

**Conflict Engagement  
Best Practices II:  
When Othering Disrupts a  
Community**

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**Othering and Bias**

- **Othering**  
The phenomenon of consciously or semi-consciously seeing people in other groups as different than oneself.
- **Bias**  
Deeply ingrained views that people have of other groups.
- **Unconscious or Implicit Bias**  
Views about other groups that operate below our conscious level of awareness

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**The Nature of Conflict**

- Conflict is an opportunity for personal and interpersonal growth and community building
- But if ignored or handled poorly it can be toxic and destructive
- Tenant to tenant conflicts can lead to bad feelings and bad housing outcomes for residents, and to financial and legal troubles for management
- Dispute resolution and mediation skills are valuable tools for housing professionals

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### Community Building



*"Washing one's hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral."*

*Paulo Freire*

TheKnowPeople.com

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We all have biases. When unacknowledged bias can lead to and increase conflict.

In housing biases often arise when dealing with low income residents and those perceived as different.

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What are some biases that you have seen play a role in conflict for both staff and residents?

Take 5 minutes and discuss with your neighbor.

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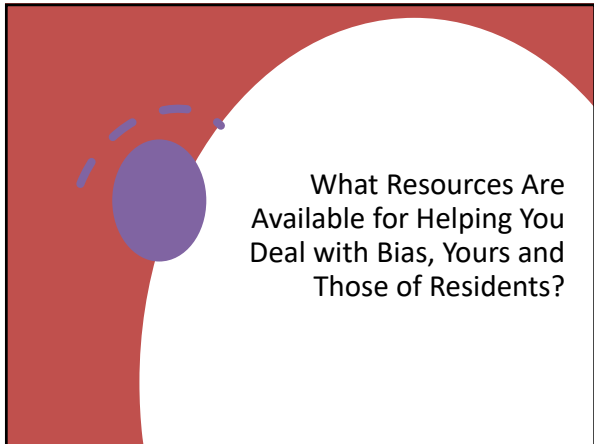
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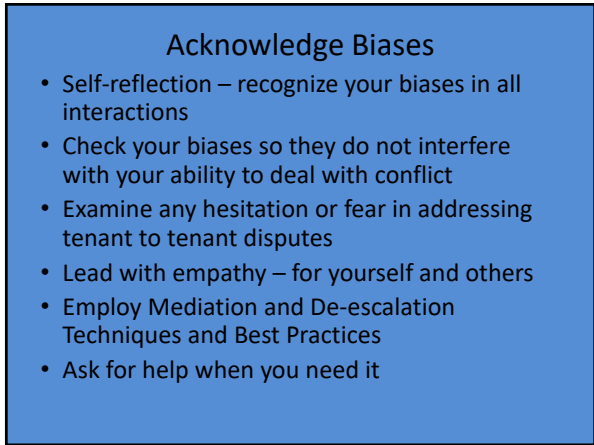
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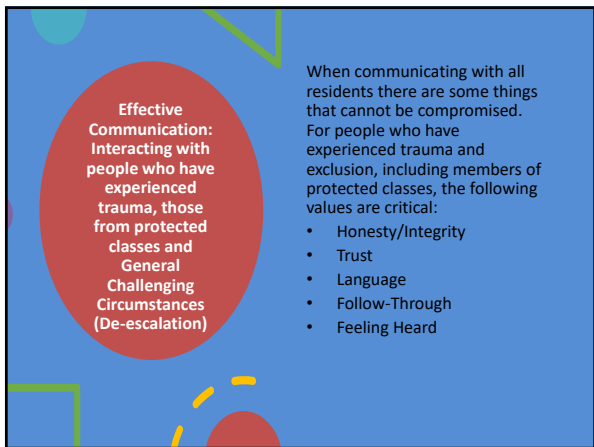
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**De-escalation Techniques**

- Lead with empathy
- De-escalate yourself
- Listen
- Allow and acknowledge feelings and emotions of others even if you disagree with them
- Stay calm and control body language and tone
- Focus on the future, not the past
- Good communication helps everyone get what they want with less drama and hard feelings

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**Mediation Is a Great Resource**

**What is Mediation?**

- Mediation is a dynamic, structured, interactive process where an impartial third party assists disputing parties in resolving conflict through the use of specialized communication and negotiation techniques.
- All participants in mediation are encouraged to actively participate in the process. Mediation is a "party-centered" process in that it is focused primarily upon the needs, rights, and interests of the parties. The mediator uses a wide variety of techniques to guide the process in a constructive direction and to help the parties find their optimal solution. A mediator is facilitative in that she/he manages the interaction between parties and facilitates open communication.

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**Best Practices in Mediation**

- Prior to commencing the Mediation, be sure to set norms to follow to ensure the proper amount of respect is given across the parties.
- Be patient and creative. Think of options - economic and non-economic factors.
- Consider a pre-mediation telephone conference with the parties involved.
- Be comfortable with and embrace the silence.
- Be patient; come up with alternatives and options; be flexible and open to ideas.
- Expect and anticipate "ups and downs" during the negotiating process.
- Be prepared to sign a binding settlement document.

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**Best Practices in Mediation**

- Set aside sufficient time for the negotiation “dance”.
- Be an effective communicator.
- Practice active listening.
- Pay close attention to non-verbal communication.
- Learn to recognize fear, isolation, feelings of inadequacy.
- Remember to engage in self-care.
- Practice reflective listening.
- Establish norms and a parking lot in the mediation.

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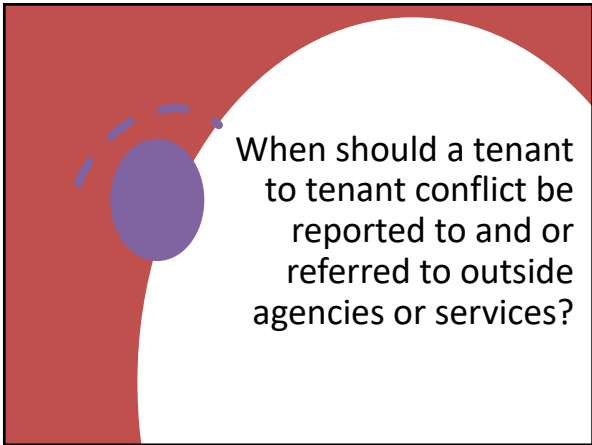
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**When should a tenant to tenant conflict be reported to and or referred to outside agencies or services?**

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**Conflict Intervention Service**

Collaborative solutions for any housing related conflicts  
Transforming tenant-landlord relationships

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