

North East Anarchist Group (NEAG)

Accountability, Conflict Resolution and Restorative Justice Processes

Agreed Upon: 08/01/2023

This document in brief:

This is a policy for what to do when someone is alleged to have broken the North East Anarchist Group (NEAG) Safer Spaces statement/agreement (also referred to as 'Safer Spaces Policy'). Since the Safer Spaces agreement states that we will not tolerate 'abusive behaviour' in NEAG, we also try to be as clear as possible about what we mean by that. This document can't possibly take account of every possible eventuality, but it's our best shot at providing some tools and setting out how we understand some key terms that we hope will be helpful to those dealing with these difficult problems.

While the processes described below are not 'set in stone' and we encourage their modification, what is written here has been thought through in some depth, and has been agreed on at a Co-op General Meeting as our approach to accountability.

This policy applies to all members of NEAG, any events hosted by NEAG, and any publications/communications that are issued in NEAG's name/by NEAG members. This applies both online and in-person.

All members of NEAG will aspire to act in accordance with this policy in their relations with others (both members and non-members) and are expected to abide by and be held accountable to this as members of NEAG.

If you feel unsafe in NEAG due to somebody else's behaviour, then please contact any member of NEAG. They will then use this document to guide them on the appropriate actions to take. If you wish, your complaint will be kept confidential and your identity secret as much as we are able to do so.

If you have been subjected to violence or abuse (physical or psychological), sexual assault or sexual harassment, the perpetrator will be asked not to take part in NEAG activities (including the online chat) while the process is ongoing. If they are a member of NEAG, their ability to use our spaces and communication channels will be suspended until the matter is resolved. The process will be survivor-led, you will be able to choose a mediator and you will not be expected to see or speak with your attacker if you do not wish to do so.

For complaints that do not involve violence or abuse (physical or psychological), sexual assault or sexual harassment, we encourage both/all parties to engage with our Conflict Resolution procedure, and we will provide mediation if requested. See our Conflict Resolution and Survivor-led procedures (below) for details of how these processes work.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are Safer Spaces?

A Safer space is somewhere that has a policy listing the behaviours that its users have collectively decided they won't tolerate in that space. It is a space where people can feel that they're less likely to face violence, harassment, intimidation or bullying, and will be supported in confronting these behaviours if they experience them.

We name these behaviours in the Safer Spaces statement so that we have an agreement on what we can feel justified in challenging, so that anybody challenging these behaviours doesn't have to feel alone or risk dismissal of their concerns, and so that those who might be tempted to use these behaviours as a shortcut to making their point will think twice about the possible negative consequences.

Why "Safer" rather than "safe"?

It isn't possible to completely eradicate all the behaviours we oppose, and we don't try to pretend that we're perfect or that anywhere can be guaranteed entirely safe for everybody. The aim is that a collective agreement on what's unacceptable and processes for challenging these behaviours makes the space Safer than places that rely on state laws and enforcers, or assume that they need no agreements or processes of any kind.

Why do we need Safer Spaces?

When we organise non-hierarchically, we're working in an environment that we haven't been socialised for, and we need to think about what that means for the ways in which we control our own behaviour or influence the behaviour of others. We live in a society that imposes limits on conflict from above, allowing only state-sanctioned violence and characterising as aggression only resistance to state laws. Capitalism, racism, sexism, homophobia, disablism and a multitude of other interacting systems of oppression are all a part of the world we live in. We've been shaped by these systems, and our conscious rejection of them is not enough to make them disappear from either our organisations or our own attitudes. We need Safer Spaces, not because we think that we can build a little slice of utopia free from oppression and hierarchy, but because we know that we can't, and so we need ways of recognising and dealing with those oppressions when we find ourselves facing them from friends and NEAG members.

Can't we just use common sense?

In reality, once a conflict is underway it is difficult for anybody involved to talk about the behaviours displayed in isolation from the people who displayed them. We end up defending or attacking individuals rather than talking about why an action was, in itself, right or wrong. A pre-agreed set of definitions allows us to look at our conflicts a little more objectively. It is easy to take a reasonable criticism as an insult, or to be intimidated out of making a necessary challenge to somebody's behaviour because it may be seen as personal or hurt their feelings. A policy can be used to both justify our concerns about others and help us to examine our own behaviour less defensively.

Can people misuse or manipulate this policy?

No policy or process is immune from being misused, but we try to guard against this by encouraging everybody in a process to involve mediators they trust and by aiming for resolution

and restoration of trust rather than putting anybody on trial or aiming to punish them for breaking the letter of the policy.

For instance, if a member of NEAG were to deliberately provoke somebody to anger (rather than challenging their views constructively) and then call them to a process because they resorted to insults, then the process would cover the whole situation, dealing with the provocation as well as the insult, and concentrate on the ways in which each person was made to feel unsafe, not just who was the first to snap.

Because of this, it is very difficult for somebody to misuse the policy if those they are attempting to manipulate enter into the process in good faith.

Does this inhibit free speech and open debate?

Safer Spaces are not about trying to forbid or suppress conflict, they are concerned with allowing it to happen constructively, while ensuring that it doesn't lead to people getting hurt, marginalised or silenced. If the subject of the debate is a particular oppression, then for it to be constructive we need people who have experienced that oppression to feel safe joining the discussion. If we don't care about their safety, and let debate become an excuse to verbally attack and intimidate one another, we have inhibited free speech and open debate by excluding people from the discussion.

The Safer Spaces policy is not designed to prevent disagreements or shut down normal argument, but to discourage situations in which people are intimidated out of such discussions. We don't all have to agree on everything, but we don't tolerate the use of violence, harassment or intimidation to make our points. Free speech ends at the point that it becomes an act of oppression to somebody else.

These look a lot like rules. Aren't we against rules?

