

Peer Support Circles

Quick Reference for Supportive Conversations



Guidelines for Support

Supporting Others

- Be present and accepting
- Be honest and compassionate
- Be curious and concise
- Listen closely
- Avoid lecturing them

Getting Support

- Describe what is troubling you
- Share how you feel
- Mention what would be helpful to you now
- You want advice, questions, resources?
- Ensure time for others to support you

Types of Helpful Support

Do:

- Do help the other person to express themselves, feel accepted and feel understood
- Do continue to affirm by summarizing and paraphrasing what you are hearing
- Do focus on the other person's perceptions, assumptions and conclusions
- Do help the other person to reflect and realistically act on their situation

Don't:

- Don't focus on the past. Instead, focus on the present and future.
- Don't say "don't feel that way" and "you feel that way because ...".
- Don't say "it'll all be better soon" and "others have it worse than you".
- Don't say "you should", "you have to", "you must", etc.

Curious
Be: Caring
Concise

Sample Questions When Supporting Others

1. To help them briefly describe their priority

- What's important to get help with today?
- What is bothering you the most about it?
- How is it specifically affecting you personally?
- Is there a bottom line, personally? If so, what is it?
- _____

2. To help them clarify their situation

- How do you feel about all of this?
- Which feeling is the strongest?
- How might others see your situation?
- What advice would a good friend give you?
- What does your gut tell you about your situation?
- What will happen if you don't do anything?
- What most motivates you to change it?
- What else would you like us to ask you?
- _____

3. To help empower them to act

- What do you hope for overall? What is success?
- Imagine a point in the future where your priority was addressed. How did you get it there?
- Have you experienced anything like this before? What did you do? You build on that somehow?
- What personal strengths can you build on?
- What other realistic ideas might you have?
- What is some small action you will do about this? Do it by when? What will it look like when done?
- How can we support you?
- _____

4. To help them learn about themselves

- Any new insights about you? Your situation?
- How do they change things going forward?
- _____