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# Healthy Conflict: Why Children Need to See Us Work Through Our Differences

by Nancy Bergeron, R.Psych | [info@nancybergeron.ca](mailto:info@nancybergeron.ca)



Many parents worry about arguing in front of their children. They may believe that being good parents means keeping disagreements private and presenting a picture of a relationship where everyone gets along. However, healthy relationships are not conflict-free relationships.

Children benefit from seeing that two people can disagree, experience difficult emotions, and still remain connected. When handled respectfully, conflict can become an opportunity to teach children some of life's most important relationship skills.

### What does healthy conflict look like?

Healthy conflict isn't about never becoming frustrated. It is about learning what we do with that frustration. Healthy conflict might sound like:

*"I'm feeling frustrated right now. I need a few minutes before we continue this conversation."*

*"I see this differently, but I want to understand your perspective."*

*"I don't agree with you, but I can understand why you feel that way."*

*"I didn't handle that well. I'm sorry."*

*"Let's figure out what we can do differently next time."*

Children who hear these kinds of conversations learn that disagreement doesn't automatically mean rejection, abandonment, or the end of a relationship.

### Children need to see repair

One of the most important things children can witness is what happens after conflict.

Parents sometimes lose their patience. They may misunderstand one another, become defensive, or say something they regret. What matters most is what happens next.

When children see a parent return to the conversation, take responsibility, apologize, listen, and reconnect, they learn that relationships can survive difficult moments.

This is a powerful lesson in resilience. The message becomes:

"We can have a hard moment and find our way back to one another."

Conflict can teach emotional regulation. Children learn emotional regulation partly through observing the adults around them.

When parents demonstrate that strong emotions can be acknowledged without becoming destructive, children are given a model for managing their own feelings.

They learn that being angry doesn't mean they have permission to hurt someone. Being disappointed doesn't mean they have to withdraw completely. And being upset doesn't mean the relationship is no longer safe.

Parents can model that it is possible to pause, calm down, return to a difficult conversation, and work toward understanding.

### **What children shouldn't have to witness**

Healthy conflict is very different from destructive conflict. Children should not be placed in the middle of adult disagreements or exposed to intimidation, threats, humiliation, contempt, physical aggression, or ongoing hostile conflict.

They should not be expected to take sides, carry messages between parents, or become responsible for repairing the relationship.

There are also circumstances where safety must come first. When there is violence, coercive control, or fear within a relationship, the goal is not simply to teach children how to witness conflict differently. The focus needs to be on safety and appropriate professional support.

### **Your children don't need to see a perfect relationship**

When parents demonstrate respectful disagreement and genuine repair, children learn that relationships require communication, accountability, patience, and forgiveness.

They learn that conflict is something we can work through, not something we have to fear.



*by Anne Burke*

The Glenbow Archives entry for Robert Aramant refers to the researcher and author who spent time in Calgary, during the early 1980s. He is primarily recognized in local archives for his field research and documentation on Nose Hill. For in library use only, Calgary Public Library has a copy of his report: "The Tipi Rings Nose Hill: Calgary April 1982 to May 1983."

Robert Bo Aramant (1932-2022) in the Natural Areas Group of the Calgary Field Naturalists' Society surveyed stone circles along the southern margin of Nose Hill uplands. Studies were done during the months when ground conditions were suitable. His research detailed bearing and distance information between tipi rings and on the diameter and number of stones with each ring. He recorded 60 new rings as well as mapping previously identified sites. Vehicle tracks, rubbing stones, and an unknown group of poplars were indicated.

Other maps show roads, critical bearings to Nose Hill Tower and horse barn. Following his study, the site was revisited. New rings related to recorded sites were compared. Some rings matched the original Lifeways of Canada definition by Alberta's first and longest-operating heritage and historical resources consulting company. Robert wrote it is very important to point out that this report only surveyed a small part of the proposed Nose Hill Park area. Even the southeast part of Nose Hill, where the report presents newly found tipi rings, has been very incompletely surveyed.