We think it is important that NEAG sets our own benchmarks for reasonable behaviour, and our own processes for dealing with unreasonable behaviour. The Safer Spaces policy and the conflict resolution and survivor-led/restorative justice processes are our means for doing this. The Safer Spaces policy defines the behaviours that we've agreed we want to avoid. You could call these rules, but they're the rules we have created for ourselves, not rules imposed on us from outside.

Anyone can also propose changes to be agreed at any meeting/discussion. By constantly trying to improve and clarify what we expect of ourselves and each other, we work towards the better society we would like to be a part of.

Do we punish people when they break the rules?

No. The most we have the power to do is exclude them from our group and events, and we don't resort to this lightly.

The point of naming the behaviours in the policy is not to instantly exclude anybody who displays them in any way; our processes should make sure that responses to conflicts are proportionate and constructive. They aren't about punishing people, they're about resolving conflict, safeguarding our Spaces and those who use them, protecting survivors of violence or sexual assault, restoring trust and transforming the way we relate to one another and view our conflicts.

The aim of all our processes is that we examine the reasons for our actions, understand the effect we have had on others and consider more constructive ways of dealing with the situation that prompted our behaviour. We can't expect this to always lead to full restoration of trust, and sometimes it will be necessary to exclude people from our Spaces or set conditions that limit their participation, but this is always about safeguarding, not punishment.

Why aren't all processes conducted openly?

Not all processes concern everybody in the organisation. Some conflicts are personal, and those involved would rather keep their dispute private or involve only one or two trusted members to mediate. As long as their conflict is not over an issue that concerns the running of NEAG or the wider community, there is no reason why they shouldn't resolve their conflict in private.

Sometimes there are much more important reasons for confidentiality. It is especially necessary to survivor-led processes that a survivor or a person reporting a violent or sexually predatory behaviour feels safe to do so, and knows that they will not be subjected to judgement or retaliation by the perpetrator or other members.

Who gets to judge what happened, or say who is in the right?

Nobody. Ideally, those involved come to an agreement themselves, with mediation or support from other people if they request it. If a conflict resolution process fails, a meeting of the mediators can step in to decide what to do, but this is a last resort and, again, safeguarding and resolution are the motivations, not judgement or punishment. See the processes document for more detailed information on exactly how this works.

What about examining evidence and determining the facts?

Our processes proceed from determining what made participants feel unsafe and what it would take for them to feel safe again. This requires participants to have an understanding of one another's perspective. If they have interpreted the situation differently, it may be useful to identify why that was, but it is rarely helpful to look for discrepancies in participants' stories and start trying to determine which one is objectively true (which is usually not even possible).

What if I feel unsafe because of a behaviour that isn't on the list?

You can request a process to deal with any behaviour that has made you feel unsafe – it doesn't have to be listed explicitly in the policy. This is a living document that can be expanded by proposals to the GM. If there is something important that we have left out, please let us know so that we can expand the policy to include it.

Some Useful Definitions.

We define the following as 'abusive behaviours'.

Physical Abuse

- Violence and threat of violence (unless in self-defence)
- Use of force and threat of force (unless minimal to protect people)

- Rape, sexual assault and sexual harassment

Non-physical Abuse

- Verbal abuse (insults or aggression towards an individual)
- Oppressive language (insults or generalisations about a marginalised group of people)
- Emotional and psychological abuse (bullying, isolating and 'gas lighting')
- Harassment (behaviour made abusive by being repeated, persistent and unwelcome)
- Written abuse (any of the above in written form)

What this means (and what it does not mean)

This section provides some more detail on what we mean (and what we don't mean!) by each of the abusive behaviours listed above.

Physical Abuse

1. *Violence and threat of violence:* A deliberate action that is likely to cause somebody physical pain, or the threat of such action, made verbally or implied physically.

This does not mean: Acting in self-defence or in defence of others, as a last resort, in response to a clear and direct physical threat.

2. *Use of force and threat of force:* Preventing a person from leaving a situation or forcing them into one, either by physically restraining them, blocking their way, refusing to stop following them or refusing to move away from them when asked. Threatening to carry out any of these actions.

This does not mean: Preventing somebody from doing violence to themselves or others, or preventing somebody from damaging a space being used collectively, or removing someone who is acting abusively or violently, using minimal necessary force.

3. *Rape/Sexual Assault/Sexual Harassment:* non-consenting sex or sexual touching, as well as acting in a sexual way towards somebody, invading their personal space or making sexually suggestive moves or gestures to them without their explicit consent.

This does not mean: telling somebody that you find them attractive or initiating a flirtation.

Develop personal relationships at appropriate times and places, where nobody is likely to feel trapped, coerced, isolated or embarrassed, and make sure anybody you are flirting with has ample opportunity to exit the situation or end the flirtation at any time.

Non-physical Abuse

4. *Verbal insult:* This means insulting terms specifically applied to individuals, or criticism made abusive by being shouted or expressed aggressively, with the outcome of causing hurt, intimidation or humiliation. This applies regardless of whether or not the outcome was intentional. It is not the intentions of the person who made the remark or the offence felt by the

person being insulted that is being addressed here, though these issues will be relevant to any resolution or disassociation process that follows. The behaviour is problematic because it is a means of forcing a point through the use of intimidation rather than reason, and this works to silence dissent and stifle constructive and reasonable discussion.

This does not mean: a ban on insults, compliments or personal remarks in conversation amongst friends who know and respect one another's limits. However, when engaging in such banter, we should always be aware of our context – where we are, who else is around us and how what we're saying affects the general atmosphere of the space. It is not enough to assume that everybody within earshot knows our intentions, or even to state that we don't mean anything by our use of insulting terms, or that they are being used ironically. The trust that is being asked by somebody who uses insulting or aggressive language in jest has to be earned and maintained, and is not automatically due to anybody with good intentions.

