

## Positive Engagement Team

**Mission:** The PET supports a community culture in which differences are acknowledged and accepted and members live in integrity with who they are.

**Vision:** All actions of the Positive Engagement Team reflect our effort to be inclusive of everyone's unique way in the world, to accept our differences and to create and maintain connectedness and ease among all members of the Trillium Hollow community.

The principal "tool" we will incorporate to achieve our vision will be empathic listening. We will attempt to "project ourselves into another's shoes". This first-line action will create a safe context for sharing feelings and experiences without judgment, questioning or advice. Truly hearing another on all levels, offer empathic responses reflecting only what the other is sharing, can lead to opportunities for discovery and connection. We believe that people need to be "heard" first before anything else meaningful can happen and until this happens no negotiation or creative problem-solving can occur.

### Working with Conflict in the Community

Conflict is inevitable. Our different perspectives are rich aspects of living in community. Paradoxically, our different perspectives can lead to frustration and conflict between members. Conflict has the potential to make people feel alienated from each other and disempowered. It also presents an opportunity for the growth of trust and a deepening of our relationships with each other. The Positive Engagement Team will seek to nurture the growth of a culture at Trillium Hollow in which community members engage with one another in positive ways to work through conflict. The PET will do this by supporting education and training, and by working directly with members experiencing conflict in the community.

When working directly with conflict in the community PET and/or its members will:

Listen empathically to members and/or teams and help them clarify their issues/concerns and establish a communication channel that would be useful in resolving the issue,

Help any individual or team in dispute to gain access to a coach or facilitator that is mutually agreeable to both parties,

Act as a facilitator or mediator to resolve conflicts,

Assist members or teams to seek professional help in mediation or facilitation when necessary.

To build community capacity for positive engagement with conflict, PET will:

Establish a list of qualified and interested community members willing to serve as coaches, facilitators and mediators,

Organize ongoing education opportunities for learning effective communication and conflict resolution,

Introduce a set of processes to the community that provide basic conflict communication frameworks. Community members and the PET will draw from these frameworks to design a process uniquely suited to each conflict situation,

Collaborate with the steering team to bring issues to the plenary for consideration and action

where appropriate.

## **NUTS & BOLTS**

**Community Access:** A community member will access the team with a request or concern by sending a personal email to one or all members, calling a team member, or visiting the team member of your choosing. The team will respond to requests for assistance from individuals or teams experiencing conflict in a timely manner. Sometimes unresolved interpersonal conflicts radiate negative energy that destroys the experience of harmony at Trillium Hollow. In such instances, the PET will proactively approach community members involved in conflict to offer support and assistance.

### **Composition of the Team**

The team will have between 3-5 members. Members of the team will appoint a team lead who will attend team lead meetings, track PET tasks, schedule PET meetings, and manage PET communications with the community. All members of the PET team (not just the lead) are access points for PET support.

### **Qualities required for PET members**

- integrity around keeping sensitive information confidential
- recognize and honor each individual's journey through the experience of conflict
- Sensitivity and acceptance of age, gender, religious and sexual preference differences.

### **Qualities desirable for PET members:**

- ability to function well in the midst of emotional turmoil,
- available to spend time with people in crisis,
- experience in facilitating or mediating conflicts,
- reliable in keeping agreements,
- willingness and commitment to resolving their own conflicts within the community.

### **Confidentiality:**

Team meetings will be closed to other community members when sensitive information is being shared.

The content of reports to the plenary on team meetings and other work being done is left to the discretion of the team.

When requested and agreed to in advance, PET members will provide conflict resolution services to community members in private.