



**SOUTHEASTERN SYNOD**  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

## **Consensus Decision-Making**

## **CDM PROCESS**

1. One group member carefully and precisely frames the question or suggestion for the group.
2. A group member (occasionally members) provides historical information and a description of the issue associated with the question to be resolved.
3. Group discussion begins.
4. Each speaker responds specifically to prior statements and reflects upon these and adds comments. The speaker does not repeat prior statement. The speaker talks only to clarify, disagree, provide new information or other alternatives.
5. A group member or the facilitator (in this case, the Synod Vice President) tests for agreement of the group. This person provides specific language for the proposal. [NOTE: Any member of the group may call for consensus at any time during the discussion.]
6. Group members comment on the language and concept of the apparent agreement.
7. The facilitator asks for concerns and modifications from the group.
8. When agreement is reached, the agreement is written down. It is preferable that each member of the group sees the written agreement.
9. When consensus is found, the group outlines steps and a time table for implementation and accountability.
10. If consensus is not found, the group must decide to continue to seek consensus, to postpone decision-making or to move to another method of decision-making, upon which the group has previously agreed.

## **BLOCKING**

Blocking of an agreement by one or several members of the group occurs when a member has serious and compelling problems with the impending decision.

It is important to remember that a decision made by consensus is one which is most universally acceptable and satisfactory to the group. This does not mean that everyone is delighted. It does mean that everyone can support the decision.

Therefore, a person who is not totally satisfied with a proposed decision may choose not to block the decision for any number of reasons, including:

- It may be the best under the time constraints or with the information that is available
- Other issues are more important on the remaining agenda
- There will be an opportunity to review the decision later

**Exhibit J.6**  
**September 2021**

However, when a person decides to block, they must thoroughly explain the reasons for their position and provide new information and offer alternatives.

If consensus cannot be reached, the blocker may:

1. Let the decision pass away.
2. Ask that their objections be noted in the minutes.
3. Not participate in the implementation.
4. Ask that the decision be postponed and organize, educate and develop alternatives before the next meeting.
5. Ask that the decision not be a precedent for future decisions.
6. Ask that the back-up decision-making process be invoked.
7. Leave the group.

## **MINUTES**

The recording secretary of the group will need to make the following adjustments in keeping a record of the meeting.

1. State the question or recommendation.
2. Outline major discussion, including concerns that are noted.
3. Write the decision in clear and concise language.
4. Indicate issues to be reviewed or completed at future meetings.
5. Outline the agreed-upon implementation phase, including assignments, due dates, process of accountability.
6. Type and distribute minutes promptly.

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Material is from *Building Untied Judgement*, published by the Center for Conflict Resolution, 731 State St., Madison, WI 53703