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# Restorative Processing Toolkit

A resource for communities using restorative practices to process the trials for the former officers involved in the murder of George Floyd

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\*Additional circle guides are forthcoming and will be posted to our website weekly.

# About this Toolkit

This section offers an overview of the Legal Rights Center, why we feel that restorative processing is important in this moment, and how you might use this toolkit to support your community through the trials of 2021.

We encourage you to read through this section before the rest of the toolkit.

# About The Legal Rights Center

The Legal Rights Center is a community-driven nonprofit law firm located in Minneapolis, MN. Our mission is to work with our communities to seek justice and promote racial equity for those to whom it has been historically denied. We do this through criminal defense, restorative justice, advocacy, and community education.

Celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2020, the Legal Rights Center was born in a similar moment to the one in which we are currently living, following the Civil Rights Movement and the birth of the American Indian Movement in the late 1960s. Through the coordinated efforts of members of Black and American Indian communities, LRC was founded as a community law firm. Our founders later welcomed immigrant communities to their coalition, and LRC continues to be led and operated as a community driven organization.

Whether we are engaging directly with youth and families, shaping media narratives about the legal system, or leveraging relationships with county and state leaders to seek change, everything that we do is driven by the communities we work with.

# The Y:EARS Team at Legal Rights Center

The Y:EARS team is the division at the Legal Rights Center that works to support youth in our community in various ways. Y:EARS stands for Youth: Education, Advocacy, and Restorative Services.

Education: We offer free trainings for students, families and school and district staff on topics related to Asserting and Knowing your Rights , the School-to-Prison Pipeline, and many more.

Advocacy: We provide free juvenile delinquency defense to youth in Hennepin County Juvenile Court. We also coordinate state & county level policy advocacy in partnership with the MN Coalition for Youth Justice.

Restorative Services: We partner with local school districts and community agencies to offer restorative Family Group Conferences and conflict resolution circles for youth, families, and staff.

# Why did we create this toolkit?

We know that the trials of former officers Chauvin, Thao, Lane, and Kueng are going to be widely publicized and will bring to the surface the pain and trauma associated with George Floyd's murder. Members of our community will have questions and feelings about many aspects of the trial and the state of racial justice in Minneapolis and across the U.S.

We know that the people may want to hold space to process their feelings, especially in ways that are authentic, restorative, and do not perpetuate any further harm.

Please read the fundamentals of restorative practices and our self-assessment guide before using any of these resources. If you are not ready to engage in self-reflection, discomfort, and high levels of emotion or if you do not have regular, significant time to meet in circle, please consider supporting your community using other methods (look at p.7 and p.29-30 for more ideas).

# How to use this toolkit

Start with the self-assessment and self-reflection offered on p. 8 & 9 to consider your capacity and begin to plan for the type of restorative space that you want to create.

The Restorative Circle Tools section is offered as a resource for grounding in the philosophy and components of restorative practices. We offer resources related to the different aspects of circle practice and how you might facilitate these spaces for the members of your community. This toolkit focuses on supporting youth in processing the trials but please consider adapting these outlines to fit the community you plan on supporting.

Then consider using the different circle guides offered here and on our website to process the specific aspects of a criminal trial. These guides cover topics related to community building, criminal trials broadly and to the unique aspects of this case.

# Take Time to Self-Reflect

This section offers prompts to use in self-reflection as you plan to hold space for young people in your community. We encourage you to revisit these questions throughout the process.

# Restorative Checklist: Are You Ready to Hold Restorative Space?

- ❑ Are you committed to doing on-going self-reflection throughout this process?
- ❑ Are you committed to holding a dedicated space that is voluntary and consensual?
- ❑ Are you committed to making yourself available to the young people you work with to emotionally process this material?
- ❑ Are you able to dedicate regular time to this process?

*\*If the answer to the questions above is no, we ask that you consider offering other supportive opportunities to the young people in your community. For example, you could:*

- *Let students know that you're available for check-ins*
- *Encourage students to process their feelings in a journal*
- *Look for and share information about other community groups that are offering resources to process the trials*
- *Consider extending deadlines or amending assignments during the trials*

If you do feel ready to hold a restorative space, wonderful! Take a few minutes to reflect on the following questions:

What are your goals for the space you will hold?

What do you want the space to feel like?

How will you make sure these spaces are voluntary?

What trust / relationships have already been built in this community?

What trust / relationships do you think still need to be built in this community?

How will you handle differences of opinion / emotion?

# Restorative Circle Tools

This section covers the fundamentals of holding a restorative circle space. We include tools and visual aids for facilitating the different aspects of circle, advice on navigating harm, and best practices for holding virtual circle spaces.

# Fundamentals of Restorative Practices

Restorative practices should be understood and implemented as a return to Indigenous wisdoms and ways. In our North American context this is grounded in the ways of the First Nation peoples (e.g., Yukon, Lakota, Ojibwe, etc...). We can also find restorative processes embedded and arising from Indigenous cultures across the globe and history. The following is a brief list of some fundamentals of restorative practices that help serve as anchors for practitioners to stay rooted in the restorative mindset, as opposed to simply carrying out a procedural checklist.

Restorative practices:

- Root in Relationships
- Are voluntary/consensual
- Emphasize Listening and Sharing from the Heart
- Center on Social Justice and Equity
- Honor Agency/Self-Determination (Nothing About Me, Without Me)
- Balance Power and Equal Voice
- Ask us to take Responsibility and Ownership
- Require the Intentional Creation of Space

# General Circle Format

We start circle by intentionally opening the space together. During an opening ceremony, we use grounding and body-centered practices to ensure that people are present. Quotes and poems set the tone for the space. At the beginning of the circle space, we also create group agreements and values to hold the discussions to come.

The majority of circle is spent sharing perspectives and listening deeply to other participants. Questions are asked by the circle keeper and each participant takes their turn in responding to the question or passing to the next participant. When we can join together in person, a talking piece can be a helpful tool to indicate whose turn it is to speak and whose turn it is to listen. Question rounds continue until the circle keeper and participants feel that they have reached an appropriate place to conclude sharing for that particular circle.

We close circle with a check-out round, to provide the opportunity for people to share their perspectives on the experience. A closing ceremony can include a quote, poem, song, or other sharing that allows participants to move beyond the space.

