

# Why We Gather and Where We Are Headed



Parent &  
Caregiver



Virtual  
Circle Agenda

Circle Topic		CR Section 1: Why We Gather and Where We Are Headed
Purpose of Circle	<p><b>Today you will:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Develop shared agreements, informed by group values, to guide the circle process throughout the compassion resilience group experience.</li> <li>2. Introduce the link between compassion and reaching our family's goals.</li> <li>3. Invite all to consider the positive impact of self-compassion.</li> </ol>	
Time/Materials/Preparation	<p><b>Time:</b> 90 minutes</p> <p><b>Documents to Share During Session:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Content Outline</a></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Values List</a></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Self-Compassion Visual</a></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> <a href="#">Self-Compassion Scale</a></li> </ul> <p><b>Items to Place in Chat During Session:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Definition of Compassion Resilience (<i>included in agenda below</i>)</li> </ul> <p><b>Facilitator Tip:</b> <i>It is recommended your group size be between 5 and 10 participants for an in-person or virtual 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>	
	<p><b>Welcome</b> (5 minutes)</p>	<p>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.</p>

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## Circle Topic

## CR Section 1: Why We Gather and Where We Are Headed

### Opening and Check-in (20 minutes)

#### Share

- 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. *(Pause)* Name in your mind what you want to let go of to be present in this group and your personal reason for being here. *(Pause for 10 seconds)* I invite you to bring your attention back to the group.

#### Share

- To assist us in gathering via this virtual format, we want to outline some etiquette guidelines.
  - Please mute your microphone when you are not sharing.
  - Share your video with the group if you are able.
  - Utilize the “chat” box if you are having difficulty with your audio.
  - For the sake of others learning, please be discreet if you need to move around your surroundings during our groups.
  - If you have problems connecting, please let us know.

#### Share

- We are going to take a few minutes to introduce ourselves. I will ask a question and call on someone from the group to respond, eventually giving everyone in the group a chance to respond. 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 your name is called.

#### 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 have read or heard about this group that made you want to join?



**Facilitator Tip:** Writing down 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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<b>Opening and Check-in</b> (20 minutes) <i>(continued)</i>	Virtually share the <a href="#">overview visual</a> 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.  Also, remind the group of meeting logistics — when and where the future sessions will be (ideally using the same online platform for each group).

<b>Guiding Questions</b> (15 minutes - Values and Agreements)	<p><b>Share</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>When a group is meeting 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.</li><li>It is important to try to keep these agreements to a number we can all remember, usually between 4-6.</li><li>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 your shared space labeled Group Agreements.</i></li></ul> <p><b>Facilitator Tip:</b> <i>If your online platform has a whiteboard function, this could be a good spot to record things you want all participants to see. If a virtual whiteboard is not available, you could share a PowerPoint slide where you scribe participants' responses or write them in a chat box.</i></p> <p><b>Facilitator Tip:</b> <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><b>Ask</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(Popcorn) <u>What agreements do you need from yourself and others to feel comfortable fully participating in the group?</u></li></ul> <p>Write each agreement requested somewhere all participants can see (virtual whiteboard, PowerPoint slide, group chat box).</p> <p><b>Ask</b></p> <p>I want to gather feedback from the group.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>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.</li></ul>
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<p><b>Guiding Questions</b> (15 minutes - Values and Agreements) (continued)</p>		<p><b>Facilitator Tip:</b> <i>If anyone shows fewer than three fingers, more conversation about needs and shared agreements is required. If someone is unable to share their video, you can have participants put their responses in chat.</i></p> <p><b>Share</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Thank you for generating this list of agreements. We will have them at every future session.</li><li>▪ Two other things that we'd like to keep visible at our future 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.</li></ul> <p>Share virtually the <a href="#">Values List</a> handout to each participant.</p> <p><b>Share</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Think about 2-3 core values of importance to you that you try to model for your family. Bring these to mind or write them down on a piece of paper nearby. Feel free to reference our values list if it helps you generate your top 2-3 values.</li></ul> <p>Give participants a few minutes to generate their answers.</p> <p><b>Ask</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ (Talking piece) <u>What values did you choose and who influenced one of your values?</u></li></ul> <p>As participants share their 2-3 values, write these on some virtual shared space. Also keep these for session eight to reference again during that agenda.</p>
<p>(15 minutes - Goals for our Family)</p>		<p><b>Our goals for our family</b></p> <p><b>Share</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Next, we want to identify what goals we want our families to work towards and how these connect to compassion resilience.</li></ul> <p><b>Ask</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• (Talking piece) <u>What are some goals you have for your family? Write responses where participants can see, such as virtual whiteboard or chat box.</u></li></ul> <p><b>Facilitator Tip:</b> <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><b>Share</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>As we work towards these goals, we can encounter barriers that prevent us from being successful.</li><li>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.</li><li>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.</li></ul> <p>Place definition of compassion resilience in chat box and read aloud.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li><b>“Compassion resilience</b> 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.”</li></ul>
<p>Check for understanding (15 minutes)</p> 	<p><b>Ask</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>(Popcorn) <u>How does building your compassion resilience relate to you reaching your family’s goals?</u></li><li>(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></li></ul> <p><b>Facilitator Tip:</b> <i>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><b>Share</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Each session will end with something for our own self-care. Today we will look at self-compassion.</li><li>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.</li></ul>

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## CR Section 1: Why We Gather and Where We Are Headed

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



Share virtually the [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.

Share the virtual link to Dr. Neff's [Self-Compassion Scale](#) for participants to complete after group, unless time allows, in which case you can have participants complete the scale during group and share a take-away from the scale with the full group.

### 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 this group 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 will also send the handouts we shared virtually today to you via email for future reference.
- We look forward to seeing you next time.