5. *Oppressive language*: This is language used in general conversation, not necessarily in connection with a specific person, that insults, expresses prejudices or reinforces preconceptions about a group of people that are marginalised, disadvantaged or oppressed by mainstream society.

This includes (but is not limited to) any racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic or disablist language and includes using such language as insults and slurs against political opponents. The reason for this is not "political correctness" or fear of criticising people's values. The real problem with such language is that it normalises prejudices and recreates the very hierarchies that we aim to oppose, as well as creating a space that is unwelcoming to anybody outside of a narrow demographic.

This does not mean: Compiling lists of unacceptable words and phrases in order to catch out the unwary – we don't need to ban words, we do need to meet challenges to our language without defensiveness, be prepared to apologise for unintentional offence and take the opportunity to reconsider our language, the implications behind it and the impact it can have on others. Free expression ends at the point where it becomes an act of oppression to another.

6. *Emotional and psychological abuse*: This includes behaviour that undermines the targeted person's confidence and credibility by patronising or dismissing them, putting them down or ridiculing them, ignoring, isolating and ostracising them, scapegoating them, and other bullying behaviours. It includes 'gaslighting', which is to try to make a person doubt the validity of their own senses and perception by denying or contradicting their perspective, and may include telling them and others that they are "crazy" or similar.

This does not mean: That you can't disagree with somebody or contradict them. Do this by outlining your own perspective or recollection of events rather than ridiculing or dismissing theirs.

7. *Harassment*: This is a pattern of repeated, persistent, unwelcome behaviour targeted at a person. The individual actions seen in isolation may be benign, but become abusive by being repeated, especially when the targeted person has asked for the behaviour to stop. For example, contacting someone is not inherently abusive, but multiple unwanted calls or messages is

harassing behaviour. Harassment may include making unsolicited and inappropriately personal remarks (complimentary or otherwise) about somebody's appearance or other personal attributes, or making repeated personal requests of them, sexual or otherwise, which have been previously refused, ignored or not met with enthusiasm.

This does not mean: seeking clarifications or offering reminders about a task or action that someone has agreed to. This section of the policy should be used to protect ourselves from repeated requests as an intimidation and bullying tactic, not to avoid answering a valid question or making a decision.

8. *Written abuse*: the same issues often come up in written communications, whether on mailing lists, forums and social networks or personal e-mails and text messages. It can be easier to both misunderstand written communication and to cross boundaries in terms of abusive language, since the things that would normally hold us back in a face-to-face confrontation (e.g. social unease, immediate negative response and awareness of the other party's distress) are not as pronounced in this medium. The medium also has advantages for debate – many people find it easier to express themselves clearly and coherently in writing, to think their points through and to find the confidence to put their words into a public forum. But the same rules should apply in terms of avoiding personal insult, oppressive language, bullying and harassment, and for the same reasons.

This does not mean: That you can't discuss political issues or dispute things that people have said in writing. However, always try to keep it civil, and if you feel that you are being antagonised, suggest a different format for the discussion (e.g. private correspondence or a meeting). Avoid sending e-mails or messages while you feel upset or angry. Wait until you feel calm and read over your response, thinking of every phrase you have used in terms of the way you would feel to see it applied to yourself or your friends. Always address the points that you disagree with, rather than the person who has made them (or the kind of person who you believe makes such points).

Don't assume that you know somebody else's opinions or motives beyond those that they have expressed unambiguously. You can only argue with what somebody has said, not what they might have been thinking. Argue with a view to developing everybody's ideas, including your own, rather than attempting to defeat the opposing view or force a retraction. There are no individual winners or losers, only productive discussions and destructive ones. People very rarely back down from an opinion once they have expressed it publicly in writing. Accept that, even when you do persuade somebody to change their mind, they probably won't admit it publicly, and you may never know about it.

Using the NEAG Accountability Processes

This section explains how to use the accountability process.

What are our "Spaces"? Where does this apply?

This policy should be considered to apply to members of NEAG when we meet together, be it at a meeting, event or in another space. It also applies to our communications online, by phone or in

writing, both public and private. It is not okay for us to abuse one another just because it's a personal email rather than a mailing list, or at a party rather than a meeting.

Who does this apply to?

This applies to everybody who attends any event organised or co-sponsored by NEAG. It also applies to all third-party groups, individuals or organisations involved with NEAG activities. Some of the behaviours listed shouldn't be considered acceptable by a user (or anybody else) at any time, to anybody, e.g. sexual assault, or sexually or racially charged verbal abuse. This behaviour makes the space around the person displaying it unsafe for everybody and reinforces an oppressive culture, even if the behaviour is aimed at people or organisations with whom we may be in direct confrontation, such as state institutions or members of fascist organisations.

How do I enact the policy?

Contact a member of NEAG to begin a process to deal with a behaviour you have experienced. The processes are outlined in our Conflict Resolution and Survivor-led Processes below. You will be offered anonymity and confidentiality for all complaints to the best of our ability, and given the opportunity to nominate trusted members of NEAG to mediate for you in any process that follows (though you are also welcome to speak for yourself directly if you prefer).

Complaints involving physical violence, rape, sexual assault or sexual harassment will be dealt with through a survivor-led process, and need not involve any members of NEAG who the survivor(s) have not nominated. Anybody who has been named as a perpetrator of these or other violent and serious abuses will be asked not to participate in NEAG activities or communications while the process is ongoing.

Complaints not involving violence will be dealt with through the Conflict Resolution process, and both/all parties will be encouraged to communicate their concerns in constructive ways – with mediation, if required – with a view to restoring the ability to work together effectively in a space safe for all concerned.

