

What you need to know about ...

Critical Friends Group® and CFG® are trademarks of the NSRF®

Harmony School Corporation (of which the NSRF® is a division) legally owns the Critical Friends Group® and CFG® registered trademarks and as such, no party may use them without our permission*, especially when advertising Critical Friends Group trainings, seminars, products or materials. Recently, Harmony/NSRF successfully settled a lawsuit protecting our trademark from being used by another organization.

The trademark is important to us, and to you. Here's why.

Just as you want to know what to expect when you open your preferred brand of soft drink, you can expect the highest quality experience when being trained as a Critical Friends Group coach by an NSRF-certified National Facilitator. If someone suggests you take a training from them, see if the training is listed on our [website](#), and if not, ask them if they are currently working with the NSRF. Without a current NSRF National Facilitators certification, we cannot guarantee the quality of training they might provide.

Therefore, even if you complete their training, we could not allow you coaches' access to our website (including all the new and updated protocols, activities and other support materials for coaches), nor would you be eligible to purchase the new Coaches Handbook set to be published in 2015. In contrast, NSRF CFG trainings include a year's coaches membership and the new Handbook (if trained this summer or later, or the ability to purchase the Handbook if they were trained by us earlier).

What's the value of CFG Training?

When you register to become an NSRF-certified CFG coach, you will complete five days of training with us, either consecutively or split into segments of two- and three-days. In CFG training, you'll participate in protocols and activities led by an NSRF National Facilitator with a known track record of facilitation expertise and finesse. So you'll experience the protocols as they were designed to be experienced, and learn what's behind that facilitation: the subtleties that aren't written in the instructions.

You'll learn an important series of on-task protocols and activities to build trust within the CFG communities that you will create and sustain, and recognize when and how to revisit those activities for best results. You'll leave the training knowing the most effective techniques to give and receive feedback, which will help you avoid negative outcomes – vitally important when doing critical, often

emotionally-charged work within the CFG meetings. You'll learn how to select and use protocols to create balanced participation from all members of a meeting – not just the ones accustomed to speaking. And you'll get a toolkit for how to establish your CFG community and how to run your CFG meetings.

What's required of NSRF National Facilitators?

NSRF National Facilitators (those who may train others to become CFG coaches) are well-trained professionals. They are required to complete the initial five-day coaches training themselves, and then spend over a year honing their practice, interning, and meeting high NSRF standards using the most up-to-date materials. Once they've been certified, they continue to work with the NSRF organization to ensure that the trainings they perform fulfill the required standards of content and teaching. All this so that when you see "Critical Friends Group," you can trust what you're getting.

*I'm already a trained CFG coach. Can I call myself that, and our meetings "Critical Friends Group meetings"?

Absolutely. If you've been trained as a coach or even have just been participating in CFG meetings in your school, you have our permission to continue calling your communities by that time. We protect our trademarks from others suggesting they are equipped to train new coaches or otherwise earn money thanks to our marks, but we're delighted to support educators doing the work in the field!

Also, we encourage that CFG meetings always have an NSRF-certified CFG coach at the helm, for the best outcomes and to avoid "protocol disasters." But part of being a good coach is facilitating other CFG members in leading protocols as they become more familiar with the form.

Phew! Okay, then.

For these reasons and others, NSRF remains committed to protecting our Critical Friends Group trademark. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Michele Mattoon, NSRF Director, Michele@nsrfharmony.org or 812-330-2702. 