



# Cultivating Conflict Culture After a Crisis

## 8 Individual and Collective Practices for Moving Conflict into a Generative Pathway

**In this handout (inspired by [SCRR and Radicle Root Collective's "Oak Trees in the Storm: Growing Our Skills for Generative Conflict"](#) training summer and fall 2022), we offer practices and principles for school leaders to adopt both as individuals and as collective school cultures that move us through crisis recovery towards and into renewal.**

Renewal is the most instrumental yet often least developed component of the school mental health crisis continuum: this phase includes healing, meaning-making, and new navigation of school identity after an overwhelming event.

An essential element in school crisis recovery and renewal is growing our skills to navigate repair when there has been rupture. Crisis is rupture, creates rupture, and thrives on rupture. Leading school communities requires us to know how to navigate and move with harm, apology, and conflict.

Here, we invite you to explore the concept of generative conflict and the impact of racialized grief and trauma in the escalation of conflict and to practice strategies for moving conflict into a generative pathway rather than a destructive one. SCRR and the Radicle Root Collective believe that an undercurrent of all crises is the dynamic of our identities, access to power and privilege, and structural racial trauma.

**When using this handout, we ask you to be guided by the following reflection questions:**

- **Inner work**

*What is our own relationship with conflict through the lens of our racial and other intersectional identities? How do my intersectional identity and history shape my response and behavior in the face of conflict?*

- **Outer work**

*What is our current culture of conflict in our work group and/or team, and how might we reimagine crisis as an opportunity to generative new ways of being in relationship with each other? What does or could a culture of generative conflict look, sound, and feel like in my context?*



## Individual Practices

### 1. Acknowledge Tension

- Attunement to self
- Attunement to energy of the team
- Notice when tension arises
- Utilize discernment around when and how to name tension

### 2. Shift the Pace

- Slow pace down – with self and with the group
- Notice breath
- Pause
- Take breaks
- Move your body

### 3. Hold Strong Emotions

- Notice emotions – in self and others
- Recognize and give voice to emotions
- Collectively hold emotions
- Express and release emotions
- Hold trauma responses with compassion

### 4. Address Power Dynamics

- Those who hold the most power (positional and identity based) sit in discomfort and messiness that can arise
- Those who hold the most power (positional and identity based) release control and stay engaged
- Those with least power (positional and identity based) are heard and centered
- Name power dynamics as they are observed and felt in the space



## Collective Practices

### 5. Take Collective Responsibility for Solutions

- Actively practice resisting escalation: Invite self compassion, invite self education; Use a racial and trauma informed lens
- Root into nervous system response
- Activate curiosity and inquiry based reflection: Ask questions - clarifying and probing
- Reach out to outside support for the team as needed

### 6. Address Harm

- Move through defensiveness
- Center impact of the harm
- Center those most impacted
- Practice non-binary thinking
- Orient toward asking “why” to surface root conditions that led to the harm

### 7. Apologize and Communicate Boundaries

- Proactively communicate when a mistake is made and/or harm is caused
- Apologies name impact of actions
- Apologies contain commitment to repair and shift behavior
- Set and keep boundaries needed to rebuild trust

### 8. Create Space to Learn From Conflict

- Maintain protected time for reflections during collaborations
- Create processes to use for learning from conflict and reimagining future responses to conflict or rupture



Which of the 8 practices in generative conflict are you most curious about/ willing to try on?

What might be some supports or resources you need to help you approach conflict differently as an individual and/or as a school community culture?



# Radicle Root Collective's Key Definitions (2022)

(all definitions are RRC's unless otherwise noted)

## Generative

To open to creative possibilities; to give birth to something new (consciousness, understanding, ideas, actions)

## Conflict

The struggle between at least two interdependent entities (individuals, groups, programs, institutions, nations) who perceive incompatible goals, ideas, or self-concepts

## Generative Conflict

The expressed struggle between at least two interdependent entities that leads to the creation of something new (ie: possibilities, intimacy, consciousness, healing, etc)



What do you notice about the difference in these definitions?

How might each impact the way repair is held after crises or harm in our school communities?

