

Why We Gather and Where We Are Headed



Parent & Caregiver



Circle Agenda

Circle Topic		CR Section 1: Why We Gather and Where We Are Headed
Purpose of Circle	<p>Today you will:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop shared agreements, informed by group values, to guide the circle process throughout the compassion resilience group experience. 2. Introduce the link between compassion and reaching our family's goals. 3. Invite all to consider the positive impact of self-compassion. 	
Time/Materials/Preparation	<p>Time: 90 minutes</p> <p>Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Flipchart paper <input type="checkbox"/> Note cards <input type="checkbox"/> Markers <input type="checkbox"/> Pens <input type="checkbox"/> Name tags <input type="checkbox"/> Talking piece (such as a small stuffed animal) <input type="checkbox"/> Centerpiece (such as decorative flags or bouquet of fake flowers) <input type="checkbox"/> A few fidget toys (such as stress balls, pipe cleaners and fidget sticks) <input type="checkbox"/> Handouts: Content Outline, Values List, Self-Compassion Visual and Self-Compassion Scale <p>Set-up: Arrange chairs in a circle without furniture in the middle. Write definition of Compassion Resilience (included in agenda below) on flipchart paper for all to read — save for future sessions too.</p> <p>Facilitator Tip: <i>It is recommended your group size be between 5 and 10 participants for the circle format. Having additional people makes it challenging to hear from all participants and keep the group engaged during full group sharing. A group smaller than three puts too much pressure on the few participants to share and reduces the opportunity to build community often found as a benefit to these groups.</i></p>	



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Welcome (5 minutes)	Welcome the group to the first meeting for Parent and Caregiver Compassion Resilience. All facilitators should introduce themselves, why they have decided to facilitate these circles and what this topic means to each of them.

Opening and Check-in (20 minutes)	<p>Share</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">At the beginning of our sessions, we will always start with a short centering practice to help ground us in this space. We will do that practice now.I invite everyone to get into a comfortable position with your eyes closed or looking towards the ground. We are going to take a moment to pause. Take a few slow breaths. <i>(Pause)</i> Name in your mind what you want to let go of to be present in this circle and your personal reason for being here. <i>(Pause for 10 seconds)</i> I invite you to bring your attention back to the circle. <p>Share</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">As you've noticed, we have our group set up in a circle. In many cultures, coming together in a circle has been as natural as sitting around a fire and reflecting on shared concerns. During our time together we will learn with and from each other. Sitting in a circle helps us see everyone in the group and shows that no one person is the expert in this content.There are some core components of our circle setup that will be consistent each time we meet.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><u>Circle shape:</u> We will always have similarly heightened chairs set-up in a circle formation with limited to no furniture in the middle. This provides us the opportunity to see everyone in our group and represents that we are all learning when it comes to building our compassion resilience when caring for others.<u>Centerpiece:</u> While sitting in a circle provides us the opportunity to see everyone else in our group and learn from their wisdom, it can be uncomfortable to look at others for a long period of time. We have placed this object <i>(point to object)</i> in the center of our circle as a focal point to rest your eyes. Throughout our sessions, we will also display visuals for the content we are covering in the center of our circle. <p>Facilitator Tip: <i>If you are offering fidgets for participants, point them out and share their purpose at this time (to give our hands something to-do while sitting to help us stay mentally present).</i></p>
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Opening and Check-in
(20 minutes)
(continued)

- **Talking piece:** To ensure that one person speaks at a time and is heard by others, we will use this talking piece (*show talking piece to group*). The person holding the talking piece is the one permitted to speak. The rest of the group is tasked with just listening, giving their full attention to what the person is sharing. The exception to this is if the facilitator needs to make a comment or ask a clarifying question. Sometimes we will pass the talking piece around the circle and everyone will have the chance to share. Other times the talking piece will be used to gather two or three responses to a question, tossed between participants interested in sharing. You always have the right to pass when the talking piece is passed to you.
- **Shared agreements:** These are behaviors the group agrees to that support each other's values. We will generate these as a group in a few minutes.
- **Circle keeper/facilitator:** At every session you will have the same circle keeper/facilitator(s). I/we will lead the process and help participants keep to the shared agreements.

