

# Gradients of Agreement for Modified Consensus Decision Making<sup>1</sup>

## A PROCESS FOR WELCOMING COMMUNITIES COALITION STEERING COMMITTEES

### Gradients of Agreement:

1. Whole-hearted agreement
2. Agree with minor concern
3. Don't like but will support
4. More discussion needed
5. Serious disagreement

This process can be used with numbered cards or a show of fingers in smaller groups.

### Process:

The gradient of agreement scale is explained to participants. After discussion on a topic for a decision and airing of any concerns, the facilitator takes a **“pulse check”** on a proposal for decision using the gradients of agreement (numbered cards). If everyone is a 1-3, the decision is made by full-consensus and the group moves on.

If any participant expresses a 4 or a 5 on the scale, they are given the opportunity to explain their concerns and suggest alternatives. Once those have been heard, the facilitator works with group to re-phrase a revised proposal for decision that attempts to address concerns. Making the revised proposal, the facilitator calls for a **decision**. Participants at the meeting are asked to use cards again to communicate their level of agreement with the strengthened proposal. In smaller meetings, people can show fingers or place a dot on a paper version of the gradient to register their level of agreement.

### In this second “pulse check”:

- If all participants fall within 1-3, full consensus is reached
- If fewer than 10% of participants express a 4-5, the group will proceed on the basis of a modified consensus
- These concerns are noted in the minutes
- If more than 10% of the participants at the meeting fall within 4-5, the decision requires more discussion (and may be further discussed or delayed)
- At any point in the decision-making process, people who express a 4-5 must be willing to work with the group to develop a compromise proposal

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<sup>1</sup> This process was adopted from the Comox Valley Community Health Network's Gradients of Agreement document. We thank them for sharing it with us.