

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.*