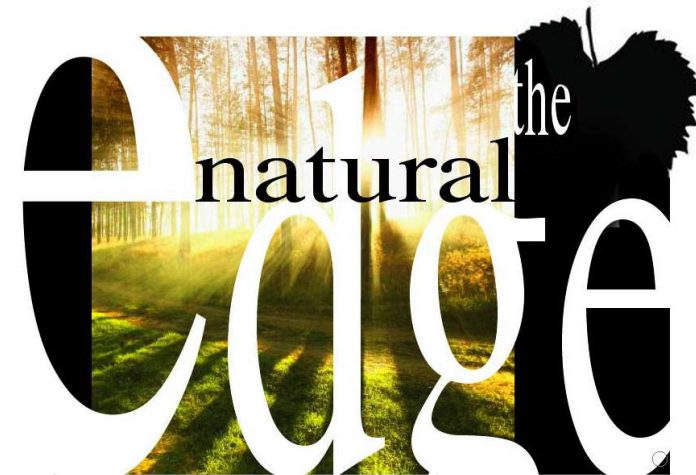


Ecoservice Foundation Presents

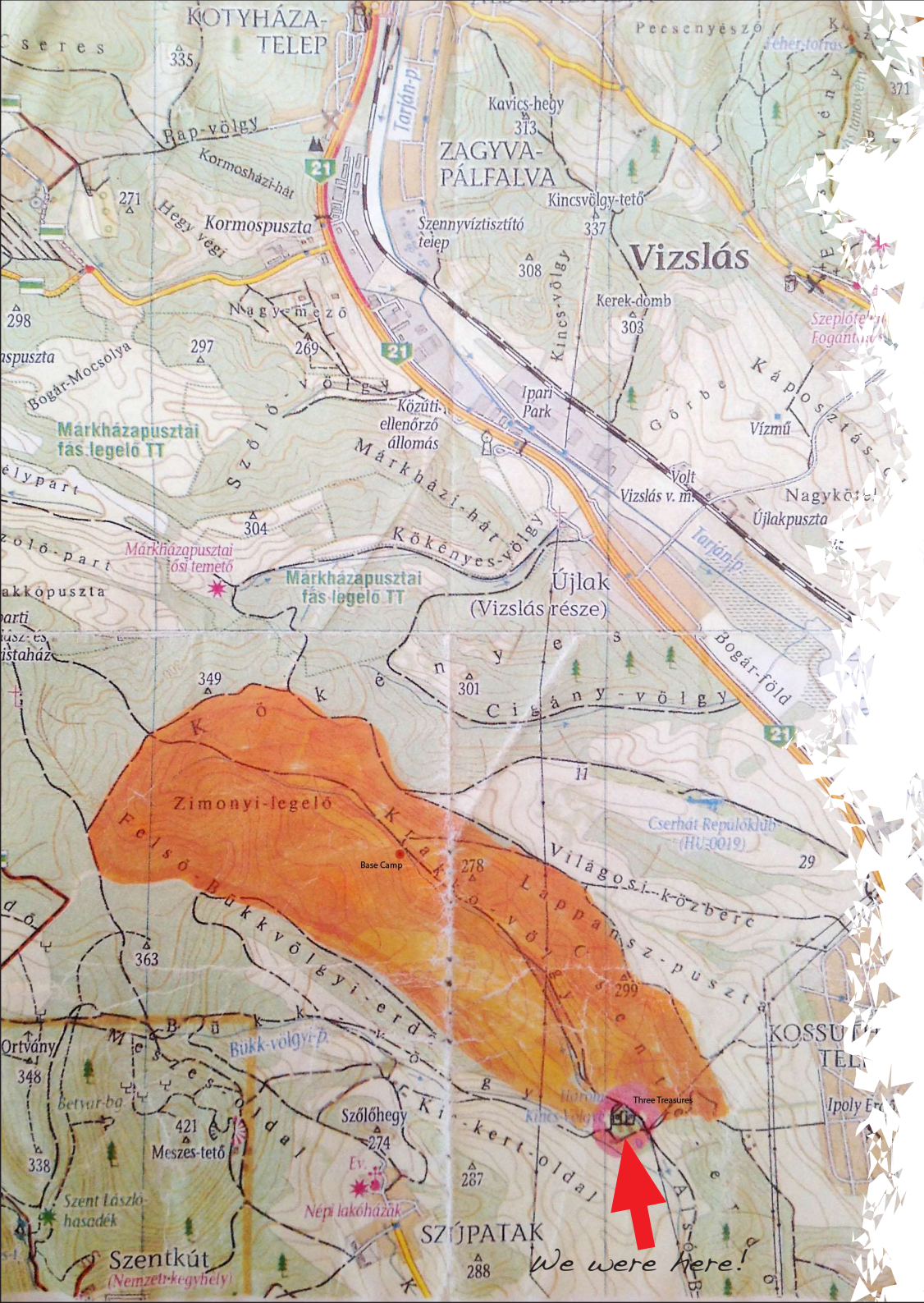


The Natural Edge
8-day international training course
for youth workers within the frame of Erasmus+, KA1

Participants from 9 countries:
Hungary, Latvia, Bulgaria, Greece, Czech Republic, Turkey,
United Kingdom, Slovakia, Portugal,
plus 4 trainers



Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union





Come to the edge!