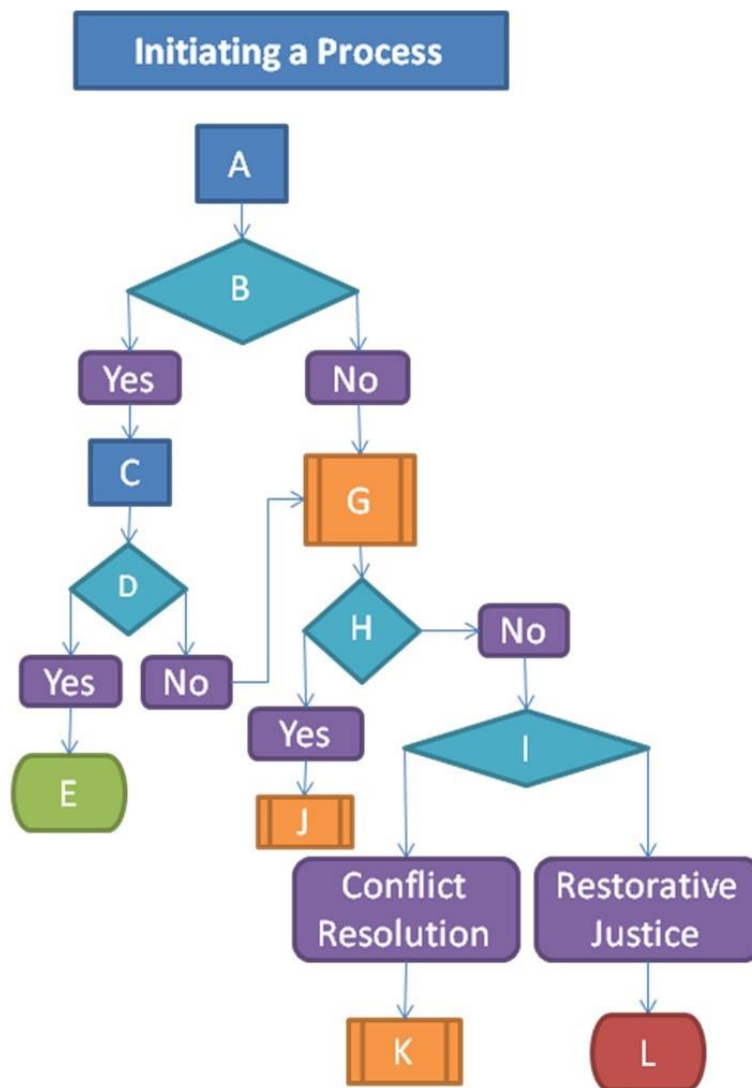
NEAG's Conflict Resolution & Survivor-led Restorative Justice Processes

Statement of Intent/Principles

1. To recognize the humanity of everyone involved. Everyone in a grievance or conflict situation deserves and needs support in order to progress.
2. To prioritize the self-determination of survivors of physical, sexual and emotional/psychological abuse. This means respecting the need for all issues raised to be treated confidentially and to only disclose any details to such people as may be necessary in line with the guidelines below.
3. To foster an environment that does not tolerate emotional and psychological abuses. We recognise that, left unchecked, these can impact seriously on mental health. We have separate processes not because we see a hierarchy of abuse between physical and non-physical, but because of the different ways in which we need to deal with these abuses.

4. To enact processes with careful consideration of the potential consequences, and with a view to safeguarding our spaces and supporting those who use them to work together constructively towards our common goals.
5. To ensure that those facilitating and participating in survivor-led processes have a good understanding of the political analysis of sexual violence.
6. To acknowledge that when someone is on the receiving end of oppression it is likely to bring up similar experiences from the past, thereby making a grievance/conflict involving oppression feel doubly unsafe.
7. To recognise that unintentional oppression, resulting from attitudes learnt or adopted from growing up in an oppressive society, can be just as hurtful as intentional actions, and we need to take individuals and collective responsibility for re-educating ourselves. The positive side of this is that a willingness to do so can bring about change.
8. To be clear and specific when communicating with people about their accountability, including our reasoning as well as our conditions or demands. When these may be difficult to hear or difficult to meet, to consider ensuring that the person is able to seek help from their friends, family, and people close to them, or offering support ourselves if appropriate.
9. To provide ways for everyone in the organisation to increase their skills and knowledge by hosting skill-share/training sessions and making available relevant books. Learning about and practising conflict resolution should be a shared responsibility and an integral part of how we work alongside each other. Not only are conflict resolution skills useful to us in other areas of our lives, they are also useful tools for helping to bring about and live in the non-hierarchical, co-operative society that we are aiming for - where there is no appeal to authority to make a decision for or against us or to tell us what to do, and where the aim is not to "win" a conflict but to address and solve the problems from which it arises.
10. To be prepared for the possibility that processes may be lengthy, and to be engaged in them for the long haul.

Initiating a Process



A: Person or group (A) experiences or witnesses abusive behaviour from person or group (B).

B: Does (A) feel confident and safe to speak to (B) alone?

C: (A) speaks privately to (B) about their behaviour, focusing on resolving the problem.

D: Has a satisfactory resolution been met?

E: Conflict resolved to satisfaction of both parties – no process necessary.

F: (A) contacts someone they feel comfortable with in NEAG (person (C)) to initiate the process. This person can act as facilitator(s) or arrange for another mutually agreeable person to do so.

F1: Does (C), with or without (A) present, feel confident and safe speaking to person (B) to resolve the problem?

If Yes: D

If No: G

G: Person (A) or (C) contacts another member of NEAG (who is comfortable with the task of being a facilitator(s)) to appoint as a facilitator(s). In certain circumstances, a member from outside of NEAG can also be chosen to be a facilitator(s). A ‘team’ of facilitator(s)s can also be appointed if it makes everyone involved more comfortable (e.g., a facilitator(s) only feels comfortable if working with someone else). When a facilitator(s) has been found, the facilitator(s) and (A) go through flowchart ‘Determining the Nature of the conflict process’ (page 11.) This determines how much to include when informing (B) that a process is being sought with them, who else to contact and which process to follow.