# General Circle Format

1

## Setting the Circle Space

Welcome  
Opening Ceremony  
Clarifying the circle purpose



2

## Sharing Perspectives

Storytelling  
Communicating feelings  
Identifying needs, interests, or  
shared visions  
Identifying any shared  
agreements or next steps



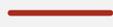
3

## Closing

Check out round  
Closing Ceremony



**Setting the  
Circle Space**



**Sharing  
Perspectives**



**Closing**

## Opening Ceremony

An opening ceremony is an important ritual to help welcome participants into the circle. By ceremonially opening the circle, we encourage community members to turn their attention to the present and open their hearts and minds in preparation for listening and sharing. Circle openings may include any and all of the following:

- Poem, Quote, Song
- Dance, Movement
- Lighting candles, selecting talking pieces
- Introductions/Check-Ins
- Discussing values and circle guidelines

Tools for setting the circle space can be found on the following pages of this toolkit.



**Setting the  
Circle Space**



**Sharing  
Perspectives**



**Closing**

## Body-Centered Grounding Practices

These practices can help participants transition from the distractions of our busy lives into the mindset required for active participation in circle. Some examples of body-centered practices include:

- As a group: Collective breathing, humming/buzzing\*, listening to a song.
- Individually: Deep breaths, 2 minute meditation, body scan (Check in with your body from the top of your head to the tip of your toes).
- 5 senses activity: Observe 5 things you see, 4 things you hear, 3 things you smell, 2 things you can touch, 1 thing you taste (the senses can be switched).
- Movement: Take turns asking everyone to move their body and then as a group everyone does that movement (rolling wrists, head circles, shoulder rolls).

\*These two body practices are described in Resmaa Menakem's work *My Grandmother's Hands*

1

**Setting the  
Circle Space**

2

**Sharing  
Perspectives**

3

**Closing**

## Circle Values

During the opening, we often invite participants to share a value they are bringing into the space. These values are an important grounding for how the community will speak and listen during circle.



The image was created by Living Justice Press. They are a great source for a variety of restorative practices books and graphics.

1

Setting the Circle Space

2

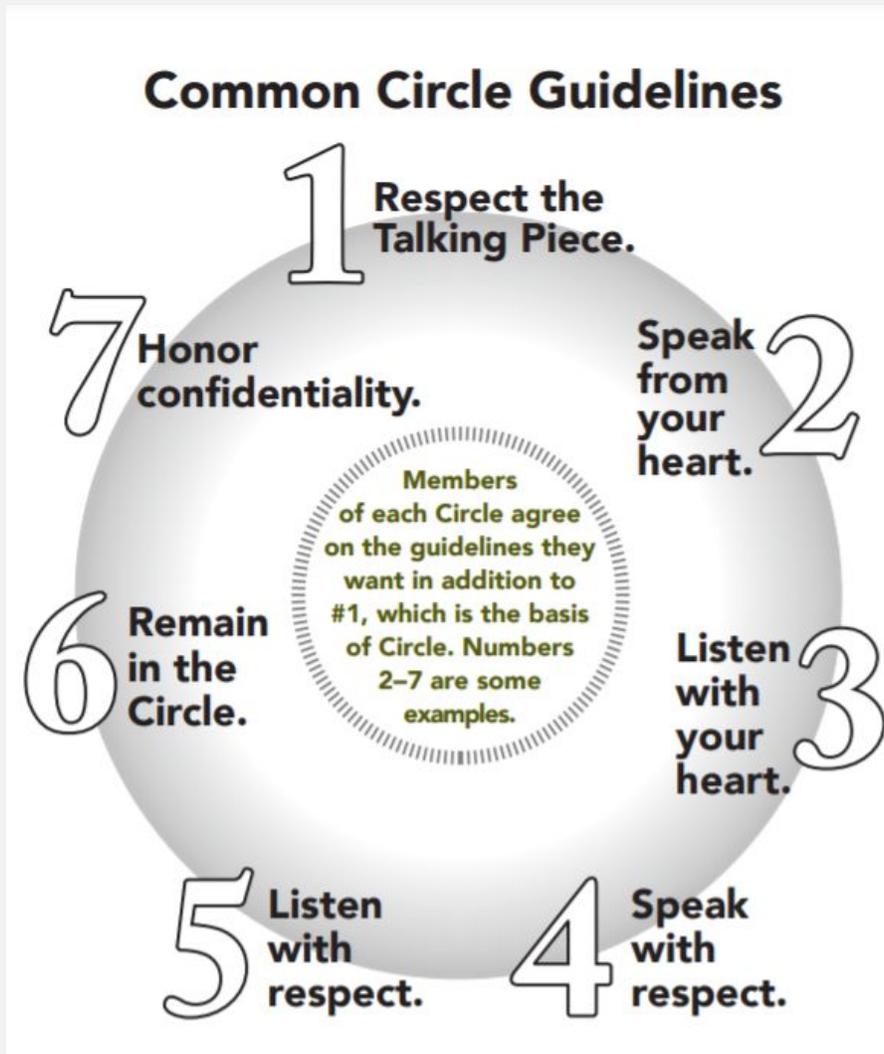
Sharing Perspectives

3

Closing

# Circle Guidelines

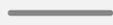
Circle guidelines help the group establish agreed-upon expectations about the sharing that happens in circle. These guidelines are intended to create a space where people feel safe to share openly. It is the responsibility of the circle keeper, alongside all participants in circle, to help the group uphold and revisit these guidelines.



The image was created by Living Justice Press. They are a great source for a variety of restorative practices books and [graphics](#).



Setting the  
Circle Space



Sharing  
Perspectives



Closing

## Circle Rounds

During the circle rounds, the circle keeper poses a question and offers each participant a chance to share. Each time a question makes its revolution around the circle is called a round, and the number of rounds per circle depends on the number of participants and amount of time held for circle.

The questions asked during this time are an opportunity for the exchange of perspectives, thought- and emotional-processing, and learning from others. The questions asked during the circle rounds are often open-ended and crafted to encourage sharing.

As all participation in circle is voluntary, participants can choose to answer the question in whatever way they like, always including the opportunity to pass. The circle keeper may choose to begin by answering the question first or can share last. They can also choose to use follow-up rounds to elicit reactions to comments made by other participants.

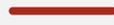
If holding circle in person, the talking piece is often passed around the circle in a clockwise direction, creating a speaking order in which each person passes the object over their heart and to the left.