13-21st Sept 2019 –
Kisterenye, Hungary

Co-operative Leadership for personal and group transformation, social initiative and cultural cohesion with communication skills from

Way of Council

in combination with

24-hour solo time in nature

Realising education in ourselves and others with experiential learning for youth-workers and educators

Trail Sign

*Just around the bend, past
the bog if you're not sucked in
turn into the darkest tangle.
Keep going.*

*But beware.
If you're seeking safety:
Turn around.
You've come the wrong way.*

*If you dare this crooked path
prepare for landslides, ravenous
beasts, lightning, sneaker waves,
raven disguised as people,
people disguised as raven,
soulweavers, dreamlisteners,
ceremonies from the holy Earth,
stars landing in your cupped hands,
and the most amazing views.
When the trail disappears,
as it does 'often' remember
our teacher who said:
you make the trail by walking.*

natural

*Beyond this sign
your customary currency
has no value:*

Here, no one wants it.

Are you sure this is the way?

You can still turn back.

*Farther down this tangled trail
love will break you open
until you gnash your teeth at Earth's pain,
or weep with the ecstasy of angels.*

*In the least presence you will find
unspeakable cosmic glory.*

*In the night sky you will
recognize ancestors.*

The dead will come in dreams.

*The living are everywhere,
wearing the faces of clouds,
water, sequoia, granite,
beetle, Chinook, neighbor,
child, mountain, beloved.*

*If you want searing aliveness
there is no safe route.*

There is no safety.

You don't believe it.

See for yourself.

*Just around the bend, past
the bog if you're not sucked in
turn into the darkest tangle,
follow the barely heard call.*

*Sometimes it will seem
the singer is beside you,
or ahead, or behind, or inside.
Keep going.*

--- Geneen Marie Haugen

Why The Natural Edge?

Currently the world is in a difficult moment with a growing number of nations presenting racism and intolerance regularly through media and political channels as acceptable, even desirable. Such leadership is a poor example to counter the increasing fragmentation, disillusion and marginalisation of youth we see in the context of our and our partner organisations' work.

The Natural Edge is an 8-day program designed to equip Youthworkers, Educators, Partner organisations and indirectly youth they work with, including marginalised groups and those with fewer opportunities, with innovative non-formal education methods that increase personal skills and methodological effectiveness, social cohesion, employment, active citizenship, intercultural dialogue, social inclusion and solidarity.

The two methodologies we find most effective in combination to employ are - Way of Council (innovative communication practice that increases deep listening, storytelling skill, personal and group transformation, social cohesion and natural leadership) and nature-based experiential learning (outdoor education sessions that co-create experience, reflection, evaluation and initiatives for change using the psychological benefits of nature)

Our objectives:

- Introduce, confer and develop a basic to intermediate methodology of Council facilitation skills
- Strengthen the value of our stories and skill in storytelling, increase awareness of impact and responsibilities in our communications
- Offer tools and methods that can educate young people to community-mindedness, that support building relations and trust, promote common values, inclusion, diversity, mutual respect and tolerance
- Increase capacity in personal development and creative learning resources with nature-based non-formal education methods
- Carry forward social entrepreneurship, initiative and learnings through a relevant follow-up project, designed, peer-mentored and facilitated by participants
- Develop leadership, service and social/civic competencies as natural outcomes of self-care and daily-service group work
- Contribute to a cross-cultural peer community of youth workers and facilitators in transformative learning



Day 1: Arrival

- 8 days
A brief summary

For more than two years, The Natural Edge training was dreamed, researched and sweated into an application that received a high result of 86 points, yet no available funding due to the high volume of other applications. The second submission also received 86 points and again no funding. Always as we listened, there was a yes until a committed third submission resulted in 92 points and funding for September 2019.

The training was designed for 8 days, 28 people and with a team of 4 trainers. The training used council as the group learning methodology, supported by Experiential Learning and nature-based activities that contained 24-hour solo experience.



The solo was provided as central to the deepening of intentions for the youth-workers and educators themselves who attended the training, for their work, gift and presence in the world. On the way, we explored several themes including marginalisation, leadership, cultural cohesion and co-operative communication, mentoring and group intention-setting.

Our first afternoon was simply working towards a cohesive group with games and an opening ceremony, an orientation and integration into the beautiful venue of The Three Treasures.