H: Does (B) Agree to participate?

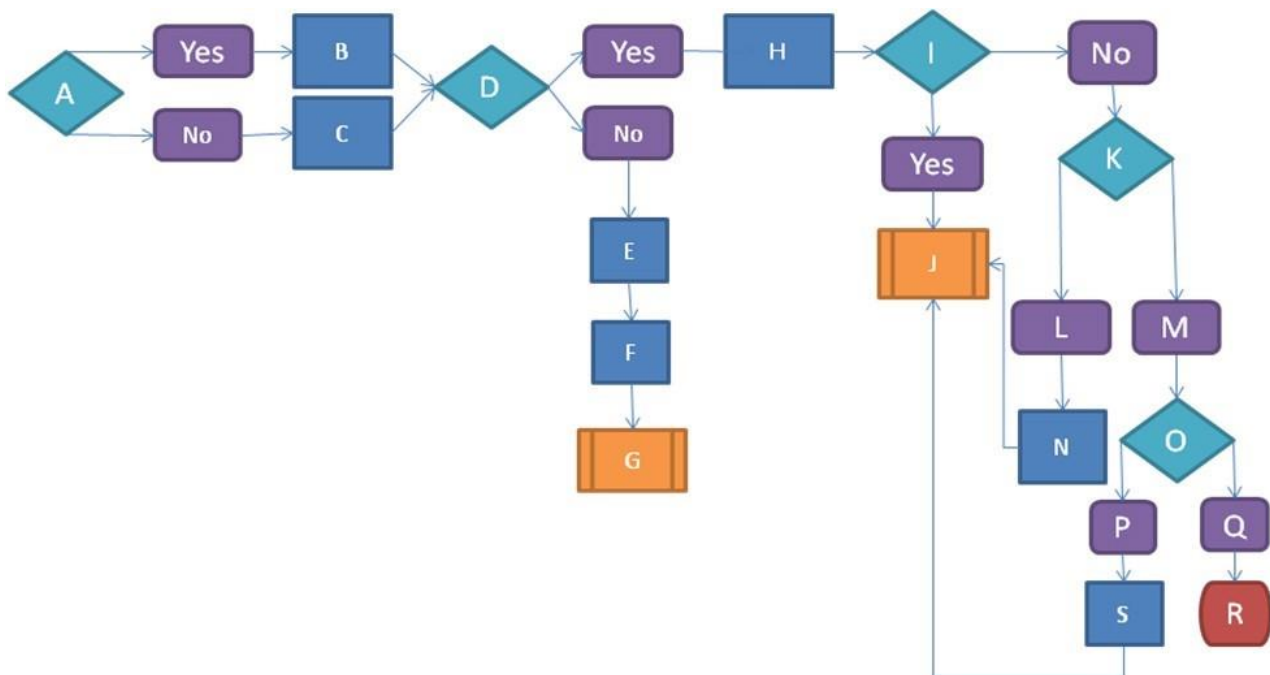
I: Was the processes determined in step G for Conflict Resolution or for Restorative Justice?

J: Go to the process determined in step G (Mediated Conflict Resolution page 13, Survivor-led Process for Restorative Justice page 15).

K: If one party is unwilling to participate, then conflict resolution can be considered to have failed. Go to “Failed Processes” (page 18).

L: By dismissing (A)’s and/or NEAG’s concerns, (B) is refusing to give assurances that allow us to safeguard our Spaces, and cannot be allowed to continue as a member in this capacity. (B) has effectively disassociated themselves. The facilitator(s) should inform the membership that B has been excluded for safeguarding reasons, giving explanations that respect the survivor’s privacy.

Determining the Nature of the Process



A: Does (A) want anonymity from (B) or any other member(s) of NEAG?

B: All facilitator(s)s and participants will be requested to keep (A)’s identity confidential.

C: (B) may be told who has called a process with them, but it is still best practice for facilitator(s) to not give details of the process or participants to anybody outside the facilitation team without participants' express permission.

D: Does the abusive behaviour reported involve rape, sexual assault, sexual harassment or a physical attack.

E: (A) should nominate people to be involved in the mediation process. If (A) doesn't know many people in NEAG well, the facilitator(s) can make suggestions and contact these people with (A)'s permission.

F: The facilitator(s) should now inform (B) of the behaviour that has been reported and that a process is being sought with them. (B) should only be told who made the complaint with (A)'s permission. (B) should be told who has been nominated to mediate, and given the opportunity to nominate additional mediators if they wish.

G: The process will be a 'Mediated Process for Conflict Resolution'. Return to H in 'Initiating a Conflict Process' (page 10).

H: As a safeguarding precaution, (B)'s participation in NEAG is suspended. The facilitator(s) must tell (B) not to attend NEAG meetings, discussions, or events, or participate in NEAG communications until the process is concluded. The process should be determined by the survivor(s), and no further action taken or information given to other parties without the survivor(s)' explicit consent.

I. Is (A) the survivor?

J: The process will be a 'Survivor-led Process for Restorative Justice'. Return to H in 'Initiating a Conflict Process' (page 10).

K: If the survivor(s) are not yet involved in the process, but are known to people involved, the facilitator(s) should look into the feasibility and appropriateness of contacting them offering NEAG's support in a survivor-led process.

L: The survivor(s) are contactable and wish to be involved in the process.

M: The survivor(s) cannot be contacted, or it would be inappropriate to contact them, or they do not want to be involved.

N: The survivor is now (A), and the person who reported the incident should only remain involved as and where needed/appropriate, taking into account the survivor's wishes.