Setting the  
Circle Space



Sharing  
Perspectives



Closing

## Navigating Potential Harm

Given the complicated nature of discussion surrounding the murder of George Floyd and the consequential trials of Derek Chauvin, Tou Thao, Thomas Lane, and J. Alexander Kueng, it is expected that tensions or problems may arise during circle. The following are some ways that circle keepers might prepare to prevent or mitigate against harm:

- Begin with and revisit the circle guidelines. As a part of this discussion, come to a community agreement about how to address conflict/harm before it occurs.
- When harm occurs, allow space for participants to share what they heard and how it made them feel.
- Be ready to interrupt “planned” circle prompts to process problematic or harmful comments.
- Acknowledge that intent doesn’t excuse impact but intent may be relevant as part of the processing of a harm.

The following are some general responses to misunderstandings that might be useful to stabilizing the circle space if harm occurs:

- What do you want others to know about your perspective?
- I’d like to pause the circle. I’m hearing this question: ... Does anyone have a response to that question?
- What did the other person say?
- How did that comment make you feel?



Setting the  
Circle Space



Sharing  
Perspectives



**Closing**

## Closing

Circle is a restorative practice that is not intended to have a formal and decisive sense of closure. It is perfectly natural to end a circle with a sense of more unanswered questions and need for more reflection. However, it is the role of the circle keeper to offer tokens of closure that, at a minimum, bring the collective space to a close. Circle closings may be any and all of the following,

- Poem
- Quote
- Song
- Dance
- Movement
- Goodbye Gestures
- A round of takeaways offered by participants.

# Advice for Holding Virtual Circles

Though certainly different, it is still possible to hold connective, restorative circles in a virtual space. Specific intention must be paid to encourage participation and to create spaces in which participants feel comfortable sharing. Consider the following recommendations if you are planning to hold a virtual circle:

- Be mindful of the timing and how that might impact people's participation. Factor this into the opening and closing ceremonies:
  - Is it in the evening when a long day of virtual gatherings have already taken place?
  - Is it first thing in the morning when folks will be getting settled into their days?
  - Is it in the middle of day when people might have to return to other work after an emotional circle?
- Use the chat or an on-screen visual to create a "restorative line-up." This can function as the speaking order.
  - Ask that participants say "I pass to..." to indicate that they are done sharing.
- Encourage people to mute their microphones when not speaking.
- Define "presence" and "engagement" in the circle guidelines. To respect the privacy of participants, consider allowing people to make their own decisions about having their cameras on or off.

# Circle Guides

These circle guides are potential scripts offered to circle keepers planning to hold space during the trials for the officers involved in George Floyd's murder. Each script contains numerous question prompts to select from. Consider the particular context of your community and adapt the offerings here as necessary.

Additional guides for processing specific developments in the trials will be available on the Legal Rights Center website.

# Community Building, part 1

**A community building circle is a necessary first step in holding space for restorative processing. Please don't skip this circle. The agreements created here will be necessary for the spaces to come.**

- Welcome
  - *As people enter the space, welcome them. Invite them to do what they need in order to be fully present for the next hour to ninety minutes that they will be together.*
- Body Centering
  - *Have folks close their eyes if they feel comfortable and take four deep breaths together, breathing in through the nose and exhaling out through the mouth. Invite participants to do a silent scan of their bodies, starting with their feet and working their way up to their heads. As they observe points of tension, encourage them to use their breath to release the points of tightness.*
- Introductions/Check-In - *Invite participants to introduce themselves. The circle keeper may decide to call on each person individually, choose to start with one person and ask them to pick the person who goes next, or provide a speaking order in the chat or on the screen.*
  - Each person share your name, pronouns, and three words for how you're feeling today.
- Quote - *Read the following quote as grounding:*
  - "The power of the World always works in circles, and everything tries to be round . . . The sky is round and I have heard the earth is round like a ball, and so are all the stars. The wind in its greatest power whirls, birds make their nest in circles, for theirs is the same religion as ours. The sun comes forth and goes down again in a circle. The moon does the same and both are round. Even the seasons form a great circle in their changing, and always come back again to where they were. Our teepees were round like the nests of birds. And they were always set in a circle, the nation's hoop." - Chief Black Elk

# Community Building, part 2

- Circle Purpose - *Share that the community is gathered today to begin holding space for one another to process the upcoming trials. The purpose for today's circle is to identify shared values, set group agreements, and begin sharing perspectives on community.*
- Values - *Share the image of the "Common Circle Values from Living Justice Press. (see p. 15 of this toolkit). Ask participants:*
  - Pick one value that is important to you and share how you will try to live into this value during circle.
- Group Agreements - *Share the image of the Common Circle Guidelines from Living Justice Press (see p. 16 of this toolkit). Take notes during the responses to these questions. Ask participants:*
  - Do we feel good about using these guidelines? Do we want to add or change any?
  - What will we do if we experience harm in this space?
  - How do we want to bring lightness and joy into our circle?
  - What do we want from each other when we are feeling emotionally stuck or emotionally drained?
  - How do we want to take care of each other?
- Sharing Perspectives - On Community. *Ask participants to answer:*
  - Round 1: What is community? Is it a noun or a verb?
  - Round 2: Who are the people who make up your community?
  - Round 3: What are some of the values that our communities hold?
  - Round 4: How have members of the community been impacted by George Floyd's murder?
  - Round 5: What are your hopes and fears for your community during the trials of Derek Chauvin and the other officers involved in Mr. Floyd's murder?
  - Round 6: How might the different outcomes of the trial impact your community?
- Closing - *Ask participants to answer:*
  - Share one way that you plan to be in community with others during the trial.
  - What are three words that describe how you're feeling leaving this circle?
- Closing Quote - *Read the following quote:*
  - None of us comes into the world fully formed. We would not know how to think, or walk, or speak, or behave as human beings unless we learned it from others. We need other human beings in order to be human. I am because other people are. - Desmond Tutu
- Closing Breaths - *Invite participants to take three breaths together to close.*