Day 2: Setting the field

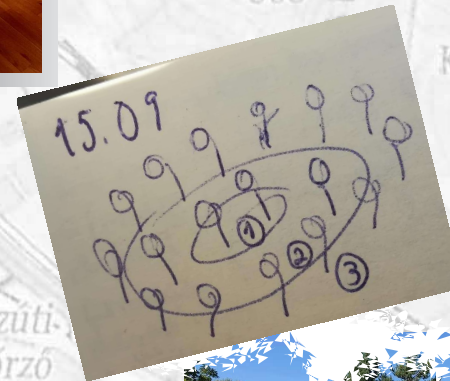
Setting the field, we continued with introductions to each other, Council, the culture of mistakes and a bit of clowning don't you know! We also had some spontaneous role-play to create a local bus driver to Kisterenye, and tell them just exactly what we were doing... in plain English to make a translation from the somewhat technical Erasmus+ lingua-speak!?!



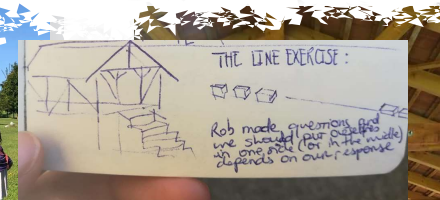
We mention Clowning again, as an important part of the adventure into the practice of finding those edges! ...

Day 3: Stirring the pot

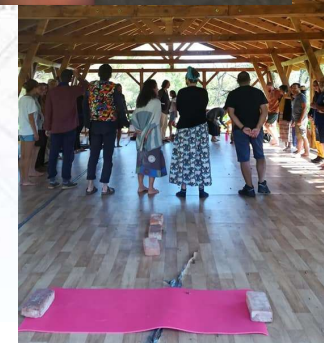
This is (usually) the day when things get stirred up. (Chaos day in 5 Rhythms practice) So we checked in about our comfort and learning zones with an exercise, included random sound-byte interviews, crossed lines that divided us and found many ways to reveal our differences.



And, we brought some of the many places we left behind to the centre of our council through storytelling and valued objects. Place is often left out, has no voice or ignored as something to walk over, meet, dig or build on. The natural edge here is the story that connects a personal object with a special moment or place in our lives.



In the end, given a moment to hear the stories, this can also bring us closer together.



We entered into groups to look into the topic of Marginalisation, who, what, and how do 'we' marginalise? Big topic, not enough time to go deeper, but some interesting reflections came, e.g. how I can marginalise myself and by consequence withdraw from intimacy or social interaction.



The afternoon brought games and leadership topics. We heard stories of how animals manage it, how council offered it to any who take the talking piece, and again into groups to practice leading and co-leading, supported by those who were more practiced and overseen by the trainers. Particularly enjoyed the frog game of community/group learning process before the councils.



Great group, interested and committed people. Day should have ended in a sauna, but we had to postpone it. Long day, early night!

We deliberately chose participants with a wide range of ages to encourage diversity and cross-age peer learning. We ended with a group aged from 20 to 71. We also tried to manifest a gender balance. Hoho – *Where are you men?* Turkey did well here, but quite some men from other countries one by one got ill, got a job or remembered other obligations after accepting.



Day 4: *Intentions*

Really important stuff this IN-tending. Kind of like the captain setting course for the ship. Without it we can be adrift 'in the infinite ocean of Samsara', or more pertinent in this case; if we go into a 'wilderness', an unknown territory, it's really good to have an idea of why I'm doing that and where I might be headed!

This was the main preparation day for the solo; two groups with two trainers, inviting peer mentoring support and deep listening to ask questions, help each person get clear about their intention. Later a tarp demo, thorough kit check and council around any last concerns and safety. Early night for leaving the venue packed and ready at 6.15am next morning!!

Our circle touched wider circles. We had to get permission from foresters, agreements from hunters, and figure out the limit of our solo territory. Because this was our third application, the only dates all four trainers and venue could make, were in September, which was the beginning of the hunting season in Hungary. Bit of an edge huh? Even as we had checked the land a year before, permission from the hunters didn't actually come until a couple of days before the training because they all had to co-ordinate and agree relative to that particular season, date and location.

A few weeks ago Gyula and Kriszta had been checking the land again and met a forester. He seemed helpful and interested, and the encounter led to further support from the foresters and hunters, including the head hunter who is also the vice-mayor of the local area! He made and printed several maps, offered to take us through the land in his truck and check the limit. Nice man and a very good sign that we should proceed with a blessing, because until that time we had had to consider safety by cancelling or shortening the solo to 12 hours from dawn to dusk.



Day 5: Solo Time



Still warm for early morning, but weather threatened to rain, worse; the temperature to drop sharply during the night to between 2-9° degrees. Out of the gates into the silent threshold walk to Basecamp Two. Arriving at our second camp, each one was invited to step into a makeshift circle among the trees, be smudged with smoke and step out into their solo time, fasting from food, company and the usual ways of being in modern life.



