

## **Group Consensus Decision-Making**

Consensus can be defined as “the sense of the group.” Unanimous agreement is not necessary, but the group strives for a decision that all members can support even though they may not agree 100%. (70% comfortable, but can “live with the decision” and willing to support 100%).

It is important for any opposition to be fully expressed so that all members have the opportunity to truly understand the opposition view.

There are many ways to test for consensus (such as show of hands and voting) but is usually not necessary if communications have been open, the group climate has been supportive, and everyone has felt that he or she has had their chance to influence the decision.

## **Participation Guidelines**

- Be prompt and flexible.
- Contribute your ideas.
- Listen respectfully and to understand.
- Disagree by stating your idea.
- Work on behalf of the group, as a whole.
- Focus on positive results and build on any and all points of agreement.

## **Steps to consensus**

1. Start with the end in mind.
2. Craft a framework agreement.
3. Pursue your interests but don't be rigid in pursuing any particular solution – avoid the “take it or leave it” proposal.
4. Move toward commitment gradually.
5. Be generous at the end – help all parties leave the deliberations feeling satisfied.