CFCR primarily emphasize how the first component of CFCR is utilized. In particular, the role of worldview and the educative dimension of CFCR become clear.

### **(a) The Case of Sandra and Bill**

Sandra and Bill had been married for 15 years and had two children.<sup>3</sup> The couple sought conflict resolution assistance after being separated for a few years. Their purpose in seeking assistance was with respect to their conflicted decision-making efforts concerning their children in the context of being separated as marriage partners. Bill and Sandra have always had very different communication and decision-making styles. Bill was, in many respects, a child who never grew up. He emphasized freedom, a fun-loving life, and advocated that the children be free to try anything. This orientation was also reflected in his work as a stockbroker, where he thrived on the competition and excitement of the lifestyle that went along with it. Sandra, on the other hand, was more reserved, and emphasized discipline, order, and hard work. She was involved in all aspects of her children's lives, and felt that some degree of structure and order was needed.

Whenever Sandra and Bill tried to make decisions regarding their children, the end result would often be a fight, with negative impact on them and their children. For example, Bill's idea of showing love for his children was to give them what they wanted and take them to "fun activities", which usually meant several hours or days of undisciplined indulgence in shopping, eating, and television watching. Sandra, however, considered this approach to parenting to be unhealthy and felt that Bill should set an example of a mature person capable of postponing his desires. She felt children needed to emulate and learn these things from their father. Bill, however, didn't like to be such a "heavy" and "boring" father. This divergence of view almost always resulted in a conflict between the parents and put the children in a "no win" situation.

Three two-hour sessions were held with Bill and Sandra. The aim of the first session was to use the developmental model of conflict resolution to help Bill and Sandra see how their contrasting parental styles were rooted in the fact that their respective worldviews were different. About one hour was spent presenting and applying the developmental model to their marital context. Bill and Sandra immediately began to recognize and acknowledge that the problems they were having with decision-making now, mirrored the problems they used to have in their marriage. At the root of these problems was that they had different worldviews which resulted in contrasting lifestyles as well as parenting styles. The introduction of the developmental model provided Bill and Sandra with an opportunity to reflect on their own worldview and its impact on their thoughts, feelings, decisions, and behaviors. This heightened self-awareness made them also more able to understand where the other was coming from. It also allowed them to distance themselves from the difficult emotions of the past which often complicated any decision-making process.

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The first session ended with Bill and Sandra having the task of articulating how they felt mutual decisions concerning the children could best be made. When they reported back for the second session, Bill was somewhat upset because he realized that his approach was not appropriate for the children, but at the same time did not think that Sandra's approach was appropriate either and thought her approach also had some problems. However, he could not articulate his thoughts clearly. Sandra, on her part felt that she has been too strict and needed to change her decision-making approach, but did not know how this could be done. In essence, they both stated that they did not know what a better decision-making process would look like. These statements became key points of the first agreement (the first points of unity) around which the remaining sessions revolved. Bill and Sandra engaged each other on trying to design how they could amicably make decisions. Ultimately they decided that whenever one of them was uncomfortable with a proposed activity, Bill, Sandra, and the children (who were 8 and 11 years respectively) would sit down together to discuss the issue in the context of guidelines of C-Mode decision making that they learned during their CFCR sessions. This satisfied Bill's desire for the children to lead the process, and it also provided a forum for Sandra to state her legitimate concerns. In the meeting of all of them, decisions would be made together.

What this anecdote highlights is that even in a micro-conflict, the introduction of the developmental model is the key component for both prevention of conflicts and the peaceful resolution of conflicts, when they are present. The worldview awareness component of CFCR has a mirror like effect – by providing developmental categories of worldview, CFCR makes the participants conscious of their respective worldviews and in so doing it helps them to take a more analytical perspective on both their own and others' behavior. This often allows a degree of recognition and commitment necessary for the peaceful resolution of conflicts. The worldview awareness is also a form of unity-building, because it engages all participants in working within a common frame of reference.

### **(b) The Dysfunctional Board**

A second context in which CFCR has been used is in a number of corporations and non-governmental organizations in Europe and Japan. The primary reason CFCR was employed in these contexts was to help decrease the levels of interpersonal conflict occurring within decision-making organs of these institutions. We have generally found that CFCR can be particularly appropriate in helping resolve conflicts and structure effective decision-making processes at the management and executive level. One reason for this is that the introduction of critical self reflection along the axis of worldview has proven to be an excellent device for key decision-makers to analyze their own styles and approaches to decision-making, as well as the prevailing culture and *modus operandi* within their organization.

