

SESSION 1 - UNCONFERENCE KICK-OFF OVERVIEW

- [Website](#)
- [Google Meets](#)
- [Running Notes](#)
- [UnConference typeform survey](#)

1) Share intention, goals, and story

a) What prompted us to convene this circle?

- Prompted by Leon's message and the pressures of expansion, but this was a long time coming
- We're here because people spoke, and continuously speak, up: Sam, Taye, Anthony B, Ellie, Kaia, Vonds
 - It takes courage. Not easy or obvious to do -- not a coincidence that these are mostly Black Womxn and Queer folx
 - Move our community forward
 - RC stands by you and aspires to better support you. That's not a given, we need to voice that and do a better job at it.

b) What are the goals and intentions of this circle?

- Address the specific incident that prompted this event and acknowledge the ways in which our language and (in)actions harmed members of our community
- Name patterns of harm in Resilient Coders' culture and community. Recognize power dynamics in our community, specifically those that harm gender minorities, and seek to center/uplift marginalized voices.
- (Re)Build trust in our community through accountability. That means making amends, being transparent, leaning into discomfort and challenge, and action. This is an iterative process.

c) What is the circle process? (shout out to Kaia for the source: [Mediators Beyond Borders International](#))

- **Hosts (Rougui and Vonds):** issue the invitation, prepare the space where a circle conversation will be held (setting the rim and center), help define the scope of conversation, and then participate in it from a position of peer leadership.
- **Guardians (Vonds and Rougui):** help the circle stay centered and intentional. Use a device to pause the action. For example, the bell rings twice: once to stop the action – a few seconds of observed pause – followed by a second bell that signals return

to interaction. The guardian then speaks to the reason for pausing. Anyone can ask the guardian to initiate a pause.

- **Scribe (Stephanie and Atiya):** preserve insights and notes decisions and actions.

Source: [The Circle Way Pocket Guide](#) by Christina Baldwin and Ann Linnea

This is going to be a difficult and challenging conversation. A few things to keep in mind:

- Discomfort is not the same as harm.
- Commit to engage and participate in hard conversations. Lean into the discomfort.
- Don't engage from a place of: shame, insult, guilt, and the need to be right

2) Group agreement: What would you need to feel brave in this space? (shout out to Vonds for the source: [City Bureau](#))

a) Let's define brave space.

1. Don't engage from a place of: shame, insult, guilt, and the need to be right
2. Use I statements
3. Listen with intention. Listen to understand, don't listen to respond
4. Being valued
5. Be open minded
6. Be intentional
7. Don't dismiss another's ideas before asking for clarification.
8. Just because you haven't experienced something yourself, doesn't mean that experience isn't valid
9. No tone policing, and conversely, speak up with care
10. Step up, step back. Encourage folks who may not usually speak
11. Don't need to be an expert to share
12. Avoid ableist language
13. Avoid derogatory terms
14. Lean into discomfort
15. Checking our privilege
16. Being slow to respond, taking a moment to answer especially if there's initial heated emotions
17. Don't assume intentions. Name impact.
18. One mic. One voice. Don't interrupt!
19. if speaking about situations, avoid blame or pointing fingers "you did this you made me feel this, etc." and talk about how --I-- felt or how it impacted --me--
20. Respect confidentiality

**I urge each one of us here to reach down
into that deep place of knowledge inside
[themselves] and touch that terror and
loathing of any difference that lives there.
See whose face it wears.**

AUDRE LORDE - 'THE MASTER'S TOOLS WILL NEVER DISMANTLE THE MASTER'S HOUSE'

b) Examples of brave space guidelines

Welcome multiple viewpoints

Own your intentions and your impact

Work to recognize your privileges

Take risks: lean into discomforts

Step back

Notice and name group dynamics in the moment

Actively listen

Challenging with care

Confidentiality

Break it down

Source: [Aware-LA's Communication Guidelines](#) for a Brave Space

c) Write out and consensus around group agreement
Stephanie and Atiya write them down on [shared doc](#)

3) Conversation

- a) Opening questions: enter the topic, clarify intentions, acknowledge and understand where everyone is at as we broach the topic of harm and accountability in our community
 - ❖ What is the heart of the matter for you?
 - ❖ How has this incident affected you personally?
 - ❖ What is at stake for you?

- b) Deepening questions: deepen reflection and illuminate the complexity and nuances of the issue. The intention is to create opportunities for people to share their beliefs, wishes, and perspectives and explore their underlying assumptions and values.
 - ❖ Who or what has been affected by Leon's message, the discussion that ensued, and Del's intervention? In what ways?
 - ❖ What are other ways this type of event/pattern shows up in our community?
 - ❖ What needs to happen to make it right? (encouraging Del and Leon to specifically speak to what they need to do to make things right, address the harm and rebuild trust)

- c) Closing questions: opportunity for reflection on what we have learned during the session and move the group toward action
- ❖ What next steps individually and as a group? With what hope or purpose?
- ❖ Please share one idea, feeling, or promising question you are taking with you?
- ❖ Was this helpful for you? In what ways? (maybe we'll ask this later in a feedback survey)

Source: Mediators Beyond Borders International ["Crafting Powerful Questions"](#)

4) Closing

- a) Overview of the next day
 - Reminder to fill out the survey about topics before Friday morning
 - Reminder to let us know about Saturday beach event
 - Let people know about our staff retreat and newsletter
- b) Picture of RC community
 - [PIC 1](#)