Who can say what passed that day, many stories in the forest and fields, who knew what would come. At base camp we wait, there if anyone returns early, or has need of more water or anything else. Only one returns, seen as a ghost until or if they speak. They take extra water and disappear again. Other things happen, another returns, but that remains their story. It's also a time to rest and be grateful in advance, that everyone returns safely. We tune in with each person, as we heard later that others had done out there in the forest. We are growing a little community, in just these few days.

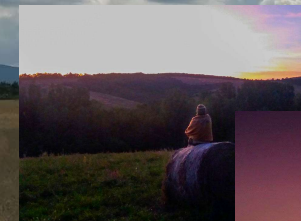
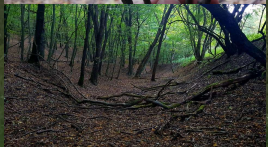
Sometimes

*Sometimes, when a bird cries out,
Or the wind sweeps through a tree,
Or a dog howls in a far-off farm,
I hold still and listen a long time.*

*My world turns and goes back to the place
Where, a thousand years ago
The bird and the blowing wind
Were like me, and were my brothers.*

*My soul turns into a tree,
And an animal, and a cloudbank.
Then, changed and odd, it comes home
And asks me questions.
What should I reply?*

Herman Hesse



Day 6: *Incorporation*

Getting up early as team, packing our things, we await the return of all in however they may arrive. It's an exciting and slightly anxious moment, but one-by-one, the fasters come, stepping back in to be welcomed 'home', hugged, recognised. Powerful community-building experience and great privilege to receive them. The light coming from their eyes is truly remarkable.



Apple is cut and gratefully received. All but one returns on time. We sing, call him in, yet he doesn't show. Decisions have to be made. Some need to begin the return to The Three Treasures venue, others decide to wait at the threshold circle, a self-elected group go out in search.

Not long after, he shows! All is OK. We return to Basecamp One in gratitude for many things, all are well, the temperature remained high through the night, the sun was now warming the air, the deer, stags, horses, owls, foxes and more.

Breaking fast is a joy. The morning is free until noon, when we gathered again in our groups and began the honouring, listening to the stories, offering mirrors and presence to what had passed for each one. This was the night of the sauna (and fireside sharing). Happy that others enjoy that, we trainers are planning the next days...

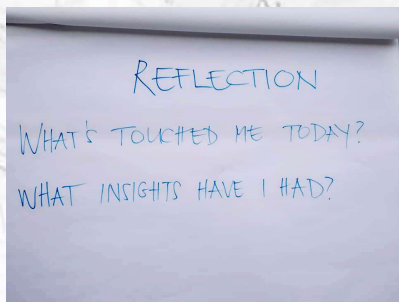


Day 7: Group offerings

Began before breakfast with a Dreamstar council led by Eva and Jaro, two of our participants. It's a great way to start the day hearing the stories from the night (dreams) and the weaving of them out of sole ownership into a community cloth.

Our second session story-reading and group-work deliberately touched on how we judge and make assumptions. Brought a few things up; achieved its purpose I believe; highlighting values, embedded cultural patterns, the benefit of not judging too fast, knowing there is more to any story. Also being aware of our own backstory; how our childhood conditions may influence how we rate people other people's actions. Last session before lunch we worked on Q&A around council work, revisited the intentions and touched on many elements that can come into council work.

In the afternoon we were treated to numerous activities arranged and hosted by the participants in what they bring as learning and skills to the Natural Edge. We had dance and movement sessions, more clowning with Theatre of the Oppressed woven in, sunset ceremony, reflections on the solo using dixit cards, response council, council in schools Q&A, storytelling, Tree of life, flower arranging connected to feedback and so on.

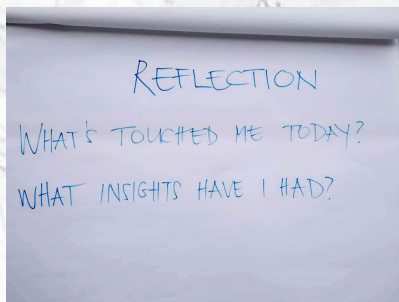


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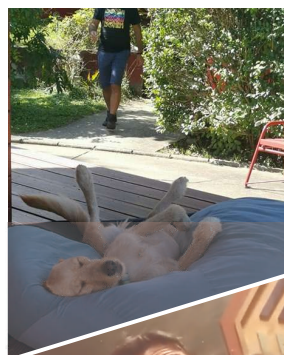
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Day 8: *Daisy chains*

Today we looked at how we can bring our learnings forward, offer it out to others through posts in social media and realtime follow-up events. Mentoring was a key topic, how each participant or country group could be supported by and offer mentoring on to others, practice mindfully as a learning in itself of how to pass on mentoring skills, especially for youth.

