



## **Courage & Renewal Practicum: Peer Learning Circles**

Peer Learning Circles provide a community of practice to support participants in their on-going learning goals. A PLC consists of 5-6 participants, plus a facilitator (one of your program leaders). Each PLC convenes by conference call on Zoom for two sessions following the retreat, with the opportunity for additional self-organized sessions in the future.

### *An Intentional Time for Practical Reflection*

Our hope is that your experience in a Peer Learning Circle will allow you to think and reflect more deeply about what it's been like to bring Courage & Renewal practices and values into your personal and/or professional life. PLCs offer space and time to dig into the practicality of what we focused on during the retreat. What challenges might you be facing in bringing these practices into your vocational settings? Where are you seeing new opportunities to integrate these practices and what might that look like for you? How are the values and practices informing how you show up in the spaces you occupy? These questions (and many others) are the types of practical considerations you might bring to your PLC to leverage the support and wisdom of your peers, as well as your own inner teacher. As you walk through this experience, it also serves as a useful guide for how you can apply this process moving forward with others, whether in this learning community or in other settings where you find it might be helpful.

### *Preparation for PLC Calls*

Participants will come to each call with a “learning goal” – a question, action or issue around which they want to receive support (from the learning plans that arise from this retreat or some other issue they want to take priority for a particular call). Each person should also come with a plan for *how* they want to receive support from their fellow circle members, choosing from one or more of the following:

- *Open Honest Questions* – helps the presenter tap into their own calling and inner wisdom, and gain clarity
- *Story Sharing* – helps the presenter tap into the wisdom and experience of others
- *Brainstorming* – helps the presenter surface other ideas and approaches, without judgment

- *Resource Sharing* – helps the presenter discover other teachers to support them in expanding their possibilities

In advance of each call, you might find it helpful to use the PLC Personal Worksheet we've provided to prepare your thoughts for the call and make note of things you've learned and actions you want to take in the days ahead (a copy of the worksheet was provided as a separate document in the outreach from your facilitator.)

### *General Structure of PLC Calls*

Each PLC call will be scheduled for two hours (the first may go 2 ½ hours to provide adequate review of call procedures) and will be facilitated by the assigned group facilitator.

In each meeting of the PLC, participants will have a 15-minute time slot where they will present their learning goal for the call and receive the type of support they are requesting from the other PLC members. The facilitator may or may not share a learning goal on the calls, but will certainly offer support for participants.

#### General Overview of PLC Call Schedule

10 min. - Space to Arrive

15 min. - Opening Check-In

80 min. - Peer Learning

15 min. - Closing

**Space to Arrive** – At the beginning of each call we'll create some intentional time to arrive, get settled, prepare as needed, and slowly transition into the call from whatever other obligations might have been taking place prior to the call.

**Opening Check-In** – From there, we will take time to more formally open the call and check-in – this typically takes about 10 minutes. The bulk of this time will consist of a check-in that will include a one-sentence statement of one's learning goal for the call and a brief personal/professional check-in (target 1-2 minutes per person) updating the group about something in their life or on their mind that they want to share with their group.

**Peer Learning** – In the main section of each call where PLC members are supporting each other:

- Each member gets equal time to address a current priority (a "learning goal") and receive support from others in the group.
- The member who is sharing their learning goal in a particular time slot is the "presenter." Each presenter's time slot is scheduled for 15 minutes.
- Each presenter has control over their time slot and how they want to receive support. PLC members should provide support in the way requested by the presenter (described above). Presenters are invited to change their requested support at any time.
- Each member selects relevant and realistic actions to take before the next monthly call.

- Remember that members often learn as much when supporting others as they do when they are presenting.
- Members always retain the right to “pass” at any time in the call.
- At the end of each person’s time, the facilitator will provide one minute or so for people to note insights or take-aways and then turn their full attention to the next presenter.

**Closing** – There will be a ~15-minute closing to each call, where participants will document their learnings and intended actions.

### *Suggested Environment for Call Participation*

Members should be as intentional about the environment in which they take the call as we are about our retreat environment. Think in advance about a few things:

- **Physical Space** – Where does it make sense for you to be when making this PLC call? Some of you will have no choice, and some will have options. Think through the ideal space for supporting focused listening and being present - to yourself and others. If you are in a typical work or home space for you, how can you set the space apart from the norm to help hold this as sacred space? Consider creating an intentional focal point for yourself (as we do in the center of our circles). See what works for you.
- **Focus & Presence** – Research continues to document the negative effects of distractedness and multitasking on our brains. These PLCs are an opportunity to practice **focus** and **presence**. You know what distracts you when you are on the phone. You know what competes for your attention. Whether it’s email, the Internet, your cell phone, the work on your desk, or whatever -- try to hold the space during our PLC call times in a way where these things are not accessible for you, as best as possible.
- **Background Noise** – If there is noise in the background where you are, please mute your phone when you are not speaking on the call.