The Board of Directors of an NGO from a small Western European country requested assistance to resolve long term dysfunction within its key decision-making body. The underlying conflict concerned the process and style of decision-making that should be used by the Board. This underlying conflict manifested itself in small disputes over issues which required decisions, and ultimately created a condition of paralysis within the

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Board. The organization simply could not make key decisions to the detriment of its nationwide membership.

The chairman of the Board, motivated by goals of efficiency and effectiveness, conducted the meetings of the Board by deciding the agenda of the meetings, limiting the contributions of the members, directing the discussion in the direction he thought appropriate, and disregarding views of others, as long as he could muster a simple majority for the issues at hand. In his approach he was forceful, used his considerable financial success as a validation of his approach, and basically considered the work of this humanitarian and progressive organization as yet another of his many business enterprises that he administered.

The secretary of the Board, a well-respected academic, held diametrically opposite views on decision-making to those of the chairman. She thought that the meetings should have as little interference from the chair as possible, that limitations on the length of presentations by the members of the Board was a violation of their rights, and that the “best ideas” should prevail. She was very concerned that the Board members voted against her ideas more than they did against the ideas of the chairman.

The chairman and the secretary had their own subgroup of supporters on the Board and consequently the Board was divided into three factions: the chairman and his followers, the secretary and her supporters, and a few others who called themselves “the free agents”. The primary preoccupation of the Board members seemed to revolve around this fractious relationship. The decisions were not made on their merits, but rather they were made with the aim of maintaining a balance, so that neither side would feel either victorious or defeated. The lofty vision and objectives of the organization remained separate from the actual process of decision making by the Board. There was no congruency between the two. Hence there was both inner conflict and the interpersonal conflict among the Board members.

Eventually, the Board members agreed to engage in a three-day intensive CFCR process. The goal was to spend the bulk of the time trying to discover the underlying causes for their decision-making paralysis. Once that was accomplished, they also planned to use their new insights to work through the current specific conflicts which they had been unable to resolve. In its character this three-day process combined elements of the previous CFCR training, actual examples of dispute resolution using CFCR approach, and addressing specific conflicts that had plagued the Board over the years.

Using a training modality, the session began with a presentation on the relationship between worldviews and decision-making. The presentation was received with a considerable amount of resistance on the part of the chairman who saw it as an attack on his integrity. Likewise, the secretary felt that her approach was being judged as a power-struggle, while it was, in her opinion, the most democratic and, therefore, the most progressive approach to decision making. As the resistance of the Chairman and the Secretary continued to grow, and the divisive patterns of the Board become apparent, it was decided a break was needed to give each member of the Board the individual task of considering their respective personal worldview and its impact on the overall decision-making process of the Board. The aim of this strategy was threefold. First, to encourage the participants to diagnose their own approach to decision making within the parameters of their respective worldviews. Second, each Board member was to determine in which

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direction he or she desired the Board's decision-making to proceed. Third, the intention was to break the focus from the divide between the Chairman and Secretary by engaging all Board members in reflection on their own worldviews and approaches to decision making as well as identifying their aspirations for the Board as opposed to the personalities which sit on it.

Once we reconvened, both the chairman and the secretary continued their protest and tried to gather their supporters to reject the CFCR approach. However, the majority of the Board members had turned their attention to an analysis of the Board's functioning and where they wished to see it go. One of the Board members described their collective dilemma by stating: "CFCR hasn't said anything new, but it has given words to issues that we were always concerned about but could not easily explain." The language of the developmental model had empowered other members of the Board to begin to articulate, in a non-confrontational matter, the dysfunction of the Board. The reactions of the Chair and the Secretary were mixed as the focus shifted away from both of them. The chairman agreed to follow the suggestions of his fellow Board members. However, the secretary pronounced the whole thing as utopian and unrealistic and left the meeting.

The Board was now faced with a choice – whether to continue in the absence of the Secretary or to end the process. It was suggested that the Board ask themselves two questions— first, how would they have dealt with this conflict in the past; and second, how could they deal with it in the C-Mode. The Board quickly agreed that in the past they would have carried on without the Secretary or the Chairman. They also concluded, after some discussion, that in order to build unity within their Board, it was important that they make efforts to bring the Secretary back into the process. They decided that two members would approach the Secretary and invite her back into the process.

The Secretary did return, and from this point on the process followed a recurring dynamic. Time would be spent developing a common understanding of what a C-Mode decision-making process might involve for the Board. The Board would then attempt to address and resolve a long-standing specific conflict on their agenda using their understanding of the C-Mode. When they would stumble upon a roadblock, the moderator would become more involved, helping them see how the C-Mode might apply to that conflict. Otherwise, the moderator would tend to stay predominately in the background.

