

New Culture Co-op Values and Practices

We are not currently accepting applications. Keep an eye out for future vacancies and keep in touch with us through our [Facebook page](#), or read on to learn more about us.

We are a new housing co-op in Western Massachusetts and we're looking for more members!

We have purchased a beautiful 8 bedroom house in the woods in Greenfield, MA. Our values and intentions for this community are informed by the [New Culture](#) movement, the [international co-operative movement](#), and [Circling and Authentic Relating](#) communities. We also draw from our own

various experiences of creating and living in

successful intentional communities. We are committed to egalitarian decision-making, social justice and collective healing, honest communication through self-awareness, and mutually supportive growth and experimentation. And, while the pandemic lasts, we are committed to evidence-based COVID safety measures (see below). Our long-term vision is to create a lasting community that supports both the people in it and the people around it in collective growth, love, and freedom.



Our current group mixes emotional exploration with intellectual curiosity—people who switch between debating the nuances of consent, laughing at bad jokes, and holding each other while we cry. Our (not necessarily overlapping) interests include dancing, climbing trees, activism, baking, theater, health work, contact improvisation, snarky memes, board games, technology, making music, singing barbershop, (relational) meditation, yoga, and other spiritual practices. This group includes community organizers, consent educators, web developers, counselors, and artists of various kinds. Many of us are in polyamorous relationships, practice relationship anarchy, and care deeply about healing our relationships to our bodies and sexuality.

>> [If you're interested in learning more or applying to join, let us know here!](#) <<

If you're not ready to move in with us just yet, but you'd like to stay connected, please [follow us on Facebook](#) or join the [Friends of New Culture Co-op Facebook group](#)! If you have questions before applying or you just want to send us some love, you can reach us at [newculturecoop \(at\) googlegroups.com](mailto:newculturecoop(at)googlegroups.com).

We hold the following shared values, and see them as aspirational:

- **Awareness of social justice issues and intention to act in service of social change**
 - We seek to increase our understanding of privilege and oppression. We recognize that we all experience both, though in vastly differing proportions, and that oppressive systems negatively impact everyone. While we aim to hold space for the pain and fear that often drive oppressive behavior, we believe privilege comes with a responsibility to listen, learn, and adapt.

- We reflect on ways we have internalized dynamics of oppression and seek to change them in ourselves and our immediate communities as well as in the world more broadly. We seek to create the social systems we want, rather than replicate the ones we have been handed.
- We believe diversity of identities, experiences, and thought makes groups stronger and leads to better and more creative decisions. We strive to be inclusive of all identities and experiences, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, culture, citizenship, religion and belief, gender identity and expression, class, education, body size, parental status, age, ability, neurodiversity, and mental illness. While all identities are welcome, behaviors that run counter to these values are not.

- **Environmental sustainability**

- We [consider ourselves inseparable from the Earth](#) and want it to remain habitable for humans. We aim to minimize our impact on it, or to have a positive impact.
- We are afraid of the impending climate apocalypse and support local, national, and international efforts to mitigate the crisis and its disproportionate impacts on poor people and people of color.
- We use reusable, renewable, and/or local resources where possible. We aim to purchase local, organic, and fair-trade products when economically feasible. We are committing to continual learning about effective actions.

- **Personal freedom, autonomy, and respect for boundaries**

- We value taking responsibility for our own choices and supporting others to feel at choice.
- We approach consent as applying to all aspects of life to help us deepen our relationships with each other and create more enjoyment and mutuality in our interactions. [Here](#) are some good examples of how we think about consent.

- **Authenticity: self-awareness and honest communication**

- Embodiment: being aware of one's present moment felt experience, and revealing one's inner world (when safe) to build trust, intimacy and shared understanding.
- Engaging in meditation or other reflective practices; developing tools to self-regulate when emotionally triggered.
- Asking directly for things we want; noticing when we're coming from unconscious/manipulative strategies to get our needs met and revealing rather than acting on those strategies.