# Jury Selection, part 1

- Welcome
  - *As people enter the space, welcome them. Invite them to do what they need in order to be fully present for the next hour to ninety minutes that they will be together.*
- Body Centering
  - *Have folks close their eyes if they feel comfortable and take four deep breaths together, breathing in through the nose and exhaling out through the mouth. Invite participants to do a silent scan of their bodies, starting with their feet and working their way up to their heads. As they observe points of tension, encourage them to use their breath to release the points of tightness.*
- Introductions/Check-In - *Invite participants to introduce themselves. The circle keeper may decide to call on each person individually, choose to start with one person and ask them to pick the person who goes next, or provide a speaking order in the chat or on the screen.*
  - *Each person share your name, pronouns, a value that you're bringing today, and something you don't put your trust in.*
- Quote - *Read the following quote as grounding:*
  - *"Juries scare me. I don't want to put my faith in 12 people who weren't smart enough to get out of jury duty." Monica Piper [comedian]*
- Circle Purpose – *This is an opportunity to engage in community while reflecting on our relationship with others while taking into account the act and process of judging someone else. Additionally, the purpose for this circle is to wrestle with concepts like truth, fairness, accountability, and justice.*
- Group Agreements – *Re-share the image of the Common Circle Guidelines from [Living Justice Press](#) (see p. 16 of this toolkit). Take notes during the responses to these questions. Ask participants:*
  - *Do we feel good about continuing to use these guidelines? Do we want to add or change any?*

# Jury Selection part 2

- Sharing Perspectives - On Jury Selection. *Ask participants to answer:*
  - Round 1: What is a peer? What is an acquaintance? What is a friend? What is a neighbor? These are all related, similar, yet very distinct. How do you feel about that?
  - Round 2: Reflecting on a time when you committed a mistake/harmed someone else, would you rather have your friends or strangers pass judgement on you for that incident?
  - Round 3: The jury selection process in a trial weeds out people with ties to the participants of the process. How is justice better served, or not, with the elimination of relationships from the process?
  - Round 4: Given the significant impact that race/ethnicity/gender has on juries, do you think they should be colorblind? Why or why not?
- Closing - *Ask participants to answer:*
  - What are three words that describe how you're feeling leaving this circle?
- Closing Quote - *Read the following quote:*
  - "The challenge of social justice is to evoke a sense of community that we need to make our nation a better place, just as we make it a safer place." -Marian Wright Edelman
- Closing Breaths - *Invite participants to take three breaths together to close.*

# Reflecting on the Idea of Justice, Part 1

- Welcome
  - *As people enter the space, welcome them. Invite them to do what they need in order to be fully present for the next hour to ninety minutes that they will be together.*
- Body Centering
  - *Have folks close their eyes if they feel comfortable and take four deep breaths together, breathing in through the nose and exhaling out through the mouth. Invite participants to do a silent scan of their bodies, selecting a color to represent how they feel in their bodies today.*
- Introductions/Check-In - *Invite participants to introduce themselves. The circle keeper may decide to call on each person individually, choose to start with one person and ask them to pick the person who goes next, or provide a speaking order in the chat or on the screen.*
  - Each person share your name, pronouns and a color that represents how you are feeling today.
- Quote - *Read the following poem as grounding:*

Allowables by Nikki Giovanni

I killed a spider  
Not a murderous brown recluse  
Nor even a black widow  
And if the truth were told this  
Was only a small  
Sort of papery spider  
Who should have run  
When I picked up the book  
But she didn't  
And she scared me  
And I smashed her  
I don't think  
I'm allowed  
To kill something  
Because I am  
Frightened

# Reflecting on the Idea of Justice, Part 2

- Circle Purpose - *Share that the community is gathered today to discuss the idea of justice in the context of the upcoming trial. The purpose for today's circle is to wrestle with concepts like truth, fairness, accountability, and justice*
- Values - *Share the image of the "Common Circle Values from Living Justice Press. (see p. 17 of this toolkit). Ask participants:*
  - Pick one value that is important to you and share how you will try to live into this value during circle.
- Group Agreements - *Share the image of the Common Circle Guidelines from Living Justice Press (see p. 18 of this toolkit). Ask participants:*
  - Do we feel good about using these guidelines? Any that we want to add or change?
  - Review the discussion of handling harm, bringing joy, and taking care of one another, developed during the Community Building circle.
- Sharing Perspectives - *On Justice. Ask participants to answer:*
  - Round 1: What does justice mean to you? Have you ever seen justice in action? Tell us about it...
  - Round 2: What does "Justice for George Floyd" mean to you? What would have to happen during this trial for justice to be served?
  - Round 3: Some people say that the purpose of a criminal trial is to find the "truth", others say it is about "accountability." How are truth and accountability similar or different from justice?
    - Just because we know the truth, is justice guaranteed?
    - If people are held accountable for their actions, does it mean that justice is served?
  - Round 4: Outside of the trial, what are other ways that we might work towards more truth, accountability, or justice in our communities?
- Closing Quote - *Read the following quote:*
  - We shall overcome because the arc of the moral universe is long but it bends toward justice. - Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
- Closing - *Ask participants to answer:*
  - What do you think Dr. King meant in this quote? What might it mean for our community during the trial?
  - What are three words that describe how you're feeling leaving this circle?
- Closing Breaths - *Invite participants to take three breaths together to close.*

# Opening Statements, Part 1

- Welcome
  - *As people enter the space, welcome them. Invite them to do what they need in order to be fully present for the next hour to ninety minutes that they will be together.*
- Body Centering
  - *Have folks close their eyes if they feel comfortable and take four deep breaths together, breathing in through the nose and exhaling out through the mouth. Invite participants to visualize a balloon expanding and constricting as they breathe.*
- Introductions/Check-In - *Invite participants to introduce themselves. The circle keeper may decide to call on each person individually, choose to start with one person and ask them to pick the person who goes next, or provide a speaking order in the chat or on the screen.*
  - Each person shares their name, pronouns, and one spring time activity that they love.
- Circle Purpose - *Share that the community is gathered today to discuss the concept of judgement and the presumption of innocence in a criminal trial.*
- Values - *Share the image of the “Common Circle Values from Living Justice Press. (see p. 17 of this toolkit). Ask participants:*
  - Pick one value that is important to you and share how you will try to live into this value during circle.
- Group Agreements - *Share the image of the Common Circle Guidelines from Living Justice Press (see p. 18 of this toolkit). Ask participants:*
  - Do we feel good about using these guidelines? Any that we want to add or change?
  - Review the discussion of handling harm, bringing joy, and taking care of one another, developed during the Community Building circle.
- Quote - *Read the following quote as grounding:*
  - The truth is the truth, it doesn't have versions – it just is! The truth may change over time but if it is correctly recorded then at any instance in time there is only one truth. - Stephen Timbers