Consequently, there are many more tipi rings on natural prairie grassland areas and probably also many other kinds of archaeological sites and artifacts as well that are undiscovered on Nose Hill. It is very desirable that the natural prairie grassland still left on Nose Hill be preserved and protected. Read more at: [www.newcomerkentuckiana.com/obituaries/robert-aramant](http://www.newcomerkentuckiana.com/obituaries/robert-aramant).

## Remembering and Reconnecting

by Rebecca Pink



November gives us a moment to pause and honour, with deep gratitude, those who served and sacrificed for others, and those who continue to serve today. It is also a reminder that remembering is something we all carry in different ways. Remembrance is not limited to one day or one kind of loss, it can take many shapes, often quietly woven into our everyday lives. Sometimes remembering brings comfort; other times, it brings sadness, longing, or emotions we weren't expecting. There is no right way to remember or feel. We can continue to try to make room for whatever comes, with a little gentleness and self-compassion,

Grief is something that many people carry quietly. I know this from my own experience as well. It can be complicated, heavy, and unpredictable, bringing waves of emotions that can shift from one day to the next. We don't always talk about it, and sometimes we may feel as though we are expected to "move on" or "be fine". However, grief doesn't follow a timeline and is never linear. We can make room for both the sadness of what is no longer here and the gratitude for once was.

November can be a challenging month for many of us.

The days grow shorter, the temperatures drop, and for many of us, our energy shifts with the season. Rather than seeing this as something we need to push through, maybe it can be an invitation to slow down and check in with ourselves. What might you need a little more of right now? Rest? Connection? Time for yourself and your loved ones?

November gives us an opportunity to pause, remember, and reconnect. We might reach out to someone we haven't spoken to in a while, revisit a memory, or make a little more room for the people and experiences that matter to us. For those carrying grief, these moments of connection can be especially meaningful. Sometimes remembering together is a way of reminding ourselves that we don't have to carry it alone.

As we move through November, I also want to take a moment to remember and honour those who have served and continue to serve, and the families who stand alongside them.

Lest We Forget.

# Living Alongside Urban Coyotes

by Calgary Wildlife



Spotting a coyote in Calgary isn't unusual. You might see them crossing a quiet residential road at dawn or dusk, moving through an urban park, or down a river path. While seeing one can be surprising, coyotes are naturally cautious animals that generally prefer to avoid people.

Coyotes are highly adaptable, which is one reason they thrive in and around cities. Calgary's network of parks, natural areas, river valleys, and green spaces provides ideal habitat and travel corridors, while urban environments can offer shelter and food. Their natural diet consists primarily of small mammals such as mice, voles, rabbits, and ground squirrels, along with insects, berries, and other seasonal foods. By helping control rodent populations, coyotes play an important role in maintaining healthy urban ecosystems.



Although coyotes are present year-round, their behaviour changes throughout the seasons. In late winter, particularly January and February, breeding season can make adults more territorial. During spring and early summer,

parents become especially protective as they raise pups. By autumn, young coyotes begin dispersing from their family groups in search of new territories, increasing the chances of sightings throughout Calgary as they travel unfamiliar routes.

When pups are present, coyotes may also show "escorting" behaviour, following a person or dog from a distance as they move away from the den or territory. Although this can feel intimidating, escorting is generally a defensive behaviour rather than an aggressive one. The coyote is responding to a perceived threat and encouraging it to leave the area.

Most encounters between people and coyotes are brief and uneventful. Coyotes typically keep their distance, but problems can arise when they begin associating people with food. Intentional feeding, unsecured garbage, fallen fruit from backyard trees, compost, or pet food left outdoors can attract coyotes into neighbourhoods. Once animals become food-conditioned, they may lose some of their natural wariness, increasing the likelihood of conflict.

Simple actions can help reduce attractants around homes and communities. Make sure to securely store garbage in bins until collection day, clean up any fallen birdseed and pick up any fallen fruit. Compost bins should be properly maintained, pet waste should be regularly picked up, and pet food should not be left outside. These measures help discourage coyotes and many other wildlife species from relying on human-provided food sources.

