

Institute for Creative Conflict Engagement and Transformation

What to Expect

Whether we are called to be social change agents or simply aspire to create a healthier environment in our meeting, our workplace, or our family, we need to understand conflict and how to engage it creatively for transformation.

The 25-day Institute for Creative Conflict Engagement and Transformation is designed to create a community of learning and practice among participants to develop the skills and practices – many developed or honed by Quakers in conflict situations over the years – that will enable them to engage conflict courageously, confidently, and competently.

A faculty of experienced teacher-practitioners will use lectures, exercises, small group discussions, films, and lots of experiential practice sessions to guide participants in learning and practicing these skills. We are fortunate to have international Quaker peacebuilders John and Diana Lampen from the UK to provide spiritual support to participants and to offer occasional lectures borne of their years of work in conflict zones from schools for disturbed teens to Northern Ireland to Uganda.

Recognizing that self-awareness and ongoing self-examination of our own triggers and growing edges are integral to our effectiveness as peacebuilders, we begin with Dan Snyder's course, "The Inner Work of Conflict Transformation." As participants examine their own inner landscape for how they react to and manage conflict, they prepare to practice "Compassionate Listening" with Yael Petretti. Deep listening to and compassion for the speakers are fundamental to understanding what is at the core of the conflict and moving toward a more just and equitable outcome for the parties.

Jennifer Beer, co-author of the classic *The Mediator's Handbook*, will coach students in basic mediation skills in "Mediating Difficult Conversations." She will also lead a seminar "What's going on here? Assessing Conflict Situations." Whether we are activists seeking to expose an oppressive situation and make a conflict more apparent, or seeking to resolve a conflict in our meeting or workplace, conflict analysis is critical to planning action.

In "Compassionate Nonviolent Communication," psychologist-practitioners Pamela Freeman and Jane Connor will help us deepen our listening skills and capacity for compassionate appreciation for the needs of others as we grow in our ability, and to communicate our own needs more effectively in emotionally charged situations.

"Alternatives to Violence Project" introduces us to a series of interconnected sequential activities that build the capacity for humane interaction, mutual respect and support, and group cooperation in individual participants. Facilitated by Carolyn Schodt and Rubye Braye and a returning citizen, participants experience the transformation that these exercises evoke and increase their ability to facilitate the process at the same time.

Institute participants will receive a certificate indicating that they have completed a course of work in conflict transformation.