# Opening Statements, Part 2

- Sharing Perspectives - On Judgement and Innocence. *Ask participants to answer:*
  - **Round 1:** What are your thoughts about our quote for today? Is there such a thing as one truth?
  - **Round 2:** Tell us about a time when you've been certain of something, and had to convince someone who didn't believe you.
  - **Round 3:** Have you ever had to convince someone of something who was supposed to be neutral or impartial? Did it feel like they were to you?
  - **Round 4:** Similarly, have you ever had to have an open mind when listening to something, even if you already had an opinion about the situation? Tell us about it.
  - **Round 5:** In the legal system, the jurors are supposed to give Derek Chauvin the presumption of innocence and weigh only the evidence presented to them during the trial. In general, how do you feel about the idea of the presumption of innocence?
    - How does knowing that Derek Chauvin will be presumed innocent make you feel? If you were a juror in the Chauvin trial, do you think you could give him the presumption of innocence?
  - **Round 6:** Is there a different way that the court process could or should work, given the discussion we had today?
- Closing Quote - *Read the following quote:*
  - I'm no longer accepting the things I cannot change. I'm changing the things I cannot accept - Angela Davis
- Closing - *Ask participants to answer:*
  - What are three words that describe how you're feeling leaving this circle?
- Closing Breaths - *Invite participants to take three breaths together to close.*

# Impressions & Arguments, Part 1

- Welcome
  - *As people enter the space, welcome them. Invite them to do what they need in order to be fully present for the next hour to ninety minutes that they will be together.*
- Body Centering
  - *Have folks close their eyes if they feel comfortable and take four deep breaths together, breathing in through the nose and exhaling out through the mouth.*
- Introductions/Check-In - *Invite participants to introduce themselves. The circle keeper may decide to call on each person individually, choose to start with one person and ask them to pick the person who goes next, or provide a speaking order in the chat or on the screen.*
  - Each person share your name, pronouns, and your relationship to Saturday mornings as a child.
- Quote - *Read the following poem as grounding:*

## First Impressions by Peggy Woods

First impressions are not always the best,  
Finer distinctions are formed from the rest.

First impressions, often prejudiced and rude,  
Given more time are mellowed and soothed.

With time comes understanding, interest, even love,  
And who, being in haste, would forgo the above?

- Circle Purpose - *The purpose for today's circle is to continue to wrestle with concepts like truth, fairness, accountability, and justice. In addition, it is an opportunity to discuss the ideas of impressions and arguments.*
- Values - *Share the image of the "Common Circle Values from Living Justice Press. (see p. 17 of this toolkit). Ask participants:*
  - Pick one value that is important to you and share how you will try to live into this value during circle.

# Impressions & Arguments, Part 2

- Group Agreements - *Share the image of the Common Circle Guidelines from Living Justice Press (see p. 18 of this toolkit). Ask participants:*
  - Do we feel good about using these guidelines? Any that we want to add or change?
- Sharing Perspectives -. *Ask participants to answer:*
  - Round 1: Recalling times when you fell short in excellence. Share a story of a time you made a 'bad' first impression. What did that feel like?
  - Round 2: In your opinion, are first impressions valuable in relationships? Why or why not?
  - Round 3: Reflecting on times of disagreement. What is your relationship with arguing (verbally or in writing) with others?
  - Round 4: Contextualizing the concepts of impressions and ability to make arguments within a 'justice system' setting, of what value is it to seek justice without whole truth?
- Closing Quote - *Read the following quote:*
  - I always cheer up immensely if an attack is particularly wounding because I think, well, if they attack one personally, it means they have not a single political argument left. - Margaret Thatcher
- Closing - *Ask participants to answer:*
  - What do you think Margaret Thatcher meant in this quote? What might it mean for our community during the trial?
  - What are three words that describe how you're feeling leaving this circle?
- Closing Breaths - *Invite participants to take three breaths together to close.*

# Evidence, Part 1

- Welcome
  - *As people enter the space, welcome them. Invite them to do what they need in order to be fully present for the next hour to ninety minutes that they will be together.*
- Body Centering
  - *Have folks close their eyes if they feel comfortable. Lead the group in four deep breaths. As folks inhale, have them imagine a cool, calm blue filling every corner of their bodies. As they exhale, have them imagine gathering up all the red (stress/tense) energy in their bodies and blowing it out.*
- Introductions/Check-In - *Invite participants to introduce themselves. The circle keeper may decide to call on each person individually, choose to start with one person and ask them to pick the person who goes next, or provide a speaking order in the chat or on the screen.*
  - Each person share your name, pronouns and a color that represents how you are feeling today.
- Quote - *Read the following quote as grounding:*
  - “The search for truth takes you where the evidence leads you, even if, at first, you don’t want to go there.” - Bart Ehrman
- Circle Purpose - *Share that the community is gathered today to discuss the idea of proof, since proving someone did something is at the core of all criminal trials.*
- Values - *Share the image of the “Common Circle Values from Living Justice Press. (see p. 17 of this toolkit). Ask participants:*
  - Pick one value that is important to you and share how you will try to live into this value during circle.
- Group Agreements - *Share the image of the Common Circle Guidelines from Living Justice Press (see p. 18 of this toolkit). Ask participants:*
  - Do we feel good about using these guidelines? Any that we want to add or change?
  - Review the discussion of handling harm, bringing joy, and taking care of one another, developed during the Community Building circle.

# Evidence, Part 2

- Sharing Perspectives - On proof/knowing. *Ask participants to answer:*
  - **Round 1:** Are there times when “the truth” feels obvious? And other times when it doesn’t?
  - **Round 2:** Can you think of a time when you heard two different versions of an event and you had to decide which was true? How did you decide?
  - **Round 3:** Can you always explain why you believe something to someone else?
  - **Round 4:** Can you think of a time when you changed your mind about something you had been pretty sure about? What made you change your mind?
  - **Round 5:** Are there particular types of information that you trust more than others? (ex: hearing someone tell a story, seeing physical subjects, pictures or videos)
  - **Round 6:** How do your values and life experience influence what you believe to be true?
- Closing Quote - *Read the following quote:*
  - A society based on the letter of the law and never reaching any higher fails to take advantage of the full range of human possibilities. The letter of the law is too cold and formal to have a beneficial influence on society. Whenever the tissue of life is woven of legalistic relationships, this creates an atmosphere of spiritual mediocrity that paralyzes people’s noblest influences.  
- Alexander Solzhenitsyn
- Closing Breaths - *Invite participants to take three breaths together to close.*

