

Listening Circle of Connection

Purpose: Create a temporary online collective “space” in which to see and hear others as caring peers; speak honestly and be heard without interruption or advice; collectively hold the truth of “what is” for each of us individually, while being open to what appears from our presence and connection together.

Agreements/Guidelines:

- We sincerely aspire for this circle to be of benefit to ourselves and others.
- We talk to the collective gathering as peers and equals.
- We treat each other with kindness and respect.
- We hold all information shared in the circle as confidential.
- We listen with presence, good-heartedness, and awareness, as best we can.
- We honor each other’s unique ways to experience life and don’t presume to advise or try to fix each other.
- We trust each of us has the capacity to connect more deeply with our innate inner resources, and we rely on the power of our presence together and silence to access them.
- We are open to the potential that being heard and felt by others within a field of intentional caring presence positively expands our perspectives, hearts, and minds.

Enhancing calm presence, good-heartedness, and clear awareness while listening and speaking

CALM: Calm presence

- Pause whatever is going on in your mind and attention;
 - Use awareness of your physical sensations of the body standing or sitting to pay attention to the present moment of your experience;
 - Join one’s mind together with the body in the present moment as best you can;
 - Use your inner experience of the present moment as an anchor, while opening to the other person or situation.
 - Keep pausing and coming back to your present-moment anchor as you listen or speak.
- (Meditative qualities: concentration, one-pointed focus, present moment awareness.)

KIND: Good-heartedness

- Warm, relax and expand your innate good heart;
 - Sincerely aspire to be of benefit to self and others;
 - Bring your attention to your heart area and imagine breathing through the heart;
 - Think of a time, person, pet, or symbol associated with caring, kindness, warmth, or compassion, remember what that felt like, and let yourself receive or bathe in that quality as best you can;
 - Use the qualities of good heart/caring as an anchor in the present moment, while opening to the other person or situation.
 - Remember that the person you are with suffers and wants to be happy, just like you.
- (Meditative qualities: loving kindness, compassion, impartial well-wishing.)

CLEAR: Clear awareness

- Stay aware of your stream of experience of thoughts, emotions and sensations as best you can, with as much curiosity, relaxation, and openness as possible;
- Keep your attention balanced between awareness of your inner experience and awareness of what you are hearing or seeing from and with others;
- When judgements, reactivity or emotional intensity happen (they almost certainly will), that’s ok. Notice them. Experiment with making lots of space around your reactions when you are triggered, contracted or upset. Try staying quiet and breathing, rather than speaking right away.
- When you lose awareness, try shifting attention back to calm presence or good heartedness, or resting your focus more deeply on the other person’s words/energy.

(Meditative qualities: mindfulness, equanimity, clear perception)