O: The facilitator(s) contacts other members of NEAG (a meeting may be necessary for this) to decide whether NEAG wishes to seek a process with (B) as an organisation, or ban B permanently. NEAG and the facilitator(s) should balance the confidentiality of the survivor(s) with the need to safeguard NEAG members. NEAG and the facilitator(s) should give out only the minimum necessary information, never the survivor(s).

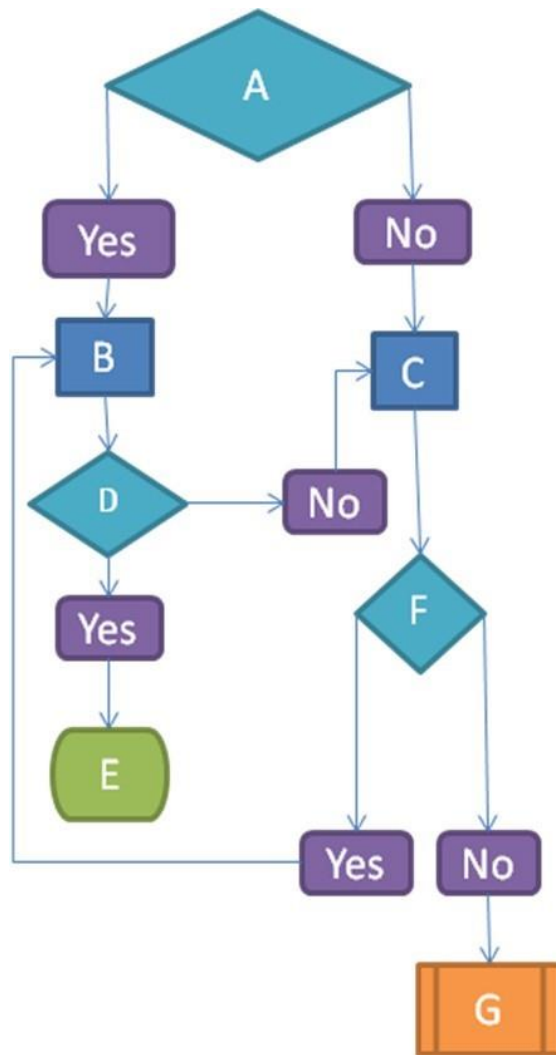
P: Decision to enter a process with (B) as an organisation.

Q: Decision to make (B)'s disassociation permanent.

R: Facilitator(s) communicates the decision to (B), along with advice for rehabilitation if appropriate.

S: Facilitator(s) informs (B) of NEAG's intention to seek a process with them. The organisation is now (A). From here, the survivor-led process (page 15) can be used as a guide, but as the survivor(s) are not involved it is not for NEAG to make judgements on the incident that was reported to them, only on what actions (B) can take to assure the membership that their presence does not compromise the safety of our Spaces.

Mediated Process for Conflict Resolution



A: Do (A) and (B) both feel safe and confident to meet together with mediator(s) present?

B: (A) and (B) meet with mediators, using Guidance for Mediators below to try to resolve the issue.

C: Mediators meet with (A) and (B) separately, allowing each to talk freely and clarify what they wish to gain from the process.

D: Has a satisfactory resolution been achieved?

E: Conflict resolved to satisfaction of both parties.

F: Do all involved feel that a meeting could now be productive?

G: Go to the Failed Processes flowchart, page 19.

Guidance for Mediators:

The mediators' role is not to take sides or to decide what (A) and (B) should do, but to facilitate the meeting and maintain it as a space where (A) and (B) may each talk and be listened to by the other, and to help (A) and (B) together create solutions to the conflict. Mediators can, if requested, be assigned to separate parties to support in private as well as at a meeting. Again, recognising that 'support' does not mean taking sides, but enabling each person to feel safe enough to express themselves and not be isolated while listening to opinions which may be critical. Any specific next steps arising from the meeting should be recorded in a written agreement by the facilitator(s).

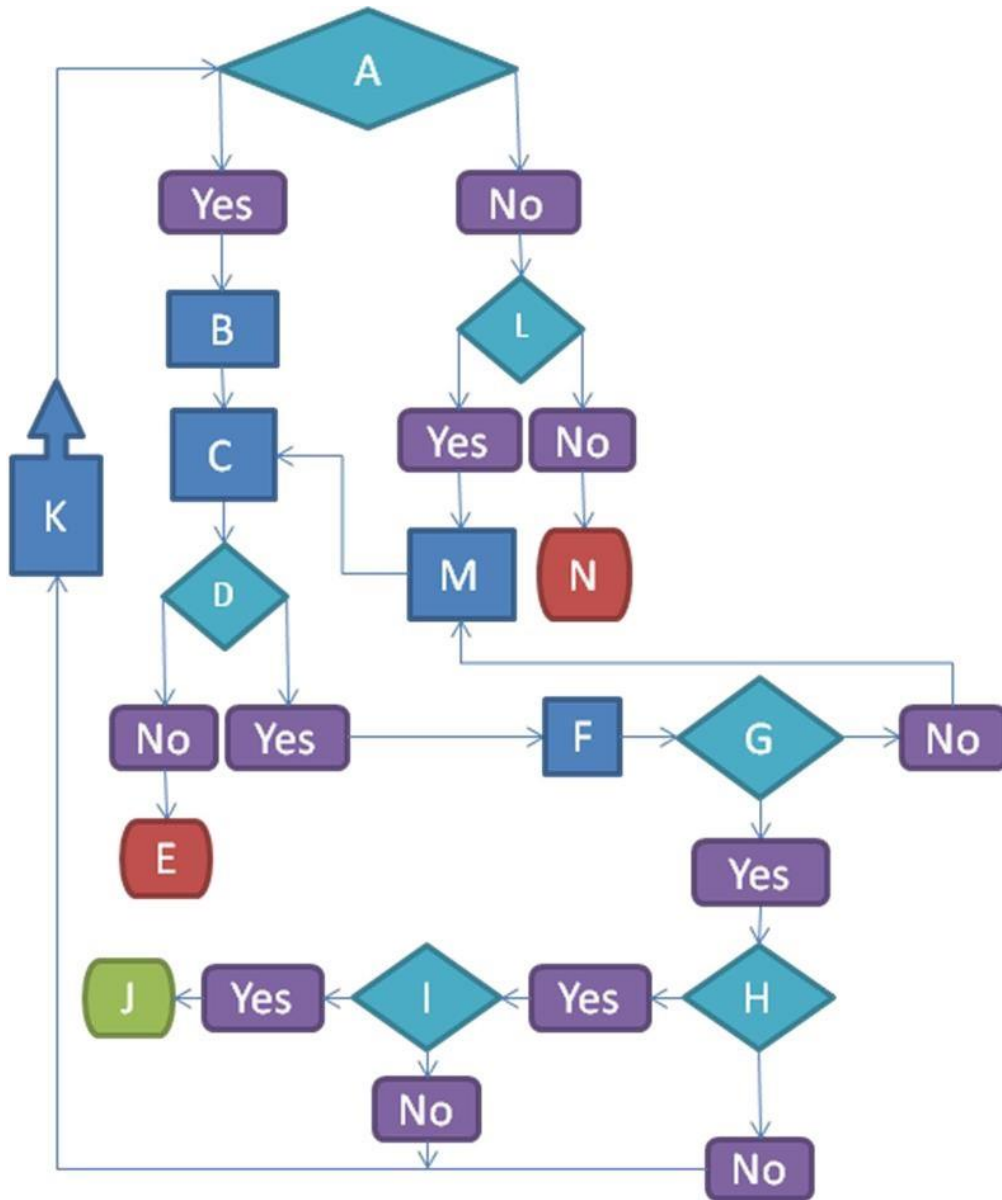
If the whole of NEAG has been informed of the mediated process, the facilitator(s) and/or (A) and (B) should submit an update at the next meeting.

