HEARD CIRCLE

Participant Agreement & Community Agreements

Peer Emotional Support Sessions

What Is a Heard Circle?

A Heard Circle is a structured peer support session in which participants practice empathic listening. Each person has the opportunity to speak and to be genuinely reflected back — to feel truly heard. The circle is facilitated by a trained space-holder who guides the process.

A Heard Circle is NOT therapy, counseling, psychotherapy, or any form of clinical mental health treatment. It does not involve diagnosis, treatment, or any clinical intervention. The facilitator is not a licensed mental health professional acting in a clinical capacity.

Scope & Limitations

By participating, you acknowledge and agree that:

- This is peer emotional support, not a substitute for professional mental health care.
- The facilitator holds the process and space — they do not provide advice, interpretation, diagnoses, or treatment.
- If you are experiencing a mental health crisis, suicidal ideation, or require clinical care, you agree to seek support from a licensed mental health professional or crisis service.
- Heard Circle facilitators are trained in empathic listening and group facilitation, not licensed clinical practice.
- Nothing shared in this circle constitutes a therapeutic relationship.

Confidentiality

Everything shared in the circle stays in the circle. This is a foundational community agreement. Specifically:

- Participants do not share identifying details, stories, or content from sessions with people outside the group.
- You may share your own experience — "I went to a listening circle and felt supported" — but not others' personal content.
- The facilitator maintains confidentiality of all participants, with one exception: if there is a credible and immediate risk of harm to self or others, the facilitator may take appropriate action including referral to emergency services.
- Sessions may not be recorded by participants without the explicit written consent of all attendees.

Community Agreements

These agreements create the conditions for genuine presence and safety:

- We listen to understand, not to fix, advise, or respond.
- We reflect back what we hear before speaking our own experience.
- We speak from our own experience, using "I" statements.
- We hold what is shared with care and do not minimize or judge.
- We respect that each person's emotional experience is valid, even if different from our own.
- We give each person unhurried space to be heard.
- We honor the facilitator's role in maintaining the process.

Participation Agreements

- I participate voluntarily and may leave at any time.
- I am not in acute psychiatric crisis requiring clinical intervention.
- I understand this is peer support, not therapy or clinical treatment.
- I will honor confidentiality for all other participants.
- I will respect the structure of the circle and the facilitator's guidance.
- I agree to arrive on time and minimize disruptions during the session.

Fees & Cancellation

Session fees are charged to support the facilitator for organizing and holding the space. Fees vary by session format (see current pricing). Cancellation with less than 24 hours notice may be charged at full rate. Sliding-scale options are available — speak with the facilitator before your first session.

Questions or Concerns

If at any point you have concerns about the circle, another participant, or your own wellbeing, please speak with the facilitator before or after a session. If you are in crisis right now, please contact:

- 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: Call or text 988
- Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741741
- Your local emergency services: 911

I have read, understood, and agree to the terms above.

_____ _____

Participant Full Name (print) *Date*

_____

_____

Participant Signature *Date*

Email Address: _____

Thank you for joining our circle. We look forward to holding space with you.