Consultation

Universal non-adversarial process understood as a collective search for truth

Consultation is a collective verbal exchange of thoughts, experiences, and wisdom to make decisions and advise our direction.

Consultation should involve:
- People that have information about the topic
- People that will implement the decisions
- People that will be impacted by the decisions

Elements of Effective Consultation:
- Group owns the decision-making authority – as a group.
- Group has access to the same information.
- Mindfulness of power dynamics and efforts to mitigate inequalities.
- Equal participation in the discussions jointly assessing the problem and the solution is critical.
- Ideas are offered for the benefit of the group.
- Deliberations are confidential and without attribution.
- The group collectively makes and owns the final decision.
- Ideally all agree; but, if a group vote is necessary, the majority rules.
- Once a decision is made, the group unites behind it.

Effective Qualities
- Love
- Kindness
- Patience
- Truth-Seeking
- Honesty
- Humility
- Detachment from ego and opinions
- Respect
- Careful Listening
- Seeing Commonalities
- Forgiveness
- Creativity
- Authentic Emotion
- Believing/honoring each other’s lived experience
- Posture of inquiry
- Naming difficult issues; talking through conflict

Ineffective Qualities
- Ego
- Negative body language
- Competition
- Stubbornness
- Not engaging/withholding
- Belittling
- Impatience
- Quick assumptions
- Suspicion
- Backbiting/gossip after meeting
- Using coded language
- Under/over-use of power
- Focusing on the person, rather than the idea
- Denying others’ experiences/their truth
- Prioritizing nice over addressing hard issues (avoidance of conflict)

Consultation is a Baha’i decision-making process used by Organic Oneness. Adapted from Materials Courtesy of the Tahirih Justice Center. Used by permission.