



Circle Facilitation Training

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Purpose of the Facilitation Training

This training provides tools for effective facilitation of regional circles to build trust and create a safe environment for trainers to share their experiences openly regarding the current changes in the Kundalini Yoga community and envisioning the future of the Aquarian Trainer Academy . Please note that those are only guidelines and facilitators can adjust as viewed necessary.

“Facilitation is the art of leading people through processes towards agreed-upon objectives in a manner that encourages participation, ownership and creativity by all those involved”

Facilitator's Role

- MAINTAINS STRICT CONFIDENTIALITY
- Guides discussions gently using questions, paraphrases and reflection
- Involves all participants by inviting all group members to speak
- Listen to both the emotion and the content of the message
- Responds with compassion
- Doesn't judge or communicates with judgmental language
- Trusts the wisdom of the group
- Clarifies topics and keeps focus on discussions (when necessary or desirable)
- Shows enthusiasm for participants' participation
- Manages if problems arise in the dynamics of the circle, e.g.: if one of the participants takes over the sharing space, uses language or attitude not part of the shared agreement.
- Be honest, open and authentic
- Do not take a teacher's stance. We are not there to teach, preach, nor give solutions; we are there to facilitate listening and the emergence of the group's wisdom.
- Monitors the circle process and makes adjustments as needed to maintain the sanctity of the circle and the safety of the members.

Participant's Role

- MAINTAINS STRICT CONFIDENTIALITY. What is shared within the group DOES NOT LEAVE THE GROUP.
- Takes part in discussions
- Listen compassionately to others
- Does not teach, preach, or provide solutions (except when you ask permission to do so)
- Doesn't judge or communicates with judgmental language
- Complies with the shared agreements .
- Be honest, open, genuine and authentic.
- Allows others to participate and does not grab attention or talk too much.

Establishing Shared Agreements for Circle

At the beginning of the circle present shared agreements and take suggestions for additions or modifications the participants may have to help you lay out the ground rule. Keep the list and have it available each meeting as a reminder. Here it is a suggested list:

- Everyone is encouraged to participate - at their own comfort level.
- Allow everyone to be heard - no one person dominates the discussion.
- All views will be respected - everyone's input is valuable.
- Focus is on mutual respect, kindness, compassion, and deep listening to promote understanding.
- Disagreements will not be personalized - put-downs, name-calling, labelling or personal attacks will not be tolerated.
- Confidentiality will be maintained - this can be extremely important if people are to be comfortable revealing personal stories.
- We honor the circle members by:
 - Speaking from the heart, honestly and openly
 - Speaking with respect for self & others
 - Speaking to the question/topic posed in the circle
 - Speaking briefly enough so that everyone will have time to speak
 - Listening fully with a willingness to learn & grow
 - Being open to the wisdom in each person
 - Speaking from your own experience, thoughts and feelings – using “I” statements

Circle Structure:

1. Opening the Circle: 25 minutes

- a. Welcome, Framing, intention, supports available 5”
- b. Tuning in/invocation/prayer 5”
- c. Shared agreements/ Rules of Communication 10”
- d. Guidelines 5”

2. Listening and Sharing: 60 minutes w 10 per grp plus time to break out and in.

- a. **Shared agreements:** revisit the Rules of Communication and add to it if necessary 5 “
- b. **Brief Check in** (give a set time per person to check in, e.g. 1 minute, and remind them when that time is up so everyone can participate) 10”
- c. **Questions/discussions:** Each facilitator can propose which question to address from the list below or any other question that the group may have, those are just starting points to the conversation: 40”

"What has changed for us since...?"

"How is this crisis also an opportunity?"

"What are we feeling called to do now?"

"At this time of crisis and opportunity for KRI, what I am most grateful for is...."

"When I think of this time of crisis and opportunity for KRI, what breaks my heart is...."

"When I envision us joining together to co-create an inspiring future together for KRI what I most want to see is...."

3. Integration: 15 minutes

done in full circle; Facilitator regroups with the intention to acknowledge the different experiences each small group may have had.

4. Next Steps, Closing the Circle and Dedication: 10 minutes

5. Frame the Trainer Summit: 5 minutes identify how it's different than the circles



Tips for Keeping the Flow

- Communicate clear guidelines and instructions: Sequentially explain the steps participants will take, providing a brief overview.
- Manage timing: timekeeping is essential for a successful circle
 - Begin and end on time
 - Assign a participant to keep track of time or manage the time yourself;
 - Be aware of the passing time during a meeting and that you let participants know when time is running short.
 - If doing individual check-ins make sure to give a set time for each participant beforehand, allowing extra time at the end of everyone's sharing for closure.
- Empathy: Make sure that people are not left behind or left out of the flow of the discussions.
- Active listening: effective conversation is when people feel they are being heard and listened to. It can be demonstrated by basic verbal tools, such as paraphrasing, or non-verbal cues, such as nodding.
- Establish hand gesture to communicate during the call:
 - Raise up hand = I want to say something
 - Prayer Pose = I concluded my sentence → next person can talk
 - Hand-signs in response of what's been said:
 - Closed fist = approval
 - Open one finger for each resistance = e.g. 2 fingers= 2 considerations regarding what's said
 - Full hand open at chest level = disapproval
 - Form a T with your hands = technical point, e.g. can I share my screen? → skip queue
 - Form a C with your hands = clarification, e.g. what does that word mean? → skip queue
 - Roll hands = get on with what you're saying
- Opening the Circle (suggestion only, each facilitator can choose what feels right)
 - Tune in
 - Offer Grounding through different methods:
 - 1-2 minutes of silence to ground
 - chanting/breathing to bring to calm and grounding . Often we use Guru Ram Das Chanting
 - Supporting the members to settle in/feeling support from the circle
 - one can 'ground' into the physical/personal - physical body, earth or the relational - feeling support with the other/the group; or the spiritual, supported by God, Guru, the Divine, etc.
- Closing the circle (suggestion only, each facilitator can choose what feels right)
 - 1 or 2 word check-out go-round
 - Close with long time sun or Long Sat Naam.