

Restorative Practices for Living in Community

We offer the following method for transforming interpersonal tension and conflict when they arise, as a means to restore intentional relationship within your community. The following framework is intended as a resource for safety, continuity, co-creation, and choice in your work team, family or other group.

Restorative practices - such as described below - offer vital support to a community in living its values. When gathered, the community might review the menu and then refine it as desired to better support their covenantal relationships. Please consider this menu as an organic living document that can be expanded and adjusted at any time, rather than as a set of rules or as the “right way” to engage conflict.

Restorative Practices Menu

The following list describes a number of restorative practices available when interpersonal tension, conflict, or departures from relational norms arise within a community. We affectionately refer to it as a “menu” to remind ourselves that these options are strategies available for selection in service of reconnection and restoration. The order of these practices is from least to most human resources required.

- **Self-Empathy:** A person experiencing tension or conflict may practice self-connection as a method of transforming pain they are experiencing. To support this practice, a self-connection handout is made readily available within your community.
- **Empathic Presence:** A person may invite any other member of the community to offer them empathic presence for the purpose of self-connection, in a space removed from the larger group.
- **1-on-1 Conversation:** If both people are willing and confident in their ability to resolve the conflict with each other directly, they may do so in a space comfortable to them both.
- **Supported 1-on-1 Conversation:** This is the same as a 1-on-1 Conversation, but in the presence of third person. This third person contributes their presence as needed to support reconciliation, from silent witnessing to active mediation. Either of the two persons involved, or a third person, may invite such a conversation.

Restorative Practices for Living in Community

- **Group Process:** When a person experiencing or impacted by a conflict sees it as necessary for multiple members of the community to be present to address the conflict, they may initiate a group process, such as a Restorative Circle, a sharing circle, or a facilitated group dialogue. Participation in such a process is voluntary for all involved.
- **Restorative Circle:** One group process option is a Restorative Circle involving facilitated Pre-Circles, Circle, and Post-Circle. See materials on Restorative Circles for more information on this practice.

Group Process and Facilitation Notes

- **Facilitation:** During a facilitated dialogue or any group process, the group can designate two people to facilitate and "hold" the circle while tracking needs of the group and its individual participants. If at any time one of the facilitators has a sense they are no longer capable of holding the facilitator role with integrity, another person can be identified as holding the circle. For example, if the facilitators become triggered or are in need of empathy and support, then a new person can be the facilitator to track the group's needs. Facilitators may check in with the group to see if there is any objection to continuing the current dialogue or to switching to another strategy or offering on the menu.
- **Emergent Requests:** During a group process, someone experiencing pain/disconnect may also simply notify the group of their needs and make an in-the-moment request for any specific form of support.