## Racial Trauma

An intensely personal AND collective practice involving the recovery of a sense of wholeness and belonging that has been stolen, obscured or co-opted by the system of White supremacy

## Harm

The suffering, loss, pain, and impact that can occur both in conflict and in instances of abuse as well as in misunderstandings steeped in differences of life experience, opinion or needs (adrienne marie brown, *We Will Not Cancel Us*, 2020)

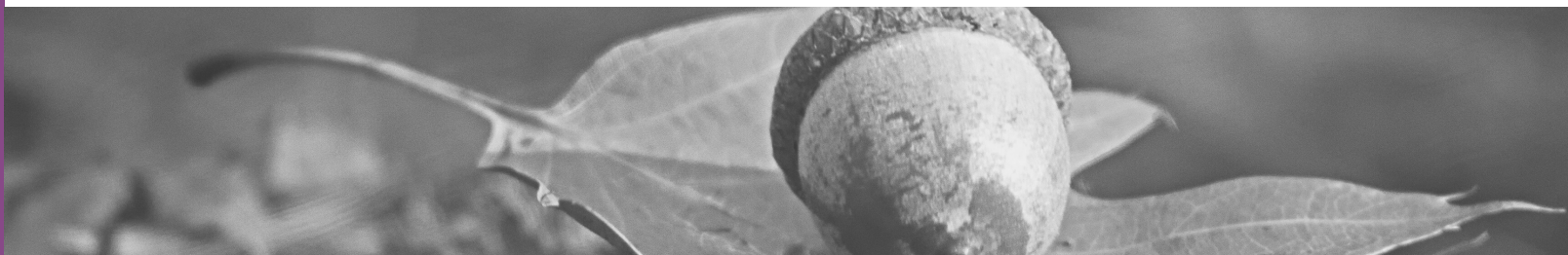


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# Additional Resources

Title and Author	Type of Resource	Link
<p><a href="#"><u><b>My Grandmother's Hands</b></u></a> by Resmaa Menakem</p>	Book	<a href="https://www.indiebound.org/book/9781942094470">https://www.indiebound.org/book/9781942094470</a>
<p><a href="#"><u><b>Racecraft: The Soul of Inequality in American Life</b></u></a> by Karen and Barbara Fields</p>	Book	<a href="https://www.indiebound.org/book/9781781683132">https://www.indiebound.org/book/9781781683132</a>
<p><a href="#"><u><b>Conflict is Not Abuse</b></u></a> by Sarah Schulman</p>	Book	<a href="https://www.indiebound.org/book/9781551526430">https://www.indiebound.org/book/9781551526430</a>
<p><a href="#"><u><b>We Will Not Cancel Us</b></u></a> by adrienne marie brown</p>	Book	<a href="https://www.akpress.org/we-will-not-cancel-us.html">https://www.akpress.org/we-will-not-cancel-us.html</a>
<p><a href="#"><u><b>Calling In vs. Calling Out</b></u></a> by Claire Witmer</p>	Tool	<a href="https://drive.google.com/file/d/11LwnliYA5tFZtmK8M8KvulsbN7rN1kL4/view?usp=sharing">https://drive.google.com/file/d/11LwnliYA5tFZtmK8M8KvulsbN7rN1kL4/view?usp=sharing</a>
<p><a href="#"><u><b>White Danger: Double-Mindedness, Violence, and the Confusion of Whiteness</b></u></a> by Autumn Brown</p>	Article	<a href="https://aorta.coop/blog/2021/02/09/white-danger-double-mindedness-violence-and-the-confusion-of-whiteness">https://aorta.coop/blog/2021/02/09/white-danger-double-mindedness-violence-and-the-confusion-of-whiteness</a>
<p><a href="#"><u><b>Moving Towards Conflict for the Sake of Good Strategy</b></u></a> by Yotam Moran</p>	Article	<a href="https://medium.com/@YotamMarom/moving-toward-conflict-for-the-sake-of-good-strategy-9ad0aa28b529">https://medium.com/@YotamMarom/moving-toward-conflict-for-the-sake-of-good-strategy-9ad0aa28b529</a>
<p><a href="#"><u><b>Strategic Questioning</b></u></a> by Fran Peavey</p>	Tool	<a href="http://transformerleadership.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Strategic-Questioning-Manual-11b4d4l.pdf">http://transformerleadership.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Strategic-Questioning-Manual-11b4d4l.pdf</a>
<p><a href="#"><u><b>Transforming Toxic Culture</b></u></a> by For the Wild Podcast</p>	Media	<a href="https://forthewild.world/listen/homebound-transforming-toxic-movement-culture-with-the-wildfire-project-180">https://forthewild.world/listen/homebound-transforming-toxic-movement-culture-with-the-wildfire-project-180</a>
<p><a href="#"><u><b>All About Love</b></u></a> by bell hooks</p>	Book	<a href="https://www.indiebound.org/book/9780060959470">https://www.indiebound.org/book/9780060959470</a>
<p><a href="#"><u><b>Love and Rage: The Path of Liberation through Anger</b></u></a> by Lama Rod Owens</p>	Book	<a href="https://www.indiebound.org/book/9781623174095">https://www.indiebound.org/book/9781623174095</a>