In a follow-up communication with the organization, it was clear that change was underway, but it was slow. The Board, for the first time in years had made a decision at its annual meeting to change its officers. Both the Chair and the Secretary were replaced. As well, the Board stated that they were continuing to use the language of CFCR in their decision-making processes. The greatest benefits of this experience were that they now had a common language to use when conflicts arose, as well as a shared understanding of the dynamics of their dysfunction, both of which allowed them to approach their conflicts as opportunities to further educate themselves as a decision-making body.

### **(c) Education for Peace**

In September 1999 the authors were invited to hold a three-day CFCR workshop in Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH). Approximately 50 individuals, comprised of leading journalists, mid-level government officials and international

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community agencies in BiH participated in the meeting. Bosnia and Herzegovina at the time was gradually emerging from the ruins of war and the participants who were from all three BiH ethnic groups (Bosniak, Serb, and Croat) were extremely fearful and suspicious of one another. They would not even agree to stay in the same hotel at night. By the end of the three days there was a demonstrable change in the atmosphere amongst the participants, indicating that some success had been achieved by the workshop. Much of the fear and suspicion had been replaced by a common focus on moving their nation forward.

As a result of this workshop, we received an invitation from the Minister of Education of Bosnia and Herzegovina Federation to introduce a program based on the principles of CFCR into BiH schools. What emerged was a multi-year, large-scale program called Education for Peace which held the goal of promoting the re-integration of the school system, and re-uniting the nation's young people. The pilot project took place in six BiH schools—two schools in each region where the population reflected the dominant ethnicity of one of the ethnic groups. The six schools (three primary and three secondary) had a total population of approximately 6000 students, 10,000 parents, and 400 teachers and school staff.

The structure and rationale of the EFP program was based on the CFCR model with the goal of building patterns of unity in diversity amongst the members of the major ethnic groups. The core features of the program were:

1. The central pivot of the program was focused on worldview transformation. However, the terminology used to describe worldviews was adapted to take into account a larger group process, as well as the particular dynamics of a post-conflict society. Three major categories of worldview — Survival-Based (authoritarian), Identity-Based (power struggle) and Unity-Based (consultative and integrative) — were identified as lying at the foundation of models of social order and social relations.
2. It was essential that the entire school communities be involved, including all staff and students. The rationale for this was that a unity-building process needed to occur within and between these school communities, and therefore inclusiveness was essential. This resulted in various levels of involvement. Core groups of teachers trained intensively in the CFCR process were developed in each school. These teachers would help facilitate a worldview transformation process – akin to the first stage of CFCR – in all of the teachers and staff. Then building on local knowledge and context, a macro-curriculum for use within the schools would be developed. This macro-curriculum would emphasize and encourage the teaching of every subject within the school through a framework of unity, equality, and peace.
3. This macro-curriculum would be based on core principles of peace — there is one human race, the oneness of humanity is expressed in diversity, and the singular challenge before humanity is to maintain its oneness and strengthen its diversity without resort to violence — and would be applied in schools from different regions of the country representing the three main ethnic populations.

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4. Regional and National “Peace Events” would be held periodically to provide a forum through which the students could demonstrate, often through the arts, their new understandings of concepts such as unity, peace, and equality, and how they apply to their own lives and their relations with members of other groups.
5. Groups of students within each of the schools would also be trained to resolve disputes through CFCR.

The success of the pilot project resulted in the government of BiH requesting that the program be expanded, and if possible, be introduced to all schools in BiH thereby reaching approximately 800,000 students. Currently the program is being implemented in an additional 102 BiH schools engaging a student population of about 70,000. The goal is to gradually integrate the program within every BiH school.