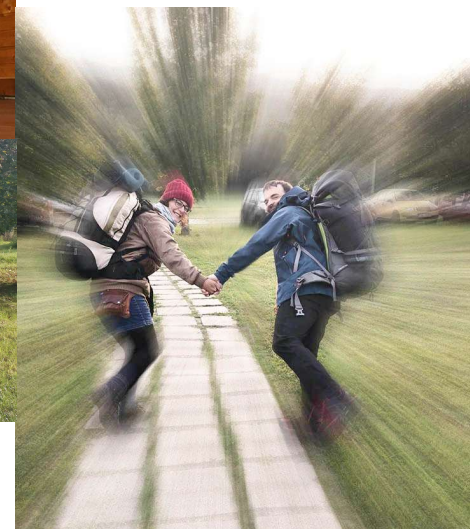
We ended the morning with opening up the field for networking amongst ourselves and organisations through practicing an elevator pitch, while others in the group used their time as reflection with an experiential learning activity of storyline in pairs. Our final council was long and deep, a goldmine of essential and poignant sharings, witnessed by the black dragon in the windowsill and the occasional sounding of the heart-bell. Worth every bit of sweat and tears we made during that week. A good meal, sauna and fire saw us into the last night and dreaming of our re-entering the world, changed somehow.



Do you love
yourself
enough
to listen
with the ears of your heart

to the *other*
voices
of yourself
speaking?

~ Beno Kennedy



Approaches

Summary of methodologies, main activities and sessions

Way of Council

Storytelling

Games

Mistakes & clowning

Mentoring

Comfort/Learning/Panic zones

Line crossing

Threshold Walk (Medicine walk)

Peer Mentoring Intention-setting

Solo time

Mirroring

4 Competencies

Mohammed and Leila

Daisy Chain

Service & Care

Offerings from Participants:

Dixit Cards – Luca

Dreamstar Council – Eva and Jaro

Wisdom (Response) Council – Eva

Tree of Life – Daniela

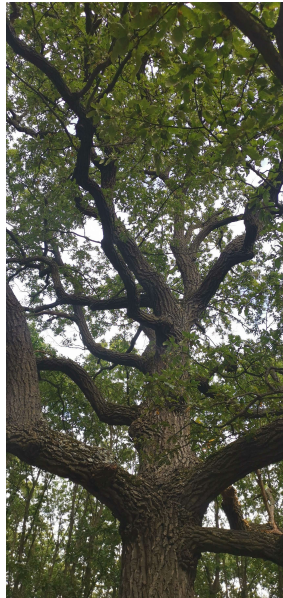
Workshop with flowers – Lucia

Dance & movement – Ezgi

Theatre & clowning – Ester & Serhan

Storytelling – Argin

Council in Schools – Maria Teresa



Way of Council

Active (individual and group) deep listening, sharing stories, authentic expression Council is a very successful human social technology derived from the circle of life, tested over millennia. A simple way of council is sitting in a circle, attributing a center, agreeing the use of a talking / listening piece and conducting our attention to witness, attend and facilitate a learning, a support and a wisdom inherently present within the participants, space and time allotted.

Council is used as a very powerful tool for personal growth, fostering group learnings, and creating community. It is used for a wide set of aims, with organisations, associations, schools, companies, groups and individuals.

As part of our Council work we covered –

Intentions, Storytelling, Facilitation, Forms and functions of council – Cosmic date, Traditional and web forms, Fishbowl, Response, Popcorn, Mentoring/Peer mentoring, Mirroring and Dreamstar.

http://www.heart-source.com/council/way_of_council_page.html

<https://waysofcouncil.net>

<http://www.ojaifoundation.org>

Storytelling

Our storytelling covered a wide range of practices, from Council practice with different forms and focus, to the more traditional approach that was brought by one of the participants, to the inter-cultural learning exercise; Mohammed and Leila. The use of these forms were employed to support how to facilitate meaningful storytelling for ourselves and inexperienced or socially challenged youth with little or no comprehension of their own value.

Argin offered from Participants, a session –

"I have been storytelling more than six years. I wanted to share my gift with the group, and offered storytelling to show how I performed storytelling and let them experience. Normally I tell stories in Turkish, my mother tongue, this time I told in English. I told mostly anonymous stories from different countries such as Greece, Sweden and Turkey. I shared some examples of how I implemented storytelling in my work. Storytelling is a powerful tool also to create communities, make connections, send your messages, cultivate values, reach every kind of people. I mentioned about Hero's Journey and Joseph Campbell. He figured out every mythology has a common pattern, he mentioned in his book with details, the cycle of the hero's journey. In the end I received questions and got reflections, then closed this session."