# Additional Resources (cont'd)

Title and Author	Type of Resource	Link
<p><b><u><a href="#">Radicle Feedback Principles</a></u></b> by Radicle Root Collective</p>	Tool	<p><a href="https://docs.google.com/document/d/14BSLqWXfWmKAvvEhX-nqIf676XiEcrLxvLFxUkBlzQ/edit?usp=sharing">https://docs.google.com/document/d/14BSLqWXfWmKAvvEhX-nqIf676XiEcrLxvLFxUkBlzQ/edit?usp=sharing</a></p>
<p><b><u><a href="#">Building Accountable Communities</a></u></b> by Barnard Center for Research on Women</p>	Media	<p><a href="https://bcrw.barnard.edu/building-accountable-communities/">https://bcrw.barnard.edu/building-accountable-communities/</a></p>
<p><b><u><a href="#">Four Parts of Accountability: How to Give a Genuine Apology</a></u></b> by Mia Mingus</p>	Blog/Website	<p><a href="https://leavingevidence.wordpress.com/2019/12/18/how-to-give-a-good-apology-part-1-the-four-parts-of-accountability/">https://leavingevidence.wordpress.com/2019/12/18/how-to-give-a-good-apology-part-1-the-four-parts-of-accountability/</a></p>
<p><b><u><a href="#">A Beginner's Guide to Polyvagal Theory</a></u></b> by Amelia Ortega</p>	Article	<p><a href="https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uo4ggRttw1wl8alXn4eigpKkldzEdrnF/view?usp=sharing">https://drive.google.com/file/d/1uo4ggRttw1wl8alXn4eigpKkldzEdrnF/view?usp=sharing</a></p>
<p><b><u><a href="#">Module 4, Session 1: Crisis Recovery and Renewal Leadership: The Art of Apology and Repair</a></u></b> by SCRR</p>	Archived Webinar	<p><a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LJmcJhl4vBg&amp;feature=youtu.be">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LJmcJhl4vBg&amp;feature=youtu.be</a></p>
<p><b><u><a href="#">Trauma-Informed COVID-19 Leadership Practice Guide for Recovery and Renewal</a></u></b> by SCRR</p>	Tool	<p><a href="https://schoolcrisishealing.org/trauma-informed-covid-19-leadership-practice-guide-for-recovery-and-renewal/">https://schoolcrisishealing.org/trauma-informed-covid-19-leadership-practice-guide-for-recovery-and-renewal/</a></p>
<p><b><u><a href="#">What Helps &amp; What Harms Students' Crises Recovery? Young Adult Reflective Listening Sessions</a></u></b> by SCRR</p>	Tool	<p><a href="https://schoolcrisishealing.org/what-helps-what-harms-students-crises-recovery-young-adult-reflective-listening-sessions/">https://schoolcrisishealing.org/what-helps-what-harms-students-crises-recovery-young-adult-reflective-listening-sessions/</a></p>

### Disclaimer

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