EFP is not unique in the sense that there are many programs and organizations which have also focused on building peaceful relations amongst youth in conflict or post-conflict societies. Further, there are many important examples of organizations which pioneer transformative and co-operative approaches to inter-group conflict and peace-building. For example, there are some parallels between EFP and organizations such as Search for Common Ground which has as its goal “to transform the way communities and societies view and deal with their differences”<sup>4</sup>. CFCR, as evidenced in its role in the EFP program, potentially makes a twofold contribution to efforts at peacebuilding in post-conflict societies. First, it provides a clearly articulated language and framework — that of worldview and the developmental model of conflict resolution — which, as EFP demonstrates, is rather easily grasped, engaged, and implemented by members of groups or communities where there has been violence. Further, the benefit of framing the language in terms of worldview is that it inevitably encourages an integrative approach. Using the same set of tools, individuals can engage in self-analysis, groups can analyze their collective functioning, and inter-group relations can be dissected. This allows for participants to see the connections and relate between their inner conflicts, interpersonal conflicts, and intergroup conflicts, as well as understand that finding resolutions to any of these conflicts requires to some degree, addressing each of them. Second, CFCR in emphasizing unity, and articulating an understanding and definition of conflict which revolves around the reality of unity, goes farther than many other approaches in challenging the notions of the inevitability and normalcy of conflict. While CFCR is not averse to the prevailing and progressive notion that conflict can be transformed into a positive and life-altering force, CFCR further emphasizes the end-result of such transformation: the creation of patterns of unity in diversity. As a result, the orientation of CFCR is distinct from the outset. Participants are more focused on talking about and examining unity, and then exploring their conflicts through the lens of unity. All these processes are integral aspects of the EFP program.

## **Lessons and Challenges**

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These examples of CFCR in practice have highlighted challenges which future CFCR practice and theory must increasingly address.

First, it has become evident that the CFCR model has potential as both an ADR process, and as a framework for peace-building and peace education programs. As well, CFCR clearly provides a distinct foundation for systems design within institutions and organizations, as well as a training model for issues of team building, diversity, and group decision-making. The developmental model of conflict resolution, because it targets the worldview and attitudinal dimension of conflict, also translates into a framework for addressing issues of cultural change and development within institutions. Such systems often involve CFCR permeating the institutional culture in a variety of ways ranging from intervention models to particular programs of training, education, and professional development, as described in the examples above.

Second, it has also become clear that the role of the moderator in CFCR is somewhat distinct from that of a mediator and requires different training models than those often employed for mediators. The main reason for this lies within the creative nature of the CFCR process, which demands that a moderator not be tied to particular steps or stages. For example, even the order of Component 1 and Component 2 will often not be sequential, but rather may need to be interwoven. Sometimes consultative discourse will occur at the very beginning, with the two components of “forming a unity of purpose” and “consultative discourse” interacting throughout the process. The specific appearance and form of the process will vary based upon the context and character of the dispute, as well as the personality and approach of the moderator.

The challenge which this poses is whether an efficient and effective CFCR training program can be developed, and whether the transferability of CFCR skills will be a significant obstacle to the widespread use of the process. To date, the first glimmerings of a rationalized training methodology have begun to appear. This methodology attempts to combine training in the skills and stages of CFCR with a reproduction, in a more comprehensive, sustained, and analytical manner, of the process of worldview self-education which is to occur for participants within the CFCR process.

Third, it has become clear, as is true with most consensual processes, that CFCR is not suited for some types of conflicts. To date, however, no clear typology of when CFCR may or may not be appropriate has been developed. As the EFP example illustrates, the emphasis on “forming a unity of purpose” can be effective in reducing intergroup conflict. At the same time, however, raising questions of worldview and a process structure where there is an emphasis on group consultation may be inappropriate in certain cultural contexts or situations where there are particular histories or vulnerabilities among the participants. Further research into questions of culture, power, and CFCR will need to be done in future.

The emergence of CFCR in the last decade illustrates that there remains significant room for experimentation with proactive and education-oriented conflict resolution processes. It also illustrates the benefits of cross-disciplinary scholarship in contributing to our understanding of conflict and how it might be resolved. CFCR has evolved to date through the combined efforts of lawyers, educators, psychiatrists, psychologists, and conflict-resolution professionals. The result is a process and theory of conflict resolution, which, though in its nascent stages, appear to offer some novel contributions to the field. The decision to articulate a description of CFCR at this time is motivated by a hope that

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more voices and insights will further contribute to a culture of dynamism and experimentation within the contemporary study and practice of conflict resolution.

## Endnotes

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<sup>1</sup> Within this paper we have tried to use specific referents – such as ADR or names of specific processes as much as possible. However, at times “dispute resolution” and “conflict resolution” are used interchangeably in the paper. The reason that one term might have been chosen is that the specific context may imply the appropriateness of one over the other.

<sup>2</sup> For example, in transformative mediation a party-party language and structure sometimes continues to be employed. As an example, see the description of transformative mediation in *The Promise of Mediation*.

<sup>3</sup> Names and some details of the case studies “The Case of Sandra and Bill” and “The Dysfunctional Board” have been altered for confidentiality purposes.

<sup>4</sup> For information about Search for Common Grounds see: <http://www.sfcg.org/>

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