

Equality:

All members share the opportunity for contribution to the identity and direction of their groups.

Starting and maintaining a group so that it sustains a healthy healing environment is a rich opportunity and responsibility. Vital Cycles encourages all members to contribute to shaping the identity and character of the groups they attend, including support groups and service groups. The members of a group become members simply by attending and striving to align with the Healing and Community Principles of Vital Cycles.

The collective wisdom of the group can be facilitated by regular business meetings (usually monthly), guided by the Community Principles. The establishment and maintenance of these regular business meetings to discuss and review the business matters at hand supports the sustaining of a healthy and safe group; these meetings allow an opportunity for Vital Cycles members to participate in shaping business decisions for the group. Although the specifics of business structure and the conduct of the business meeting are left to the collective wisdom of the individual group, which sustains autonomy over its actions, Vital Cycles recommends:

1. The development of a regular schedule for business meetings.
2. Establishment of a consistent format for the group. This may include the format of readings and time-structure for the group, and may also include a monthly format for the group as well.
3. Announcing the business meeting for several meetings prior to the date
4. Fair and equal voting to ensure that each member, without exception, has one equal vote and voice during the vote. In this way we recognize the equal value of all member votes. For example, the vote of a “newcomer” is as valued and valid as the vote of an “old timer”.
5. The establishment of “Best practices” for each, including the solicitation of minority opinions and the development of group decisions.
6. Most groups use a majority vote for decisions, but groups may also choose to use consensus (all feel good enough about the decision), or a certain percentage of votes, to make decisions.
7. The implementation of brainstorming tools and techniques that support the development of creative ideas quickly.
8. The definition of standing roles, such as:
 - Facilitator who facilitates business meetings
 - Treasurer who gathers donations, pays rent and sends contributions to Vital Cycles
 - Secretary who takes notes during business meetings
 - Literature person who downloads and prints Vital Cycles literature for the meeting
 - Space facilitator, who locates space for the group and for workshops, may negotiate rent and other aspects of the relationship with the space provider and may make specific accommodations for the group’s needs when the group meets.
9. In addition, the group may wish to establish term limits for each role, thus allowing responsibilities to be rotated and to provide everyone with the opportunity to “grow into service.”
10. The delegation of some tasks and responsibilities to subcommittees. Such groups would be empowered to move more quickly and efficiently to take action, while still reporting

back to the business meeting and the group as a whole. Such subcommittees may facilitate certain tasks, such as planning workshops and social events, developing group formats, selecting literature, etc.

11. The conduct of the business meeting should support the timely sharing of all individuals, including old-timers and newcomers, without requiring sharing.
12. Each member of the group has but one vote. Being elected to a volunteer service role does not confer any power or greater voice in decision-making.
13. Groups may delegate decision-making regarding specific tasks to certain roles for greater ease and speed of action.
14. Groups can determine whether they will use proxy voting, absentee voting or telephone call-in voting for certain situations.
15. In addition, groups may wish to create a basis for an impromptu “Healing Environment” meeting called in the moment to deal with an immediate circumstance.

Example 1: After three weeks of announcements, the Tuesday Night Phoenix group holds its business meeting. Joey, the group chair for the year, has prepared a preliminary agenda, and the group considers additional agenda items. Part of the agenda is to commit to a workshop that focuses on journaling, and a brainstorming session is sustained to discuss the probable content of the workshop. A subcommittee is created that is given the responsibility for determining a location and place and will continue to design the workshop. The subcommittee will report back at the next business meeting, which will be held on the next second Tuesday of the month.

Example 2: The founders of the Tuesday Night group in Lagos, Nigeria felt strongly about creating a group that chose to restrict membership to those who had experienced war crimes. Over time, the membership chose to reconsider this boundary, and in a series of business meetings, the group chose to place aside that boundary, thus accepting anyone who had sustained any violent trauma.

Example 3: During a meeting, a newcomer shares about currently physically abusing a child. David, feeling uncomfortable with the sharing, as it violates a core Community Principle, calls for a “Healing Environment Meeting” to be held immediately following the break. During that meeting, David speaks to his concerns, and all others who wish to are asked to speak as well. At the end of the “Healing Environment Meeting”, the group agrees to ask the newcomer to not return.