

## Ground Rules for Using the White Flag®



- The White Flag is used when we observe someone breaking or not following our Operational Values (see attached).
- Provide feedback in person and in private (never use email and only use the phone if it is the only option). Delivering White Flag feedback via e-mail (or in a group) will likely make things worse.
- Always be sure you and the other person are calm. Keep your tone of voice helpful, warm, friendly, and empathic (not defensive)..
- Always ask permission first before proceeding: *"May I give you feedback about the values...?"*
- Describe the specific behavior. Avoid giving your opinion (avoid criticism or judgmental language): *"Here is what I heard you say... here is what I saw you do..."* Use statements that begin with *"When you did this, I felt this..."*
- Refer to the Operational values, to clarify the behavior needed and the behavior observed.
- Always ask questions when you do not understand or disagree (do not judge, do not criticize). And, ask questions to identify the process that needs to improve.
- Always ask for a new agreement on how to improve the process or system (hand-off) in the future, e.g., *"Are you willing to agree to ...?"* or... *"I am willing to do this... will that work for you?"*
- Always confirm the agreements with helpful, neutral language in an email after the meeting: *"Here is what we agreed....thank you."*
- If someone is giving you White Flag Feedback, PROVIDE EMPATHY IF THEY ARE UPSET. Avoid turning the situation around by giving the White Flag feedback to them at the same time they are giving you White Flag feedback. Let them finish first. Listen first.
- Be OK if it doesn't seem to work. Sometimes just beginning the process helps the person become more aware of their behaviors.
- Be OK forgiving the behavior and walk away if the issue is not critical.