Share

- We are going to use the talking piece to introduce ourselves. I will ask a question and pass the talking piece to the person next to me. As a reminder, when someone is sharing our only task is to listen to what they are sharing, and you always have the right to pass when the talking piece is passed to you. After you answer, please pass the talking piece to the person next to you.

Ask

- (Talking piece) We are going to do two rounds of questions. First, please introduce yourself, who the kids are in your life that you care for and something you really enjoy about your children.
- (Talking piece) For our second round, what is something you read or heard about this group that made you want to join?

Facilitator Tip: *Scribing the things each participant hopes to get from the group will help you keep track of the group's needs so you can tailor future content when appropriate. Depending on what is shared – you can connect what participants share to the course overview shared next.*

Facilitator Tip: *To minimize deep sharing by participants, facilitators can answer the question first as a way to model the kind of response you are looking for. Also share with participants that they will have additional opportunities to share their story throughout the eight sessions and right now you are asking them to share just a small piece.*



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<p>Opening and Check-in (20 minutes) <i>(continued)</i></p>	<p>Handout the overview visual and briefly explain the content that will be covered during these groups, connecting to what participants hope to get out of the group when appropriate.</p> <p>Also, remind the group of meeting logistics — when and where the future sessions will be (ideally in the same location).</p>
<p>Guiding Questions (15 minutes - Values and Agreements)</p>  	<p>Share</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">When a group is using the circle process to meet on a continuous basis it is important to develop some shared agreements for how we will interact with each other. These are things we need from ourselves and others in the group to feel comfortable fully participating in the group.It is important to try to keep these agreements to a number we can all remember, usually between 4-6.One agreement I want to add is confidentiality so that people know what is said here, stays here. <i>Write Confidentiality or What is Said Here, Stays Here on a flipchart paper labeled Group Agreements.</i> <p>Facilitator Tip: <i>If mandated reporting laws apply to you, it is important to issue an exception related to confidentiality. If someone shares harm or neglect being done to a child, you will need to share that information with someone outside the circle. You also may want to inform the participants of your duty to report.</i></p> <p>Ask</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(Popcorn) <u>What agreements do you need from yourself and others to feel comfortable fully participating in the group?</u> <p>The facilitator should write each agreement requested on flipchart paper and when complete put the paper in the middle of the circle where all can see it.</p> <p>Ask</p> <p>I want to gather feedback from the group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Can you follow these agreements? Indicate your level of agreement by holding up 0 (shown as a first) to 5 fingers, 0 being not able to follow the agreements, 5 being able to follow the agreements with no reservations. <p>Facilitator Tip: <i>If anyone shows fewer than three fingers, more conversation about needs and shared agreements is required.</i></p>

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<p>Guiding Questions (15 minutes - Values and Agreements) <i>(continued)</i></p>	<p>Share</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thank you for generating this list of agreements. We will have them visible at every future session. Two other things that we'd like to keep visible at all our sessions is your values and family goals. These serve as a guiding star in our caregiving and are helpful to reconnect with, especially when we are feeling drained and struggling with tapping into our compassion. Connecting back to these things can help us feel more centered and fulfilled. <p>Pass a note card, marker or pen and the Values List handout to each participant.</p> <p>Share</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Think about 2-3 core values of importance to you that you try to model for your family. Write these values on your note card. Feel free to reference our values list if it helps you generate your top 2-3 values. <p>Give participants a few minutes to generate their answers.</p> <p>Ask</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (Talking piece) <u>What values did you write down and who influenced one of your values?</u> <p>Share</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Please put your notecard in the middle of the circle. We will include these values in the center of our circle at every future circle.
<p>(15 minutes - Goals for our Family)</p> 	<p>Our goals for our family</p> <p>Share</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Next, we want to identify what goals we want our families to work towards and how these connect to compassion resilience. <p>Ask</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (Talking piece) <u>What are some goals you have for your family? Write responses down on flipchart paper.</u> <p>Facilitator Tip: <i>While there may be some overlap with values and goals, goals are typically more specific — for example, a goal for my family is for each family member to be supportive of one another, or, a goal for my family is that we eat dinner together on a regular basis. If a goal is too general or philosophical, you can help participants get specific by asking "what does that look like in practice?"</i></p>

