



Facilitator Inquiry

Holding a Healing-Centered Circle

The Office of Restorative Justice Practices approaches healing as a practice of:

- restoring and strengthening relationships that honor our interconnectedness.
- addressing relationships and environmental factors that perpetuate disconnection.

As you are preparing to facilitate community-building Circles, below are some self-reflective questions you can think about to ground your RJ practice in this healing-centered approach.

Circle Planning Self-Inquiry

Imagining Healing:

- What is my vision for how this Circle could be a healing space?
- How am I integrating interconnectedness into the construction of the Circle?

Self-Care:

- What care and resourcing do I need to hold this Circle? What can I do myself (self-care), and what support do I need from others (community, family, colleagues, etc.)?
- What access needs may I have for this Circle?
- What practices will help me to maintain or return to calmness and openness during the Circle, especially if I become activated?
- What care and resourcing may I need after holding this Circle?

Assets and Offerings:

- Considering my vision for how this Circle will be a healing space (first question in Imagining Healing), how am I uniquely positioned to hold that space?
- What are my assets (skills, knowledges, capacities, strengths) that can support me in building a healing Circle?
- If I have a co-facilitator, What are their assets to create a healing Circle? Where are each of our gifts most in service?
- How am I honoring and creating space for the assets of others in the space?

Ancestrally- and Culturally-grounded:

- Are there cultural practices of healing (rituals, phrases, grounding practices) within my community, family, and/or ancestral traditions that can support me to practice self-care and create this Circle?
- How am I honoring and creating space for the community, family, and/or ancestral traditions and/or cultural wisdoms of others in the space?



Facilitator Inquiry

Holding a Healing-Centered Circle

Accountability to Positionality

- What are my identities, lived experiences, and privilege (positionality) in relation to the topics, questions, and participants in the circle?
- How might I be holding the Circle in ways suited to my positionality, at the expense of others' perspectives and needs?
- Given my positionality, what might I need to learn about further to hold this Circle with integrity?
- What are my triggers/activators in relation to my positionality? What strategies do I have to re-regulate? (this is an important thing to check-in with your cofacilitator for support)
- Where are my growth edges in relation to the topic(s) of this circle? How can I grow into these edges in a way that feels healing for me as I stretch?
- How can I embody restorative accountability in the way I hold the space to legacies of harm I might perpetuate?
- Am I using language that recognizes and honors the identities and lived experiences of circle participants?
- Am I using language that upholds systems of oppression/historical violence (white supremacy, patriarchy, heteronormativity, ableism, xenophobia, classism...)?

Collective Care:

- If I have a co-facilitator, how can I support them to hold this Circle and how can they support me? Do we have a way to communicate with each other if we have a need for support during the Circle?
- What practices am I using to create an [accessible space](#) for everyone? How have barriers to access been removed?
- How am I facilitating participants to express and get their needs met?
- How am I celebrating different kinds of bodies in the Circle?
- How am I integrating [trauma-informed practices](#) into the Circle?
- What practices of attunement do I have so that I can continue to track the feelings and needs of participants?



Facilitator Inquiry

Holding a Healing-Centered Circle

Self-Check-in Before Circle:

- Am I feeling resourced to hold this space in a way that can be healing for others and myself? If not, what do I need in this moment? Is this something I can support myself with or do I need to ask for support?
 - o Am I feeling calm and expansive?
 - o Does my nervous system feel regulated?
 - o Am I feeling like I could be flexible based on the needs of the participants in the Circle?
 - o Am I feeling like I could embody my values in the space?
- Do I have access needs for the space today?
- If I have a co-facilitator, have I checked in with them about what supports or needs they may have before we begin?

References:

“Anti Racist Inquiry.” Circle Keeper’s Companion Guide EWORKBOOK. Honeycomb Justice Consulting.

“Beloved Community Journey: Healing & Care.” Thrive Network & Thrive East Bay. 2022.

Ginwright, Shawn. “The Future of Healing: Shifting from Trauma Informed Care to Healing Centered Engagement.” Medium. 2018.

Ross, Jovida and Ghadbian, Weyam. “Turning Towards Each Other: A Conflict Workbook.” Abolitionist Toolkit. 2020.]

Story, Jasmyne. “Restorative Practices: Introduction to Circle Practice.” Honeycomb Justice Consulting.

[“Toolkit for Planning Accessible Events at UCSF.”](#) Disability Resources. UCSF.

[“Trauma-informed Restorative Practices.”](#) Boulder County DA’s Center for Prevention and Restorative Justice. 2019.