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1yAA5M6m_cj64yD16CN2dsFIAzJWpZfTT

Games

Games and active play co-create a field of ease and connection, support an environment where individual learning and group dynamics can begin to forge, bypassing much of the intellectual and pre-judgemental barriers present in a large and newly formed group. Mix of styles, from fun to interactive games and learning opportunities related to the current or coming topic.

Clowning & Mistakes

Trainers introduced theatre and clowning skills to illustrate the power and strategy of *making* fun, becoming 'larger than' in order to laugh at or make less serious our problems and challenges by theatricising (exaggerating) our weaknesses, flaws and mistakes. During participants offering Serhan and Ester offered a combined session.

From Serhan –

“Warm up - Embracing the space and the people. Walking, slowly getting connected with space, Moving and giving attention to different parts of your body, then connecting with people.

Hypnoseses - (in pairs)

a. Following the other's hand with keeping distance of 20cm, b. ankle c. belly button

Pinochio - (in pairs) One loosens their body, the other gives a soft impulse and make the other's body move. Elbow, knee, ankle, waist, etc.

Sculpture Park - (in pairs) Each sculpturor gets an assignment of a feeling and make their clay into a sculpture by hands, no mirroring or talking, that represents their assignment. At the end we make an exhibition and others guess the emotion or feeling.

After each exercise first reflections were in the pairs, then in the end as whole group.”

From Ester –

“So after Serhan's warm up, I did a small introduction on the objectives of clowning, using it as a tool to be more present and express feelings, fears, hopes. Allowing the clown to witness their own feelings from another perspective, playing with them, challenging and making them ridiculous in order to deconstruct and be aware of them.

I did only 2 exercises -

Clown Battle (in pairs, each clown did movements in the hope that the audience chose to repeat them). This allows to experience "success and

unsuccess" in a controlled environment, and also to realise that is sometimes in the moments of unsuccess that we are more creative and bounce back, getting unexpected success

Another teaching is that you don't have to reinvent the wheel, sometimes keeping it simple and more authentic is key.

The other exercise was individual, and only possible because there was already trust in the group. Each of the participants embodied one of their fears and shared it with the audience. Besides being so so so funny, some people got the stage they needed to express feelings that would otherwise be tucked away inside and did not allow for self healing.

Reflection afterwards was extremely important, starting from the question: "how did it feel like for you?" important learnings were shared.

The purpose was very therapeutical, and I believe we did it!!”

Comfort, Learning & Panic Zone

Three concentric circles; comfort zone, learning zone and a panic zone, are made out of ropes on the ground so that participants can step in one of these areas. Different activities are written on a piece of paper (either trainers or participants do so) and are read out one by one. Each participant needs to find which zone that activity belongs to for them. Activities can be from speaking in front of people to going into the forest at night, filling in Erasmus+ forms etc. The objective is to realise that zone borders differ for everyone and in each topic and to be aware that when designing an activity as a trainer, participants should move out of the comfort zone, yet stay safe enough not to go into panic in order for the learning to happen.

<http://www.thempra.org.uk/social-pedagogy/key-concepts-in-social-pedagogy/the-learning-zone-model/>

Crossing the Line

Examining our differences and the stories that support what is revealed. A quick, spatially demonstrative and efficient method employed in Process Work (created by Arnold Mindell) to support a shift in attitudes and behaviours that are fixed, offensive or defensive. Process work has been applied in a range of contexts including groups and organisations, and known for applying psychology to world issues including socio-economic disparities, diversity issues, social conflict and leadership.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Process_oriented_psychology

<http://www.aamindell.net/worldwork/>

Threshold walk

Also known as a medicine Walk. There can be many reasons for taking such a time, TNE used it in supporting each participant in preparation for the solo time and in clarifying, *'What is my intention for the role I take up in the world, for which I am seeking an outer confirming experience'*. This is a method of using the symbolism of nature as mirror. Can be anything from 45 minutes to a few hours.

Have a question, or be available to receive a question, or any other signs or symbols along the way. At the beginning of your time with the land, find a place, or let a place 'find you' that feels like a threshold – a point that is like a doorway. You may choose to create something, like a line in the sand or two stones either side of you or it may be something that already exists naturally. Pause there and be aware that you are leaving the 'middle world', the world of humans and talking, eating, etc. You are entering into ceremony now. You can speak out loud your intention and who you are, ask for support. Don't assume that nature is there for your use – a relationship needs to develop first.

Be receptive to the other-than-human realm. Be open to nature and the 'otherness' mirroring something to you. Offer yourself in conversation with the land, the *Mystery*, your way of being in conversation. This may not be speaking in the way you would to a human. This could be singing, making sounds, dancing, your tears, a gesture or just a silent listening.

During your time with the land do not eat or speak to other humans. You can take water and an emergency snack if you're going for a long hike. If you encounter another human you can of course acknowledge them but try not to enter into a conversation with them.