Mediators can support communication between (A) and (B) in the following ways:

- Listening uncritically to the problem as perceived by (A) or (B), and taking the problem seriously.
- Encouraging (A) and (B) to express their concerns in terms of the behaviours and actions that have been problematic, not the personal attributes of the other party.
- Preparing (A) and (B) to be able to express themselves when they meet.
- Identifying some action to be taken by (A) or (B) to change a particular behaviour or educate themselves on a particular issue.
- Suggesting a helpful setting, agenda or structure for a meeting, especially for a second meeting to be different if the first has failed.
- Arranging to have a particular allies' or caucus meeting within NEAG. A reportback to the rest of NEAG may be agreed to inform the others of the grievance/conflict and the steps taken to make progress on it.
- Suggest a change of mediator if you feel you are unable to take the process further.

Example of a Survivor-led Process for Restorative Justice

(The survivor may make changes – this is a guide for ideas and good practice)



A: Is there anything (B) could do to enable A to feel safe in B's presence again?

B: (A) Outlines conditions that should be met by (B) in order for basic trust to be restored (see guidelines below for ideas). (B) remains suspended until such time as these conditions are met.

C: (A)'s decisions and conditions are communicated to (B) in a statement that (A) has either written or approved.

D: Does (B) agree to take these conditions on board and work towards restoring trust?

E: (B) remains excluded from NEAG. Facilitator(s) informs (B) and the rest of NEAG, taking care to give only necessary details and respect (A)'s confidentiality if requested. If (B) may pose a danger to others in the anarchist community, (A) may wish to release a statement to groups and Spaces that could be affected. This should be at (A)'s discretion, with the support of the facilitator(s) and potentially others, depending on the scope of the statement and who (A) wishes to approach.

F: (A) Sets review date. It is for (B) to contact the facilitator(s) or group at this time and demonstrate that conditions have been met.

G: On review date, does (A) consider (B)'s progress satisfactory?

H: Members of NEAG meet to decide whether all are prepared to re-associate with (B).

I: Local group propose in next NEAG meeting that (B) be allowed to re-associate with NEAG. If this proposal is agreed, go to J, if not, go to K.

J: (B) is allowed to return to NEAG, possibly on conditions set by (A) and the rest of NEAG.

K: The Mediators are now (A). This part of the process is an extra safeguard. Nobody has any business exonerating (B) when the survivor has not, but the local mediators can demand further reassurance after a survivor is satisfied. The survivor comes first, but (B) only returns when everybody can feel the space will be safe.

L: Is it possible that this decision will change in time? If not, is there something that (B) or NEAG/the facilitator(s) could do such that (A) can tolerate (B) using the space in some way (e.g. using the space when (A) not there).

M: (B) remains disassociated from NEAG with a date set by (A) to review the decision, possibly giving a set of conditions to be met for review (see below for ideas), or possibly merely deferring the Restorative Justice process until (A) feels better able to consider such conditions.

N.B. If we have looped back to M (from G, 'No') three or more times and the facilitators and NEAG strongly and unanimously feel that the conditions set down by (A) have clearly been met by (B), the facilitator(s) meet with (A) ask whether there is something that (B) or NEAG/the facilitator(s) could do such that (A) would be able to tolerate (B) using the space in some way (e.g. using the space when A not there). If there is not, the ban is not automatically upheld and the option of a conflict resolution process is put on the table. This is extremely rare case that would need to be handled with extreme care. This guards against misuse of the process.

