

Condo Community's Restoration and Relief

MRJC's Circle Process takes a Condominium Board and resident owners of the condominium complex through difficult conversations, in a safe and nurturing way, about the expensive restoration of their building, the costly impact of how this process was handled, and the ultimate restoration of the community that was torn apart in the process.

Scenario: A 100 unit condominium complex in Edmonton's River Valley is almost 40 years old. Many resident owners have been stakeholders in the condominium for decades. They are now senior citizens and are on a fixed income. The building has not been maintained regularly, the structure is starting to show its age (structural and aesthetic issues have been pushed off), and repair is now critical.

The current Condominium Board votes to proceed with some of the critical repair issues and sends shared assessments to all resident owners that will cover the \$2 million+ in repair costs. These assessments require each resident owner to pay \$5,000+ each year for the next four years – an unanticipated financial hardship for all residents, but especially those on a fixed income.

The Conflict Escalates: The assessment process causes a lot of ill-will within the previously peaceful condominium community. Many resident owners feel that the Condominium Board did not effectively communicate with them, that they were not treated fairly, and many residents, actually dreaded meeting their neighbours on the elevators. Overall, residents felt that there had been a huge loss of community within the complex.

MRJC's Conflict Resolution Team Gets Involved: Trained members of MRJC's Conflict Resolution Team engage a group of more than 20 concerned resident owners from the condominium's community in a Circle Process. In the first MRJC facilitated meeting, resident owners individually share their concerns, their very strong emotions and the issues that are most important to them, with the rest of the group. By the end of the first meeting, all participating resident owners have a much clearer understanding about how everyone's individual concerns can be framed as their collective concerns. It is determined that the most critical concern all involved is their desire to restore a sense of trust and community within the condominium complex.

The same group meets a second time, and with MRJC's help, continues with sharing, consensus building and brainstorming on how each resident owner's individual concerns can be collectively addressed. In a very short time, this group comes up with a couple of key actions that help them to move forward. Residents who had felt like they were in opposite camps prior to the meeting, agree to work together collaboratively on solutions about how information is shared, transparency, on how to build cooperation and understanding, and above all, how to rebuild trust and community.

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MRJC Six-Month Follow-Up: MRJC follows up with participants of the Circle Process six months later. A “sense of relief” is expressed by the resident owner group as a whole. The open communication with each other, and within the group, “really helps” the resident owners and members of the Condominium Board to move much needed repairs forward. “The needs of constituent members are respected and much-desired trust and community are restored.”

MRJC invests countless hours helping individuals and organizations in conflict like this condominium community. A Resolution Meeting or Restorative Dialogue can help you to resolve difficult conflicts or disputes that may arise between you and your family members, neighbours, members of your community, people at work, or fellow participants in groups or activities.

To find out more about MRJC’s Resolution Meeting and/or Restorative Dialogue process, please call us at 780.423.0896.