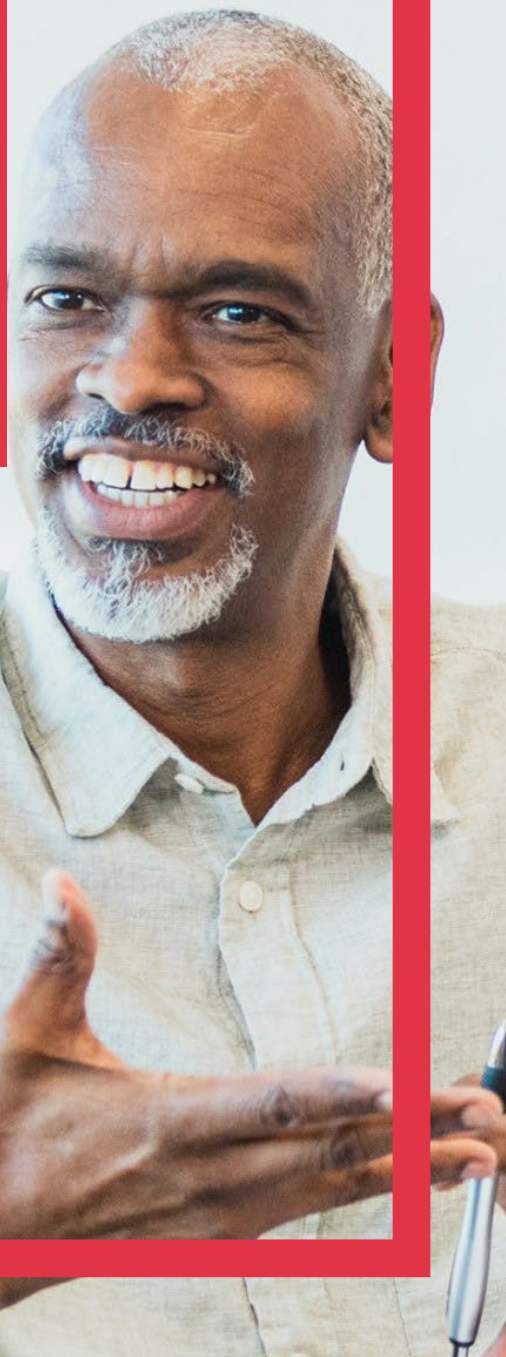


Common Ground

A Graduate Supervision Conflict
Consultation and Support Service

– Pilot Program Overview (May 2025-26)

YORK 



Common Ground: A Graduate Supervision Conflict Consultation and Support Service

CONFIDENTIAL SUPPORT FOR STRENGTHENING SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIPS

(One-year pilot beginning May 2026)

Program Overview

Common Ground is a confidential, early-intervention support service for graduate supervisors navigating relational challenges or conflict in graduate supervision. The service is delivered by the Workplace Restoration team within the Centre for Human Rights, Equity & Inclusion (CHREI), in partnership with the Faculty of Graduate Studies (FGS). It complements existing academic and policy-based processes by offering a neutral, restorative, and non-evaluative space for consultation, preparation, and facilitated dialogue.

Common Ground supports supervisors in making thoughtful and informed choices about how to respond, by providing a confidential space to reflect, prepare, and engage with situations constructively and with confidence before issues escalate.

Purpose and Objectives

The service aims to support supervisors before issues escalate, strengthen supervisory relationships, reduce unnecessary formal escalation, and reinforce a relational culture of care and clarity in graduate supervision.

Who the Service Is For

The service is available to Graduate Supervisors and Graduate Program Directors (GPDs). Graduate students do not access the service directly.

Services Offered

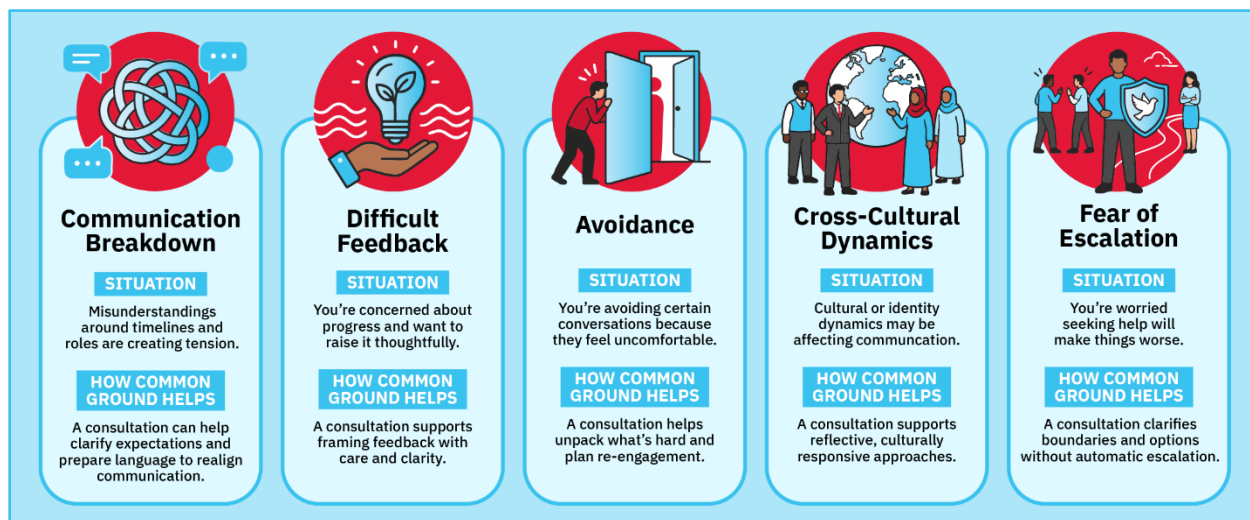
Services include confidential consultations, facilitated conversations, and practical tools to support strengthening the supervisory relationship.