Responsible pet ownership also plays an important role in preventing conflicts. Cats are safest indoors, particularly between dusk and dawn when coyotes are often most active. Dogs should remain on a leash in parks and natural areas unless they are in designated off-leash spaces where wildlife activity is low. Keeping pets close reduces the chance of defensive interactions, particularly during denning season.

If you encounter a coyote, remain calm and give the animal plenty of space. Do not approach it or attempt to feed it. If a coyote does not give you space or appears aggressive, make yourself appear larger by standing tall, maintain eye contact, pick up small children or small dogs, wave your arms, and speak in a firm voice while slowly backing away. Running is not recommended, as it may encourage the animal to give chase.



Coyotes have adapted remarkably well to urban life, but successful coexistence depends on maintaining healthy boundaries. By keeping wildlife wild, removing food attractants, and respecting their space, Calgarians can help reduce conflicts while supporting one of Southern Alberta's most adaptable native species.



*Community Campfire hosted by Shawnee Evergreen Community Association, 2025*

The Placemaking Residency is a brand new, free program offered through the Federation of Calgary Communities' Good Places Project. This residency invites you to build your leadership skills while volunteering to do a small-scale placemaking project in your community.

Maybe you want to add seating to a shared space, create an art installation or pop-up, organize a community activity or event such as a scavenger hunt or campfire, or introduce a fun recreational feature like cornhole or snow mini golf. You can explore all kinds of projects that bring people together and make your neighbourhood more vibrant.

Placemaking is all about creating places and experiences in public spaces that help people connect with one another and feel a stronger sense of belonging in their community. From cheap-and-cheerful additions in shared spaces to community gatherings and creative installations, your project can take many forms!

As a resident, you will implement a project in your own community with support from the Good Places team and a cohort of fellow residents. You will partner with your community association to use a microgrant of up to \$2,500 to implement your project. You will take part in three in-person working sessions to build skills, explore ideas, and develop your project.

You don't need a project idea or placemaking expertise to apply. All you need is an interest in making your

community a better place, and the residency will guide you through the rest. You can apply by yourself or with a group of friends to do a project together.

The goal is to give you an opportunity to try something new, learn, work collaboratively, and take on a small but meaningful project in your community.

Applications for the Good Places Residency are now open. Learn more and apply at <https://goodplaces.calgarycommunities.com/> by November 30.

Have questions? Reach out to the Good Places team: [goodplaces@calgarycommunities.com](mailto:goodplaces@calgarycommunities.com).



*Dover Community Association's skating rink benches, 2026*



*Hillhurst Sunnyside Community Associations public seating project, 2023*

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Hey, neighbour!

As I have said to my council colleagues, the City budget that will be approved later this month may be the most important decision that council makes during this term in office. This decision is more than just a tax rate: it sets the service you will receive from the City of Calgary for the next four years.

I want to be clear that we don't have a budget yet, and council has definitely not arrived at a final tax rate. Council has a lot of work to do this month before we get there, and that means being diligent and serious about the trade-offs we're going to have to make.

Repaired roads, sidewalks, bridges, and water treatment plants, alongside having safety responses to issues in our communities are what I am working towards. I also want to be clear, putting off spending again could mean reduced transit service, more risk from aging infrastructure, more broken pipes, gaps in our pathways and sidewalks, and not making progress on traffic and pedestrian safety in your neighbourhood. Council has to balance all of that—making sure that your priorities are advanced, and your neighbourhood isn't forgotten as it has been in the past—against keeping taxes affordable for everyone.

My debate will be to make sure your needs—your priorities that you have told me about for the past year—are front and center for all of my colleagues. The budget debate begins on November 23, and I want you to get involved. I want your feedback, I want your advice, but most importantly I want to hear from you at [ward4@calgary.ca](mailto:ward4@calgary.ca) so that we can confidently say all of council has heard from you and your neighbours.



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## Word of the Month

**Psithurism:** Noun (sith-yuh-riz-uhm)

The soft, whispering sound of the wind moving through trees and leaves.

"A faint psithurism at the edge of the woods could be heard as the evening air began to cool".





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