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<p>(15 minutes - Goals for our Family) <i>(continued)</i></p>	<p>Share</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">As we work towards these goals, we can encounter barriers that prevent us from being successful.As parents and caregivers, we have a desire to lessen barriers for our children and ourselves, and the pain that they cause. Our desire to lessen such pain, and to alleviate the challenges of those barriers, is compassion.Often, alleviating those barriers can be very frustrating and leave us in a place of compassion fatigue — worn out, less kind and less optimistic. The goal of this workshop is for us to build our compassion resilience, for the long haul, as we face the multiple challenges of parenting. <p>Show definition of compassion resilience written on flipchart paper.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">“Compassion resilience is the power to return to a position of empathy, strength, and hope after the daily experience of the challenges our children face and those we face as their caregivers. It requires us to be able to find optimism in an imperfect world.”
<p>Check for understanding (15 minutes)</p>	<p>Ask</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">(Popcorn) <u>How does building your compassion resilience relate to you reaching your family’s goals?</u>(Popcorn) <u>In the last month, how has being too tired or frustrated to act with compassion (you or another adult in your child’s life) impacted your ability to reach your family goals?</u> <p><i>Facilitator Tip: An example of this question may be, because I was up most of the night with a sick child, I was too tired to be as supportive or patient as I wanted to be to my family member who was struggling the next day. Your goal here is help participants connect their family goals to compassion and the impact compassion fatigue has on parenting.</i></p>
<p>Self-care and Closing (20 minutes)</p>	<p>Share</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">Each session will end with something for our own self-care. Today we will look at self-compassion.The first step to being compassionate to others is being compassionate to yourself. You will never speak to anyone more than you speak to yourself in your head. Be kind to yourself.



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Self-care and Closing
(20 minutes)
(continued)



Hand out Self-Compassion Visual.

- According to Dr. Kristen Neff, self-compassion includes these three components:
 - a. Being kind to ourselves vs judging ourselves.
 - b. Seeing our common humanity when we make a mistake vs isolating ourselves.
 - c. Being mindful of our emotions vs over-identifying with them.

Facilitator Tip: You can learn more about Dr. Neff's work [here](#).

Ask

- (Individual Reflection) Think to yourself, when you made a mistake last, did you go to a place of self-kindness or self-ridicule... did you remember that you are human and that all humans make mistakes, or did you isolate... were you aware of the negative emotions and let them pass, or did you cling to them?

Share

- Dr. Neff has a Self-Compassion Scale to help you get a read on your level of self-compassion.

Hand out Dr. Neff's [Self-Compassion Scale](#) for parents to complete at home. Also send the electronic link for the scale to participants post-session. Completing the scale online will calculate the score for you.

Ask

- (Popcorn) If you were able to increase your self-compassion, what would be different in your life?

Share

- Between now and our next session, take some time to reflect on self-compassion and how your level of self-compassion impacts your ability to be compassionate to others.

Ask

Every group we will end with a closing question. Today we'd like you to:

- (Talking piece) Share one word or phrase about your experience in the circle today.

Share

- Thank you for joining our Parent and Caregiver Compassion Resilience group. Our next meeting will be (*share next session date and time here*).
- The facilitation team will be sending out a pre-read before our next session. It is not mandatory to read this piece but will give you some additional context for what we will be covering at our next group.
- We look forward to seeing you next time.