

**Compassion Circle – *the structure that holds the space***

**Three Pillars of the Compassion Circle Practice**

* Holding Space
* Mindful self-compassion
* Being in Community

*A human being is part of a whole, called by us the “Universe,” a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings, as something separated from the rest — a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to affection for a few persons nearest us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circles of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty*

Albert Einstein

**Defining Terms**

**Compassion**

"a sensitivity to suffering in self and others with a commitment to try to alleviate and prevent it."

Professor Paul Gilbert, Compassionate Mind Foundation

**Compassionate Facilitation**

When we hold space as compassionate facilitators we consciously invite participants into an awareness of responding with compassion and wisdom to self and others – both to those who are in the circle those who are not.

Enhancing trust comes from creating safe spaces for expression, connection, and reflection, which many of us simply have little to no time for in the course of our typical work day. Providing safe group spaces with compassionately facilitated experiences invites participants into a highly supportive and compassionate mindset with their colleagues that enhances safety, trust, confidence, and wellbeing.

**Psychological Safety**

*a belief that one will not be punished or humiliated for speaking up with ideas, questions, concerns or mistakes*

Amy Edmundson from google study on high performing teams

**Core Process of Compassionate Facilitation**

* Preparation of self and the space
* Warm welcome
* Meet as equals
* Celebrate differences
* Space for contemplation
* Commitment to act

**The Structure of the Compassion Circle**

**Invitations** – ‘I would love you to come because…..’

**Preparation** – Self:- Quiet mind, Open Heart

**Preparation -** Circle of Chairs and refreshments – food and drink.

**Framing** – flow of compassion, intention of the circle (safety and growth), three relational practices, always fine to pass. Hold the space for each other. Can be challenging to stop - take care of selves and each other. Ask for volunteer scribe (neat hand writing) to record all of the rounds. Facilitator role is to be disciplined in holding the space so that it enables equality of thinking and creates a safe space. Invitation in the circle is to speak from the heart and to listen with the heart.

**Check in round** (be succinct and listen to the speaker rather than think what you are going to say when it’s your turn!) – your name, how are you arriving and one thing that is going well for you outside of work

**Uniting values** – imagine a moment in the future when you need care. Picture someone walking towards you and think I am going to be ok with this one. What quality do you feel / see / hear?

**Framing words re self-care** – flow of compassion from self to self

**Self-Care first thoughts round –** what is your first thought on the way you care for yourself?

**Pairs thinking** – how do you care for yourself? (listening then appreciations)

**Self-care commitment round** – to better care for myself I will… (scribe to record)

**Inhibitors of Compassion first thoughts round** – what is your first thought on what is most in the way of the flow of compassion?

**Pairs thinking** – what is most in the way of the flow of compassion? (new partner – listening then appreciations)

**Thinking Now round** – what are you thinking now is most in the way of the flow of compassion? (Scribe to record)

**Enabling the** **Flow of compassion first thoughts round** – what is your first thoughts on what can be done to enable the flow of compassion?

**Pairs thinking** – what can be done to enable the flow of compassion? (new partner – listening then appreciations)

**Thinking Now round –** what are you thinking now can be done to enable the flow of compassion? (Scribe to record)

**Appreciation of the Process** – what have you most appreciated about the circle and the contribution of the person to your left?

**For more information on Compassion Circles / Taking Care, Giving Care rounds:-**

[andybradley@frameworks4change.co.uk](mailto:andybradley@frameworks4change.co.uk)

[benna.waites@wales.nhs.uk](mailto:benna.waites@wales.nhs.uk)