

Second Life Support Circles

We are a community composed of a diverse set of humans, our community and spaces are built around the needs, skills and wisdoms of formerly incarcerated individuals.

Structure of the groups

You can run these *howevrrrrrr* you want! This guide is just a starting place, with examples of how we have them in the past. As with everything in the second life community, please do not feel constrained.

Format 1

- Someone introduces the topic (5-10 mins)
- Go around the circle with any responses, worries, experiences or reflections on the given topic.

Format 2

- Someone introduces the topic (5-10 mins)
- Popcorn responses - that is there is no order, people just share their thoughts either by putting their hand up to speak, or if the group can manage it without interrupting too much, just by speaking freely.

Format 3

- Someone introduces the topic (5-10 mins)
- The group is asked - does anyone have a specific experience or set of concerns that they can speak to on this topic (5-10 mins)
- The group discusses what has been said.

TIP - try to leave a little space between speaking to process what has been heard. When we rush to speak over each other, it's hard to actually listen. You can ask the group to slow the pace if it starts to feel hurried!

TIP - Ask before giving reflections or feedback on what anyone else has said - e.g. thank you for your comments - would you like advice or feedback or are you mostly asking to be heard?

Topics for discussion

#1 Scarcity mindset

#2 Internalised Oppression

Internalized oppression (also called “self-hate”) is when a member of an oppressed group believes and acts out the stereotypes created about their group. In addition to race, gender, and class, internalized oppression to how we see ourselves as activists (waiting to get a “real job” for example). The authors outline four ways that internalized oppression negatively affects the function of a group:

:: Damaged self respect: When people don't respect themselves they may substitute self-righteousness.

:: Irrational attacks on leaders: The more oppressed a group is, the harder it is on its leaders. People project their negativity on those most visible and their own feelings of powerlessness in those in their group acting more powerfully.

:: Divisiveness in the group: This shows up as complaining rather than taking responsibility to give feedback or correct situations, making nonnegotiable demands, turning conflicts into win/lose situations, gossiping, and backbiting.

:: Pessimism: Experiments won't work, bold action will backfire, social betterment is impossible anyway, and we might as well just talk about our beliefs rather than expect real change.

<https://www.allisonj.org/non-profit-work/internalized-oppression-and-its-impact-on-social-change/>

#3 Drugs and how to navigate being in substance-y spaces when you are sober or want to be sober.

- Everyone has different parole conditions
- Psychedelic clad drug scene is often seen as traditional in SF but can be harmful if not done intentionally
- Sober dancing events - let's do more!

#4 Recruiting / how to handle inclusivity and intentionality

:: who is missing for our community?

:: for whom is it hard to hear their voices?

:: diversity - what do we really mean when we talk about “diversity”? Along which axes? Where does our desire for diversity run out?

:: how do we manage this in places where there are limited space?

:: ideas for recruiting a more diverse crowd

Does everyone value diversity?

Diversity is wonderful and it is HARD. If you are the first one to show up in a space, you don't want to be the one token person from a certain identity group.

#5 How to have impact as a community



SOURCE: dreamstime

TORONTO STAR GRAPHIC

#6 Navigating sex, love, affection & relationships

How to ask for what you want, even when society tells you its not ok to want that (spoiler - it's ok to want ANYTHING <3)

How to cultivate non-coercive relationships

Types of relationships that you can hope for

Healthy Relationships



Y'all have heard of red flags... Well, here are some green ones.



The RA smorgasbord

Relationship Anarchy Smorgasbord: To form your relationships you and another can pick any number of "items" from any number of platters. Take a huge helping or just a small scoop. The dish the two(or more) of you hold is your relationship. Remember you must agree together on what is in it! No sneaking items in without the other knowing or there will likely be conflict or disappointment later. Also it's your dish so if you guys decide to change what you want from the smorgasbord later, that's cool.

Romantic Chemical reaction, Feelings of love	Friendship Companionship, Playfulness, Shared activity/ interest	Domestic Sharing a dwelling/home	Sexual Involving genitals, anus, or orgasms?
Physical Touch Dance, Sex, Body contact, Cuddles, Hugs, Pets, Hand holding, Massage	Life partner Sharing goals (long term or life), embracing change in each other	Caregiver Giving care to, Receiving care from	Co-Caregivers Children, Animals, Plants, Family (sick, elderly)
Emotional Intimacy Sharing & Being vulnerable	Emotional Support Listening, Being asked for advice, Confidant	Social Partners Seen together: Events, Friends, Family, Work, Social Media	Financial Sharing: money, accounts, payment responsibilities, property
Kink Sadomasochism, Masochism, Sadism	Power Dynamic Boss/employee, Teacher/student, D/s, M/s, Age play, Pet play	Collaborative partners Teaching, Projects, Art, Organization	Business Partners A combination of Collaborative, Financial & Social

Here's a list of topics we mentioned for our next call

Relationships that transcend status (ex. connecting with partners you had on the inside now that you are out, relationships once you are off parole with those still on parole)
 How can the community support our relationships? How can we be the most welcoming?
 Matchmaking (Who is looking for emotional, spiritual, sexual or romantic connections? How can we set you up? Where have we met new people?)
 New Relationships Energy and its effects

#7 Navigating biofamilies