# Heroes, Part 1

- Welcome
  - *As people enter the space, welcome them. Invite them to do what they need in order to be fully present for the next hour to ninety minutes that they will be together.*
- Body Centering
  - *Have folks close their eyes if they feel comfortable. Lead the group in four deep breaths. As folks inhale, have them pull their shoulders up to their ears and hold it. Have them release their shoulders and push them toward the ground as they exhale. On the last breath, invite participants to roll their neck from left to right to loosen it further.*
- Introductions/Check-In - *Invite participants to introduce themselves. The circle keeper may decide to call on each person individually, choose to start with one person and ask them to pick the person who goes next, or provide a speaking order in the chat or on the screen.*
  - Each person share your name, pronouns and your preferred morning beverage.
- Circle Purpose - *Share that the community is gathered today to share thoughts on what it means to be a hero or a role model and reflect on the heroism we have seen during the Chauvin trial.*
- Values - *Share the image of the “Common Circle Values from Living Justice Press. (see p. 17 of this toolkit). Ask participants:*
  - Pick one value that is important to you and share how you will try to live into this value during circle.
- Group Agreements - *Share the image of the Common Circle Guidelines from Living Justice Press (see p. 18 of this toolkit). Ask participants:*
  - Do we feel good about using these guidelines? Any that we want to add or change?
  - Review the discussion of handling harm, bringing joy, and taking care of one another, developed during the Community Building circle.

# Heroes, Part 2

- Quote - *Read the following passage as grounding:*
  - “A hero is someone who “we” determine to have demonstrated behaviors and decisions that are ethically and emotionally worthy of our awe. We see in them something we think is not in us. Given similar conditions, we “think” we might not make the same moves and decisions they do, so we place them in an elevated place in society or in our minds.” - Robert Cipriano
- Sharing Perspectives - On heroes. *Ask participants to answer:*
  - **Round 1:** What is your definition of a hero? Do you think your definition is the same or different from the way our larger society defines a hero?
  - **Round 2:** Do you know someone personally who you think has acted heroically?
  - **Round 3:** Have you seen acts of heroism or bravery in the context of the Chauvin trial?
  - **Round 4:** Do you think acts of heroism or bravery should be celebrated or rewarded? If so, how?
  - **Round 5:** When a whole community holds someone up as a hero, what does it communicate about what the community values?
  - **Round 6:** What keeps you most deeply connected to your own humanity and bravery?
- Closing Quote - *Read the following quote:*

“What can I learn from you?  
That I must do the thing I think I can not do  
That you do what's right by your heart and soul  
It's the imperfections that make us whole  
One life can tell the tale  
That if you make the effort you can not fail  
By your life you tell me it can be done  
By your life's the courage to carry on.” - Ann Reed
- Closing Breaths - *Invite participants to take three breaths together to close.*

# Making Big Decisions with Incomplete Information, Part 1

- Welcome
  - *As people enter the space, welcome them. Invite them to do what they need in order to be fully present for the next hour to ninety minutes that they will be together.*
- Body Centering
  - *Have folks close their eyes or soften their gaze or gaze at the ground. Three community breaths together, breathing in through the nose and exhaling out through the mouth. Guide through some gentle shoulder shrugs and neck rolls.*
- Opening
  - *Excerpt from Gods of Jade & Shadow by Silvia Moreno-Garcia: “Words are seeds...with words you embroider narratives and the narratives breed myths, and there’s power in the myth. Yes, the things you name have power.”*
- Introductions/Check-In
  - Each person share: name; pronouns; and a type of weather that describes how you’re feeling today.
- Values - *Share the image of the “Common Circle Values from Living Justice Press. (see p. 17 of this toolkit). Ask participants:*
  - What value has been particularly important for you to lean into these days? What value would you like to offer up to this space today?
- Group Agreements - *Share the image of the Common Circle Guidelines from Living Justice Press (see p. 18 of this toolkit). Ask participants:*
  - Do we feel good about using these guidelines? Any that we want to add or change?
  - Review the discussion of handling harm, bringing joy, and taking care of one another, developed during the Community Building circle.

# Making Big Decisions with Incomplete Information, Part 2

- Sharing Perspectives. *Ask participants to answer:*
  - **Round 1:** How do you go about making a big decision in your life? What information do you need? What does your process look like for making that decision?
  - **Round 2:** If a trial is a search for “truth,” how do we feel about the fact that not all the information in a given situation is presented to the jury?
  - **Round 3:** How do you feel about the fact that jurors have to make the decision but they can’t ask the questions?
  - **Round 4:** How do we feel about the fact that juries deliberate in private?
  - **Round 5:** Put yourself in the shoes of a jury member, how might you be feeling about the decision you have to make?
  - **Round 6:** Are there hopes or fears that you have around the announcement of the jury’s decision? How can we plan to care for one another upon the announcement of the jury’s decision?
- Closing round:
  - Say a word or make a sound to describe how you’re feeling in this moment.
- Closing Breaths - *Invite participants to take three breaths together to close.*
- Closing Quote - *Read the following quote:*
  - Ancestors by Nikita Gill

Your ancestors did not survive  
everything that nearly ended them  
for you to shrink yourself  
to make someone else  
comfortable.

This sacrifice is your warcry, be loud, be everything and make them proud.”

# Verdicts & Justice Redux, Part 1

- Welcome
  - *As people enter the space, welcome them. Invite them to do what they need in order to be fully present for the next hour to ninety minutes that they will be together.*
- Body Centering
  - *Have folks close their eyes if they feel comfortable. Have the group imagine the image of a pendulum swinging. As they inhale, picture the pendulum swinging up to the left, as they exhale, imagine it swinging up to the right. Take 10 breaths like this.*
- Introductions/Check-In: *Invite participants to introduce themselves. The circle keeper may decide to call on each person individually, choose to start with one person and ask them to pick the person who goes next, or provide a speaking order in the chat or on the screen.*
  - Each person share your name, pronouns and one value you'd like to bring into circle this week.
- Group Agreements - Share the image of the Common Circle Guidelines from [Living Justice Press](#) (see p. 18 of this toolkit). Ask participants:
  - Do we feel good about using these guidelines? Any that we want to add or change?
  - Review the discussion of handling harm, bringing joy, and taking care of one another, developed during the Community Building circle.
- Circle Purpose - *Share that the community is gathered today to discuss the verdict in the Chauvin trial and how we move forward as a community.*
- Quote - *Read the following quote as grounding:*
  - In order to rise from its own ashes, a phoenix must first burn." - Octavia Butler

