

Guidelines for Mutual Support Groups

- Hold all members of the group in the Light throughout the process.
- Start with Centering Worship.
- Choose a volunteer convener.
 - Rotate the convener for each session.
 - The convener reminds participants of the focus for the session, times for worship, and the total amount of time for sharing, divided equally among all present. If worship is extended beyond 3-5 minutes, be sure to include this in time calculations. It may be that it is best to calculate each participants' time after worship.
 - Have the convener or other group member keep time. Give a brief warning when time is about to expire.
- Aim for a minimum of 5-15 minutes for each person to share.
 - Sharing can go around the circle, or as members of the group are led. If a group member does not want to share or to use their whole time, the group waits in silence during their time.
 - The member who is not led to share should say "Pass".
 - No feedback is given unless specifically asked for.
- After all have shared, evaluate the process.
 - What worked well?
 - What could be better?
 - What are some suggestions for improvement?
- If the group wants to continue,
 - exchange contact information, including what is the best form of contact for each member.
 - set the next date, time, and place, and a new convener.
 - Note: if only a few want to engage in this process, perhaps join with others. A good size for a group meeting for ~90 minutes is 5 people.
- Close with a time of grateful worship.

Sharing Guidelines:

1. If there is a focus question, feel free to address them or not, as led.
2. Nothing that is said in the group is referred to by anyone except the person who said it, unless the speaker asks for feedback, advice, ideas.
3. Hold the speaker and all the attenders in the Light (including yourself!)
4. Take responsibility for your sharing, and ask for feedback if you want it.

5. Listen carefully for themes, concerns, values, and emotions from the speaker. If giving feedback, check assumptions first. (For example, “I heard you say you were having trouble with your boss, is that right?”)

Sample Queries for Practice of Mutual Support for Service Work

- What part of your life do you consider service work? (This could include direct service—as an employee, advocate, or volunteer or even, parent, neighbor, relative i.e. actions to help others.)
- How do you see your work relating to your spiritual life?
- Where does spiritual support for your work come from?

Alternatives:

An alternative process is for there to be only 1 or 2 volunteer focus people each session. This might occur when they are experiencing a great trial. It is good for the group to get to know each other well at first, with all having the opportunity to share, before going into deeper sharing by a limited number of people.

This process does not replace a Clearness Committee process when important issues need to be discerned; rather it is intended to build a small, caring group that meets regularly to provide spiritual support for each other in their work in the world.