When it is time to return either pass back through the first threshold or find another one. It is important to mark that you are now coming out of ceremony and returning to the place of human activity. Offer gratitude. On your return, you can journal what you noticed and also share with someone if that feels right.

<http://schooloflostborders.org/content/medicine-walk-exploration-ecopsychology-and-rites-passage-john-davis>

Mentoring – Daisy Chain & Intention circle

What it meant in the TNE was as a peer support for each participant with the Intentions before the Solo Time, and the Daisy-chain dissemination process. Think of it as being a kind, listening ear (as you would in council - listen from the heart), be interested and curious about what the other is sharing and exploring. You are not 'fixing' or even giving advice (unless they ask for it).

You can ask GOOD QUESTIONS. What do we mean by good questions??

We mean, helping them to deepen their understanding of their experience. Some examples - What does it look like? How do you experience this? What feeling does it give you when you do this? Can you tell me more detail about the thing you're exploring? How does it help you? How will it help you to help others? You're like a kind elder who has the interest of the other person at the heart of your listening and questioning. Keep practicing it! The world needs more kind ears and mentors!

Peer mentoring Intention setting

Preparing the deepening of intentions and focus for the solo time, this activity revolves around a group honing process; practicing input questions from the group to each participant in their turn, guided by trainers to create a clear stated, and memorable intention.

Solo time (see Threshold walk for similar discipline. Solo time is a longer version+)

24 hours spent alone in nature in ceremony without the distractions of everyday life, comfort of food, conversations and material means. This is in the tradition of the 'Vision fast', a longer-time traditional practice to look for a personal vision of one's engagement with the world. Offered for contemplation, questing for an answer, reconnecting with ourselves and the natural world, it can empower us to find inner guidance, our inner source of wisdom that Nature and the outer landscape can provide metaphorical and symbolic opportunities to reflect.

<http://naturewisdom.life/vision-fasts-rites-passage/>

http://www.heart-source.com/council/rob_dreaming_wilderness.html

<http://schooloflostborders.org/>

Mirroring (Council form)

Listening to the stories one by one, guided by trainers with group reflection, practicing learning skills to reflect back an empowered perspective, not necessarily seen by the teller. This develops an active listening and attitude to re-tell another's story and offer it back with supportive perspectives.

Telling one's own story is an ancient art. Nowadays, we have forgotten how to listen and how to tell. Yet the very survival of our species depends on our ability to communicate with each other in such ways as to be mutually enriched by the telling and the listening. If we cannot tell with expression, our life is mute. If we cannot listen like a mirror, we cannot reflect back the wholeness of the four shields -- the body, soul, mind and spirit of the teller. The best stories are about human nature -- that is, the human of us which is, after all, nature in her basic manifestations as physical, psychical, rational, and spiritual. One of the best ways to create a four shields story, if not the best, is to put people in contact with nature in the raw.

– School of Lost Borders <http://schooloflostborders.org/>

The four Competencies

Unconscious incompetency: Not aware of not being skilled at something

Conscious incompetency: Becoming aware of not being skilled in that thing

Conscious competency: Becoming skilled at that thing and being aware of it

Unconscious competency: Not being aware of being skilled in that thing – being *natural* at it and just doing it without thinking about it.

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Four_stages_of_competence

Mohammed and Leila

A story in which we have no personal involvement and comes to us as simply a reported series of characters and events. Participants are asked to rank the characters based on their behaviour, who they like the most and the least. We expand on the same story with more information after sharing our initial responses in small groups. The objective is to highlight each participant's responsibilities when lack of transparency, information, and hidden prejudices are present and how to take leadership forward in pre-empting these. We learn about different values, and apprehend how we fill in the empty parts of a story with our own. Link below to the story and a variation – *Abigale*

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1yAA5M6m_cj64yD16CN2dsFIAzJWpZfTT

Daisy Chain

Another form of peer mentoring; bringing support to participants' projects to mentor each other, be available to collaborate, feedback, ask questions... The ideal was to create groups from each participating organisation/country, working together on taking forward learnings and methodologies into a co-created event, agreed target group and situation specific to that group's practical, intuitive, applied learning achievability. Each daisy event was to be peer-mentored by the group/individual prior in the chain, each 'daisy' offer onward mentoring to the group/individual forward in the chain.

Agreements and Service & Care

Group process input and agreements to building our practical, social, learning and development culture. Service and care is a module of activity for some of the days in which participants rotate tasks in small groups, responsible for small and practical tasks supporting the course, the group and venue. E.g. Kitchen & Cleaning crews – Self-care – Gardening – Day previous Summary (for dissemination) – Energizer team etc. The module has multiple objectives:

- a) community and team building within the group;
- b) supporting host venue and organisation in carrying out small service tasks;
- c) learning and practicing skills such as digital competences, creative writing & co-creating the daisy project

Offerings from Participants

Dixit Cards

Offering from Luca –

"The Dixit card session was aiming to help with the integration of the solo-experience. After taking a moment to recall some feelings and memories of the Solo, everybody could consciously chose a card which was mirroring the experience. The chosen cards were shown for the group. The symbols of the cards could make the group-members to share about feelings or stories associated to each person's card. Every round was finished with the story of a card-owner.