- **Body and sex positivity/normativity**

- Our community is clothing-optional. (And, nudity is not a sexual invitation.)
- We celebrate bodies and sex as normal parts of everyday life and intend to minimize shame around them.
- We enjoy examining and leaning into any discomfort that comes up around nudity and sexuality, but we are not a therapeutic environment for resolving trauma.



- **Working through discomfort and [conflict](#)**
 - Ability to hold multiple viewpoints as valid and maintain curiosity about other people's experiences and intentions; interest in understanding rather than being right.
 - Shared goal of bringing our behavior into alignment with our individual and shared values, with awareness and forgiveness that we will never be perfect at this.
 - Intention to work through interpersonal discomfort before it becomes conflictual, and to work through small conflicts before they become large.
- **Radical acceptance and curiosity**
 - Not all behaviors are welcome, but all feelings, desires, experiences, and identities are.
 - We strive to be curious about our own reactions and those of others; we aim to reflect and choose our responses consciously, with compassion and understanding, rather than react automatically.
- **Egalitarianism and collective decision-making**
 - Everyone's voice matters equally. Listen to others and speak up for yourself.
 - We strive to treat everyone fairly, not necessarily to treat everyone the same.
- **Creativity and [play](#)**
 - We consider lightheartedness and humor to be just as important to relationships as reflection and conflict resolution.
 - We value making art, playing music, and dancing/moving, individually and together. We like having campfires, stupid debates, game nights, puns, and water fights. (We sound more serious in writing than in person!)
- **Compassion for self, others, and the community**
 - We use Nonviolent Communication as a model, using I-statements and trying to understand each other's feelings and needs.
 - Communities thrive when we consider our own needs, as well as taking others' needs and desires into account.
- **Continual experimentation, growth, and change**
 - Willingness to change our view and to update our understanding of other people as we learn about each other's inner worlds & past experiences.
 - Willingness to amend agreements and communal structures as our needs change.
- **Balance, moderation, and responsiveness**
 - We try to avoid extremes and absolutes, and not take ourselves too seriously.
 - We value contrasting experiences as part of a whole: dissonance and resonance; softness and loudness; being in groups, one-on-one, and alone.
 - We make choices based on context and values, not rules. We recognize that values evolve, and different values may be appropriate to prioritize in different situations.

To put our values into action, we engage in the following practices together:

- **COVID safety based on [science](#)**
 - [See our existing COVID agreements here.](#)
 - “[Pod](#)” with housemates.
 - Maintain safety precautions like masks and distancing in public.
 - Inform housemates of any symptoms, accidental risk exposure, or times you will not be able to maintain normal precautions.
 - Follow agreed upon reintegration protocols around testing and distancing upon re-entry after elevated risk exposure.
- **Regular house meetings with democratic decision making**
 - Structured to balance efficiency and having everyone’s voices heard.
 - We make decisions using [sociocracy](#), a consensus-based decision making system.
 - Currently, the house is legally owned by a member of the co-op. We are committed to minimizing the power imbalance that necessarily creates, so we plan to transfer ownership to the co-op after a few years (as soon as the co-op is financially able). In the meantime, the owner is leasing the entire property to the co-op, and the co-op has full control over its subleases with individual members—including the owner. This means that even the owner could be evicted by the co-op.
- **Shared labor to keep the community running**
 - We have structured ways of sharing house work and other community labor equitably with respect for differing needs and preferences.
- **Some shared food and meals**
 - With accommodations of dietary restrictions.
- **Some structured (and semi-structured) relational activities**
 - Communication and connection exercises from the [New Culture](#) movement
 - [Circling](#) and [Authentic Relating](#) practices and games
 - Consent and boundary games
 - Ecstatic Dance and [Contact Improvisation](#)
 - [Cuddle piles!](#)
- **Freedom of choice around substances**
 - No smoking on the property, please. If you can smoke away from the house in a way that doesn't leave enough smoke on your clothes to bother those with scent sensitivities, that's okay.
 - Vaping is okay.

- We support medicinal and moderate recreational use of substances as long as it's not ostentatious. You don't have to keep it a secret, but we also want to be welcoming of people who don't feel comfortable around substances.

- **Play parties**
- **New Culture retreats**

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