# Verdicts & Justice Redux, Part 2

- Sharing Perspectives - On Verdicts/Justice. Ask participants to answer:
  - **Round 1:** This week the verdict was decided in the Chauvin Trial. He was found guilty on all three charges. Where were you when you heard what the verdict was? How did you feel?
  - **Round 2:** What have you thought since the verdict was announced? What are your thoughts on the way the community has reacted?
  - **Round 3:** After having experienced this long trial, what does justice mean to you? Have your thoughts on justice or the legal system changed since the beginning of the trial?
  - **Round 4:** If you were in control, what system would you create to hold Derek Chauvin or the entire MPD accountable?
  - **Round 5:** Do you think the outcome of the Chauvin trial helps or hurts the work of creating the vision you just named?
  - **Round 6:** What should our next steps be as a community to get closer to that vision of justice?
- Closing Quote - *Read the following quote:*
  - “Those who profess to favor freedom, and yet depreciate agitation, are those who want crops without plowing up the ground.” - Frederick Douglass
- Closing Breaths - *Invite participants to take 3 breaths to close out circle.*
  - Ask participants to share one contribution they can make to creating a more just world.

# Mercy & Accountability, Part 1

- Welcome
  - *As people enter the space, welcome them. Invite them to do what they need in order to be fully present for the next hour to ninety minutes that they will be together.*
- Body Centering
  - *Have folks close their eyes if they feel comfortable. Have the group picture the face of someone that they know loves them. Have them imagine that person's many emotions - when they are proud of you, when they are disappointed in you, when you've hurt their feelings, when you've made them proud.*
- Introductions/Check-In: *Invite participants to introduce themselves. The circle keeper may decide to call on each person individually, choose to start with one person and ask them to pick the person who goes next, or provide a speaking order in the chat or on the screen.*
  - *Each person share your name, pronouns and who the person was that they visualized. Ask: which emotion could you see on their face most clearly?*
- Values - *Share the image of the "Common Circle Values from Living Justice Press. (see p. 17 of this toolkit). Ask participants:*
  - *Pick one value that is important to you and share how you will try to live into this value during circle.*
- Group Agreements - *Share the image of the Common Circle Guidelines from Living Justice Press (see p. 18 of this toolkit). Ask participants:*
  - *Do we feel good about using these guidelines? Any that we want to add or change?*
  - *Review the discussion of handling harm, bringing joy, and taking care of one another, developed during the Community Building circle.*
- Circle Purpose - *Share that the community is gathered today to discuss ideas of mercy and accountability.*
- Quote - *Read the following quote as grounding:*
  - *"The power of just mercy is that it belongs to the undeserving. It's when mercy is least expected that it's most potent - strong enough to break the cycle of victimization and victimhood, retribution and suffering. It has the power to heal the psychic harm and injuries that lead to aggression and violence, abuse of power, mass incarceration." - Bryan Stevenson*

# Mercy & Accountability, Part 2

- Sharing Perspectives - On Accountability/Mercy. *Ask participants to answer:*

*Part of the rationale for the legal system and court processes is so that the State intervenes to prevent individuals from taking justice or revenge into their own hands. Many criticize this process, however, because it removes the individuals who were harmed from the decision making process. Restorative practices, like the circle we're involved in now, offer a different path forward. One where individuals who create harm, who experience harm, and the broader community can all participate.*

- **Round 1:** A big part of restorative practices is helping people to be accountable to one another. How do you think all of the events from last year would have been different if former officers Chauvin, Lane, Kueng, Thao, and/or the entire MPD would have come forward from the beginning, admitted guilt, and apologized? Would that be sufficient? Would that be accountability?
- **Round 2:** Do you think that you could sit in a restorative circle with Derek Chauvin? What would you ask of or say to him?
- **Round 3:** *Read the grounding quote again/drop it into the chat.* Have you ever shown mercy to someone or seen just mercy in action?
- **Round 4:** What do you think of the idea of mercy in this situation? Do you think you could give it to Derek Chauvin?
- **Round 5:** How do mercy and accountability work together or as opposites? Can we be merciful and still ask for accountability from people?
- **Round 6:** If we were to center our legal processes on ideas of just mercy or true justice, how would that be different than what we experienced in this trial?
- Closing Quote - *Read the following quote:*
  - “We can, each of us, do the impossible as long as we can convince ourselves that it has been done before.” - Octavia Butler
- Closing Breaths - *Invite participants to picture the person they called to mind from the opening meditation. Imagine that person proud of and impressed by them for their contribution to circle.*
  - Ask participants to share one thought they're taking away with them from circle.

# Processing the Trial Generally, Part 1

Use this circle guide to support processing of the trial broadly.

- Welcome
  - *As people enter the space, welcome them. Invite them to do what they need in order to be fully present for the next hour to ninety minutes that they will be together.*
- Body Centering
  - *Have folks close their eyes if they feel comfortable and take four deep breaths together, breathing in through the nose and exhaling out through the mouth. Invite participants inhale for a count of six, hold the breath for a count of four, and exhale for a count of eight. Do ten breaths like this.*
- Introductions/Check-In - *Invite participants to introduce themselves. The circle keeper may decide to call on each person individually, choose to start with one person and ask them to pick the person who goes next, or provide a speaking order in the chat or on the screen.*
  - Each person share your name, pronouns, and a moment of joy you experienced today.
- Quote - *Read the following quote as grounding:*
  - "This is a time when Doing is split off from Knowing, and Being is hardly at all. But here and there on this side of the horizon, people meet in sacred circles to form communities and speak their heart that seek the same." - Meir Carasso
- Circle Purpose - *Share that we the community are gathered today to discuss the trial for the officers involved in George Floyd's murder. The purpose for today's circle is make space for processing the different things that have happened recently in the trial.*
- Values - *Share the image of the "Common Circle Values from [Living Justice Press](#). (see p. 17 of this toolkit). Ask participants:*
  - Pick one value that is important to you and share how you will try to live into this value during circle.

