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?