

# CONCENTRIC CIRCLE CONVERSATIONS

While simply sitting down to talk about our experiences with intimate violence may seem obvious, it's actually pretty rare. Few accessible opportunities exist to deeply explore our experiences living with and surviving the traumatic events, and few spaces exist to do so in community. Hosted in partnership with local anti-violence community organizations, Concentric Circles are about collaboratively making meaning of our trauma in the context of community. We co-explore the impacts of our trauma, identify patterns between our survival experiences, dismantle the myths & misunderstandings we've encountered, and reimagine the course of our healing with creative systemic solutions.

Held in person, participants can include survivors, allies, family, partners, mentors, community stakeholders and first responders, and in some cases, intentionally and thoughtfully coordinated to include persons who have committed harm. Scaffolded with learning resources, these deep group acknowledgment opportunities may take place over multiple or ongoing sessions, or be held all in one day. In addition to a Concentric Circle facilitator, conversations include a community partner facilitator and a well being advocate.

## WELCOME AND SIGN IN

After completing a Concentric Circles registration form, participants will receive a Confirmation Email with additional information: date and time confirmation, conversation overview, and contact info for further questions. On the day of the conversation, we will open up the location 15 minutes early to allow folks to arrive and check-in. We look forward to welcoming you!

## IDENTITIES AND INTRODUCTIONS

It's important to know who's in the room creating this community and how we're showing up. We'll have an opportunity to introduce ourselves, including our preferred pronouns and ways we identify. Depending on where we are in our healing, or simply that day, we may embody just one identity, or live at the intersection of many.

Nothing is mandatory; everything is by choice.

**SURVIVOR** I identify as a survivor; I have experienced intimate harm firsthand; I am part of a community, and am a stakeholder in my own healing and justice

**ADJACENT:** I have someone in my life who has experienced intimate harm

**ADVOCATE:** I work to support and elevate people who have suffered intimate harm

**COMMUNITY COLLABORATOR/FACILITATOR** I am with the Concentric Circle team or the Community Partner Organization, here to facilitate a safe and constructive space for the survivors in the room, which makes me a stakeholder in healing harm

# CONVERSATION BASICS AND COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS

Conversation Basics and Community Agreements help us hold the space. They serve as anchors for intimate connection, honest conversation, and deep understanding as we collectively and vulnerably share from our lived experiences.

Review these statements. Reflect on what comes up for you and what questions you have. How do you want to show up, how do you want to be received?

**EMBRACE VULNERABILITY AS A STRENGTH**

**HONOR AUTHENTICITY IN YOURSELF & OTHERS**

**ACKNOWLEDGE NEEDS & IMPACT**

**SHOW AND SHARE VALIDATION, ESPECIALLY FOR MARGINALIZED LIVED EXPERIENCES.**

**OWN OUR ACCOUNTABILITY PRACTICE**

**MAKE SPACE**

**LEARNING GOES, STORIES STAY**

**CENTER THE HEALING, NOT THE VIOLENCE**

**BOUNDARIES AS AN ACT OF CARE FOR OURSELVES AND OTHERS**

## DISCUSSION TOPICS

The conversation incorporates reflective, written, verbal and experiential ways through which we share, connect and better understand our experiences with trauma and will involve some or all of the following questions. But the topics you'd like to address, based on your responses on the registration, will be the main driver for the questions we ultimately explore.

### HEAD, HEART AND BODY

How has violence impacted you? What symptoms did/do you experience?  
What kind of support did you receive?  
What kind of support did you want?  
What do you need now in your healing process?

### COMMUNITY RESPONSE

How did your community respond?  
What did you need from those in your community? What do you wish was said?  
What would you have your community do differently?  
What did your community do or say that was helpful and healing?

### JUSTICE AND HEALING

What did you face in navigating systems of justice and support?  
If you could define it for yourself, what would justice look, sound & feel like?  
What would you say to the person who harmed you? What, if anything, would you want to hear from the person who harmed you?

### ALLIES AND COMMUNITY COLLABORATORS

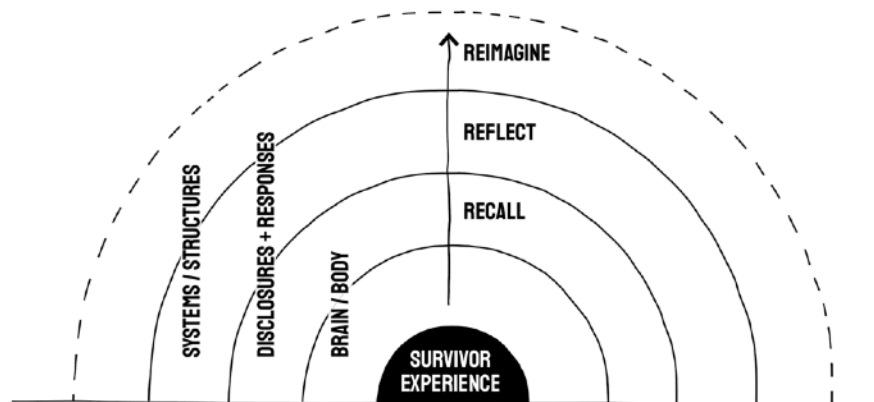
Who would you like to hear about your experience? Who could we invite?  
What allies do you wish were here? How would it feel to invite them?  
Who would benefit from hearing this wisdom?  
What community collaborators and decision makers do we wish could listen in?

# CIRCLE CULTURE

Circles are consensual sacred spaces to connect to one another and deepen our understanding of the challenges our community members face. Holding a space that feels open for participants to share vulnerably, for community members to bear witness, for co-conspirators to empathize and engage, and to both remember and imagine, takes a little coordination.

We start all circles by creating a common ground of values. We refer to these as Community Agreements and Conversation Practices. These are values we can hold ourselves to, values we can point to if things veer in comfort, values we decide and add to collectively, values that make the circle accessible.

Concentric Circle Conversations, while completely customizable to the needs and cultural dynamics of a given community, tend to flow from the past to the future, from the inner world to the outer. We look inside ourselves, into our heads, hearts and bodies. We look outside, toward our families, friends, communities, and cultures. We look back at what hurt, what failed, what wasn't said or allowed or given. Then we look forward, imagining what could have been there, what could have been said, what could have made survival easier.



And finally, we invite our community, those who played a role in the course of our trauma, healing and justice, welcoming them to bear witness to intimate wisdom and difficult truths.

For some participants, this will be their first disclosure. For others, their first invitation to join a movement. No matter where we are in our non-linear healing journeys, we work together to create a space that can contain this radical connective work.

If the conversation does include allies, co-conspirators and community stakeholders, we need to prepare ourselves, and we need to prepare those we invite. We take time in the circle to explore how our body receives these ideas, how we craft our invitations, the words we use to explain the space, and who in our world is ready to hold these powerful truths. Outside of circle, we offer resources to support everyone involved.

We invite you to explore our circle cultures by clicking the circles at the edges of this page.

Welcome to the conversation.

**COMMUNITY  
AGREEMENTS  
AND  
CONVERSATION  
PRACTICES**

**RESOURCES  
FOR ALLIES  
WHO HAVE  
BEEN  
INVITED**

**THINKING  
ABOUT HOW  
TO INVITE  
OUR ALLIES**