# Processing the Trial Generally, part 2

- Group Agreements - *Share the image of the Common Circle Guidelines from Living Justice Press (see p. 18 of this toolkit). Ask participants:*
  - Do we feel good about using these guidelines? Any that we want to add or change?
  - Review the discussion of handling harm, bringing joy, and taking care of one another, developed during the Community Building circle.
- Sharing Perspectives - *On The Trial. Ask participants to answer:*
  - Round 1: What did we hear this week? What happened?
  - Round 2: There are lots of different opinions (from the media, from people we trust, even within ourselves) about how the trial is going. How are you handling that?
  - Round 3: What surprised during this week's proceedings? Why do you think that was?
  - Round 4: What bothered you during this week's proceedings? Why do you think that was?
  - Round 5: What are our hopes and fears given how the trial is going?
  - Round 6: What things have you done this week that have brought you calm or joy?
  - Round 7: What do you need from people in your community as the trial continues?
- Closing - *Ask participants to answer:*
  - If you could make magic happen tomorrow or next week, what would happen with the trial?
  - What are three words that describe how you're feeling leaving this circle?
- Closing Quote - *Read the following quote:*
  - "Do not be dismayed by the brokenness of the world. All things break. And all things can be mended. Not with time, as they say, but with intention. So go. Love intentionally, extravagantly, unconditionally. The broken world waits in darkness for the light that is you." - L.R. Knost
- Closing Breaths - *Invite participants to take three breaths together to close.*

# Closing Circle, part 1

Use this circle guide to support processing of the trial broadly.

- Welcome
  - *As people enter the space, welcome them. Invite them to do what they need in order to be fully present for the next hour to ninety minutes that they will be together.*
- Body Centering
  - *Picture something that smells fabulous to you. Take a moment and fully visualize yourself in a space where you are smelling that wonderful smell. Are you deep in a wooded area, near a stream? Are you tucked into a cozy chair waiting for chocolate chip cookies to come out of the oven? Maybe you just kissed the top of a baby's head. Take a moment to immerse yourself in wherever you pictured and breath in the delicious scent.*
- Introductions/Check-In - *Invite participants to introduce themselves. The circle keeper may decide to call on each person individually, choose to start with one person and ask them to pick the person who goes next, or provide a speaking order in the chat or on the screen.*
  - Go around and share what scent you imagined, if you feel comfortable, or another scent you really enjoy.
- Quote - *Read the following quote as grounding:*
  - *"I was going to die, sooner or later, whether or not I had even spoken myself. My silences had not protected me. Your silences will not protect you...what are the words you do not yet have? What are the tyrannies you swallow day by day and attempt to make your own, until you will sicken and die of them, still in silence? We have been socialized to respect fear more than our own need for language." - Audre Lorde (Black, American poet and civil rights advocate, feminist)*

# Closing Circle, part 2

- Sharing Perspectives. *Ask participants to answer:*
  - **Round 1:** Cast your mind and heart back to May 25, 2020 - where were you when you heard George Floyd had been killed? What were your first thoughts and actions?
  - **Round 2:** Has your thinking about race changed in the past year (if at all)? How? How have you seen conversations about race play out in your communities or the spaces you sit in?
  - **Round 3:** What growth have you seen in yourself over the past year? What growth have you seen in our community? Where do you still see opportunities to grow?
  - **Round 4:** Who or what will stay with you from Chauvin's trial and conviction?
  - **Round 5:** How will you honor the memory of George Floyd?
- Closing Quote - Read the following:
  - "I believe we become more fully human with any gesture of generosity, any time we reach out to another rather than withdraw into our individual suffering. To become fully human we need to keep opening our hearts, no matter what. At this time when suffering and anxiety continue to increase, when there is always reason to weep for some unbearable tragedy inflicted by one human on another, I try to remember to keep my heart open." - Margaret Wheatley, consultant and speaker in Utah - developed Training for Warriors of the Human Spirit

# A Year Later, part 1

## Building the Legacy of George Floyd

- Welcome
  - *As people enter the space, welcome them. Invite them to do what they need in order to be fully present for the next hour to ninety minutes that they will be together.*
- Body Centering
  - *Invite participants to take 3 deep breaths together, inhaling in through the nose and exhaling out through the mouth. As people find their own breathing rhythms, ask them to find a note and on their exhale, hum. As the humming continues, ask folks to experiment with being louder, quieter, higher pitched, lower pitched, or trying to find a harmony.*
- Quote - *Read the following quote as grounding:*  
I take it back by Ben Heart  
Will the scales dip  
Under my words  
Does the balance slip  
From my tongue  
  
Will I know when  
I'm on my flowerbed of death  
If either I or my pen  
Managed to move the world
- Circle Guidelines - *Offer the following guidelines to participants. Ask for any additions, changes, and then consent.*
  - Respect the talking piece (or the circle queue if virtual)
  - Speak from the heart / Listen with your heart
  - Speak with respect / Listen with respect
  - Remain in the circle (if virtual, Cameras on are great. Cameras off are great too)
  - Honor confidentiality

# A Year Later, part 2

- Introductions/Check-In - *Invite participants to introduce themselves. The circle keeper may decide to call on each person individually, choose to start with one person and ask them to pick the person who goes next, or provide a speaking order in the chat or on the screen.*
  - *Ask participants to share: How are you?*
- Sharing Perspectives. *Ask participants to answer:*
  - **Round 1:** A year later, what is the value that anchors you to the murder of George Floyd?
  - **Round 2:** Legacy is something we often hear or talk about but seldom do we intentionally reflect on. When you die, what is it that you want to be remembered for or as?
  - **Round 3:** The world has been reacting and acting over the past year. We have shared our anchor this past year, what value would you like to hold onto moving forward into this next year and beyond?
- Closing Quote - Read the following:
  - “Daddy changed the world” - Gianna Floyd

# Community Resources

This section is to provide additional community resources. We have included mental health resources for young people and other community organizations who will be holding restorative space. There is also information for restorative trainings offered throughout Minnesota.

# Links to Mental Health and Processing Tools to use with Young People

[Boston Public Schools Restorative Resources for Returning in Person](#)

[Change to Chill](#)

[Ramsey County Mental Health Collaborative](#)

[50 Resources to Support the Mental Health of Teachers and School Staff](#)

[51 Mindfulness Exercises for Youth](#)

[Journaling Prompts for Processing Emotions](#)

[Breathing Exercises for Anxiety](#)

# Links to Community Restorative Spaces

## Coming to the Table

Every 3rd Wednesday, 3rd Saturday, and 4th Monday of the month for a virtual gathering

## Minnesota Cooperative Conflict Collaborative Inclusive Workgroup

Weekly Jazz sessions

## Ramsey County Community Healing Circles

Virtual and In-Person spaces throughout April



# Links to Community Restorative Trainings

[Minnesota Peacebuilding Institute  
Trainings](#)

[University of Minnesota Duluth  
Restorative Justice and  
Peacemaking Trainings](#)

[PeaceMaker Minnesota](#)

[Dispute Resolution Center  
Trainings](#)