Access and Intake

Supervisors may be referred through GPDs or may self-refer via email: commonground@yorku.ca or the [intake form](#) (link).

How Common Ground Can Help

Figure 1: Examples (but not limited to these)



What the Service Is Not

The service does not investigate complaints, make findings of fact, replace formal processes, or engage in performance evaluation.

Who Delivers the Service

Common Ground consultations are delivered by the Workplace Restoration team within the Centre for Human Rights, Equity & Inclusion (CHREI).

Advisors on the Workplace Restoration team bring experience in:

- › navigating complex workplace and academic conflict
- › facilitating difficult and high stakes conversations
- › restorative and trauma informed approaches
- › supporting individuals and teams through tension, breakdown, and repair

The team works neutrally and non evaluatively, supporting supervisors to think through challenges, clarify options, and approach conversations thoughtfully and responsibly.

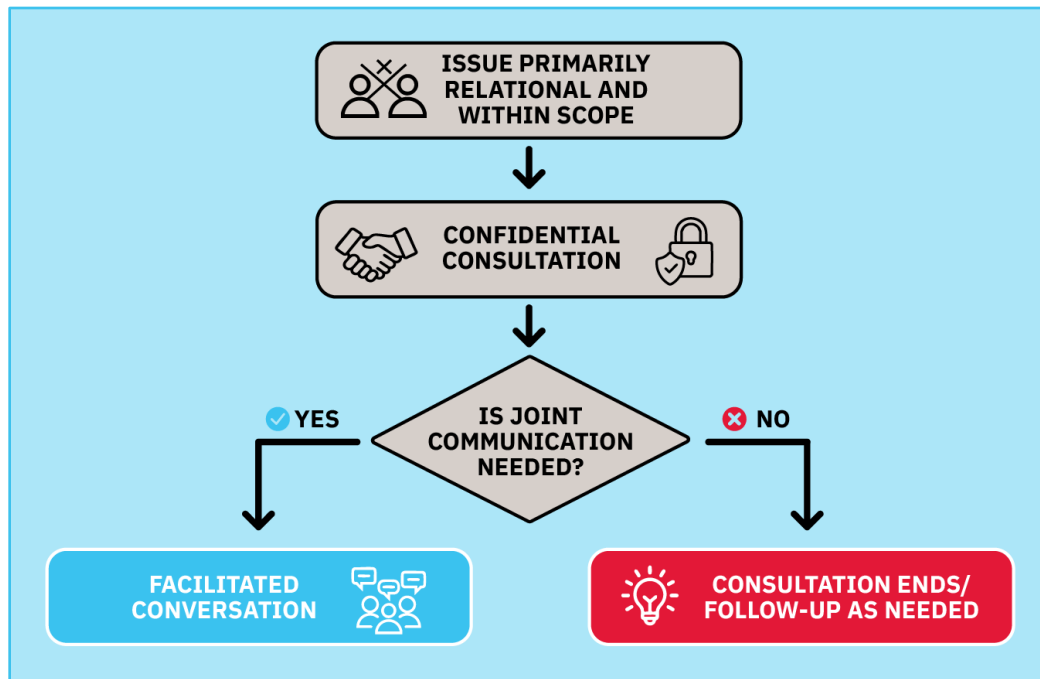
Role of Graduate Program Directors

GPDs promote awareness and can make referrals. They are not expected to mediate or manage cases. GPDs can also access Common Ground.

Confidentiality

The service is confidential with limits related to safety, harassment, discrimination, retaliation, or serious policy concerns.

Figure 2: Service flow



Note: 'Confidential Consultation' includes the provision of tools and strategies to support strengthening the supervisory relationship.

Conflict in Graduate Supervision

Conflict is inevitable; how we respond to it is a choice.

Conflict in graduate supervision is not necessarily a sign of failure; it is often a natural part of working across different expectations, perspectives, and styles. When approached early and thoughtfully, it can be an opportunity to clarify communication, strengthen relationships, and even spark new ideas and approaches.

Conflict can open the door to positive change. To move through it with care, there needs to be a willingness to connect with the other person, with a mindset of something to learn, not to prove or win. Turning conflicts into connections paves the way to finding common ground, so how you approach your next conversation can be the difference between strengthening connection and closing the door.