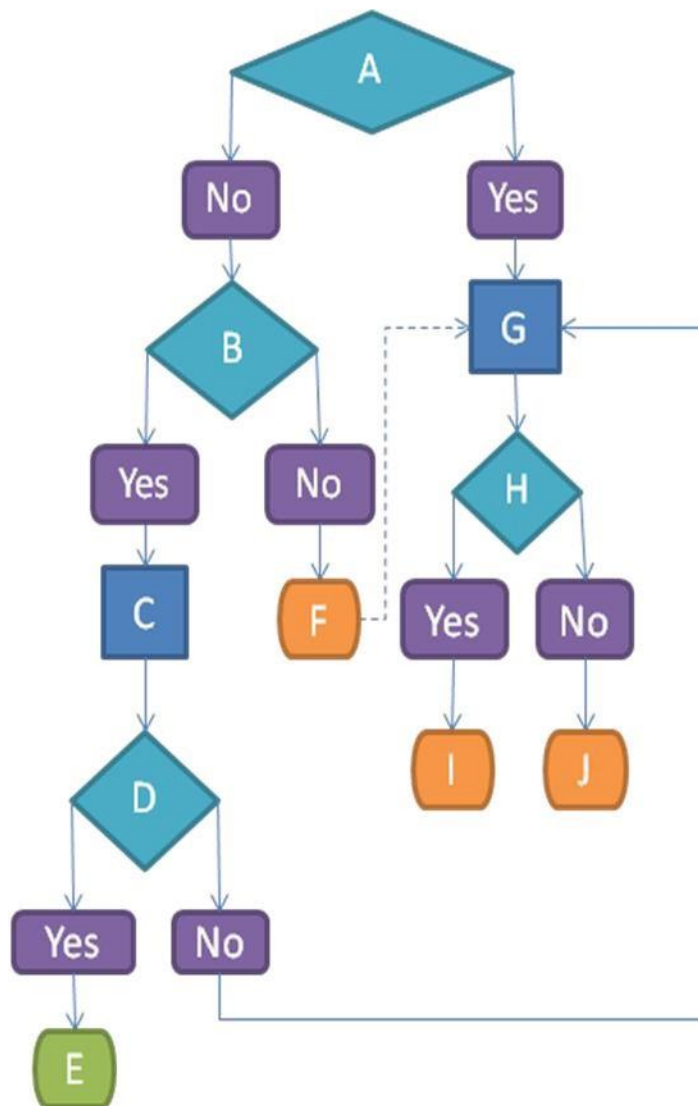
N: (B) is excluded from NEAG indefinitely. Facilitator(s) informs (B) and the membership, taking care to give only necessary details and respect (A)'s confidentiality if requested. If (B) may pose a danger to others in the anarchist community, (A) may wish to release a statement to groups and Spaces that could be affected. This should be at (A)'s discretion, with the support of the facilitator(s), and could be backed by individuals, local groups or networks depending on the scope of the statement and who (A) wishes to approach for support.

Ideas for conditions that perpetrators could be required to meet in order to restore trust:

- Take a course in anger management.
- Seek counselling/therapy.
- Admit to having a problem and speak to friends or members of NEAG about it.
- Admit responsibility and apologise for harm caused.
- Give up drinking/drugs/other addictive behaviour that has been connected with violent
- Make other changes to lifestyle/attitude to improve.
- Avoid bad influences or company.
- Read certain books/watch documentaries/attend meetings to improve understanding of an
- Write a statement explaining why the incident occurred and how the perpetrator intends to avoid behaving the same way in future.

This is not an exhaustive list – survivors should be free to think of their own ideas, and remember that they are not obliged to give the perpetrator a way out. In fact, one condition could be that the perpetrator has thought hard enough about how to restore trust that they come up with some ideas of their own.

Failed Conflict Resolution Processes



A: Are (A) and (B) willing to have members of NEAG resolve the matter for them?

B: Will the disagreement affect NEAG?

C: (A) and (B) must work out a means of resolution or NEAG will have to take over the process.

D: Did (A) and (B) reach a satisfactory resolution?

E: Conflict resolved to satisfaction of both parties.

F: (A) and (B) continue to use NEAG on the condition they don't let their conflict affect other users of these Spaces. If they do, follow arrow for next step.

G: NEAG suggest actions that (A) and (B) should take in order to work together, and may feel it necessary to exclude one or both from their Spaces, or forbid them from coming to the same events, if they do not resolve their conflict. See guidance below for ideas.

H: Do (A) and (B) agree to the suggested actions?

I: (A) and (B) continue to be members of NEAG on conditions set out by NEAG.

J: (B), (A) or both are excluded from certain events or from NEAG entirely until willing to compromise (see guidance below).

Guidance on dealing with failed processes:

This process is a last resort, in which authority passes to an NEAG meeting to find solutions that will enable:

(A) and (B) to make progress towards working constructively together. This could involve, for example, relationship counselling, time-out from NEAG, or asking an external independent person from another group to facilitate a meeting.

If all practical possibilities have been exhausted, the meeting may find it is necessary to impose some form of sanction to prevent (A) and (B) from meeting. This might be decided with (A) and (B) present, or with each of them coming in separately, or with a meeting in their absence at which their written statements are read aloud. The outcome of this meeting might include banning one or both parties from meetings or events, or deciding they must take turns in having access to such events.

These decisions are bound to be difficult, and influenced by judgments about who is in the right, or who is most deserving of sympathy. Though this may be unavoidable, we should be wary of making decisions purely on this basis, as personal friendships and prior commitments to NEAG are bound to influence such decisions. We should try, instead, to take into account factors such as the extent to which each person has made NEAG feel unsafe for the other, or for other members, and each party's willingness to engage with conflict resolution in good faith.

Any suggestions/decisions made in the absence of the individuals involved should be communicated to them in writing as soon as possible.

Commitment to review

NEAG will ensure that those engaging in a process have an opportunity to reflect on their experience. We will consider how we can improve our processes based on this knowledge.

Borrowed (and adapted) with love and solidarity from the Star and Shadow Cinema CO-OP, who kindly borrowed it from Kebele Community Co-op in Bristol.

Agreed upon by members of NEAG.