To listen to the associations can give a chance for us to get to know other perspectives, which can contribute to build up a healthy narrative about our experiences. To give the associations can provide a chance for us to catch what ideas, patterns are in our minds.

This type of game comes from the heart of Self Groove, an NGO based in Budapest. We offer this type of sessions on festivals to integrate the experiences, and also in the city to help young adults to deal with everyday life challenges"

https://m.facebook.com/profile.php?id=1438178019796925&ref=content_filter

Dreamstar (council form)

Addressing the underlying non-consensual realities inherent in any field, we gather early morning to tell the stories of the dreams that came the night before. Objective; to make known that while we will usually operate within a small band of consensual reality, there is always present a deeper and more multi-dimensional realm that is operating simultaneously, influencing our moods, perceptions and decisions. Contribution by Cia Cekija

Dance and Movement

From Ezgi –

"In the Expressive Arts based Dance and Movement Therapy workshop we started in a circle with an exercise with which everyone checked in with an individual movement, then the rest mirrored. We had a reminder of expressing ourselves and communicating each other with our bodies through movement instead of talking (except describing our process through images and sharing). Likewise we also practiced listening to each other somatically. We continued with some playful warm-up exercises where everyone got to have a



one-on-one connection with each other, again through movement and mirroring. Then everyone paired up and one person witnessed while the other had a moving session eyes closed or half open, then exchanged roles. I asked them to express themselves about how they felt physically, mentally, emotionally, socially and spiritually through movement, guiding them two-to-three minutes in each state. Then, I asked them to draw one image in silence for each state and share them with their witness. The witness also shared an image (from the heart) for each state about their partner's experience after asking permission for feedback. Then, everyone shared one or more images in the big circle.

The workshop took a little more than two hours. It was actually a demo version of longer workshop in which I would use other expressive arts modalities. I had a rough plan of what I would do with some spontaneous offerings. The workshop flowed really beautifully with everyone's unique and authentic presence. I tried to integrate authentic movement, drama therapy and a technique called body tales through the workshop. It was overall a great experience to hold space for integration - processing about our experience about one long training for my fellow trainees."

Wisdom Council

From Eva –

"This form of council provides individuals with an opportunity to harvest the wisdom of the circle by asking their question and inviting the stories of others. It is possible to start with collecting the relevant questions while introducing wisdom council.

*What is it what you'd like to learn from people in this circle?
What of the things you are dealing with you'd like to share with the circle in order to hear their experiences?*

After check-in and opening the council, ask everyone in the circle to write down such a question on single piece of paper.

Questions are collected and read out loud in a circle, one by one, always by somebody else than who has written it.

The invitation is to ask the question with such a respect and emphasis as it was my own.

There is naturally not enough space for answering all of them, yet it gives the participants a chance to learn more about the group and it's concerns. After reading all the questions, whoever feels the call can step up and ask one of the questions (or any other). It's always good share a bit of story

as well. During wisdom council person holding the talking piece can ask for input or responses from as many people as desired. Both the one asking and those responding can be offered seats within the circle or remain in their places."

Tree of Life

From Daniela –

"On the TC i offered a workshop 'Tree of Life'. This tool is a collective narrative tool that aims to promote a feeling of identity and connectedness and allows people to re-author their stories, using a drawing of a tree to represent their lives. I think about the benefits of doing this workshop, because we are exploring topics of personal and group transformation with the methodology of Way of Council with the beautiful help of nature's presence and wisdom, so this was a different methodology to do that with as art mediator.

The invitation to the group was to draw a tree and to write on the elements that are adapted to incorporate the narrative approaches:

Roots (origin, family, ancestry, culture), ground (place of residence, hobbies), trunk (skills, memories), branches (hopes, dreams, wishes), leaves (names of important people) and fruits (gifts from these important people).

The group was formed in a circle, and a had paper on the ground with questions to deepen the process of thinking about the elements. I invited also to everybody give some qualities that they saw in anothers on their trunks, and that was a good moment to strengthen the bond of the group. In the end, everybody shared what they felt while they were thinking and with the final result, working on the awareness of their own uniqueness and the active listening of the stories of the others."

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1yAA5M6m_cj64yD16CN2dsFIAzJWpZfTT

Council in Schools

From Maria Teresa – Q&A session and presentation of how council in schools has spread from California (currently over 15,000+ children), to Europe and across the world, with experiences and stories from the practice that she and her team employs in one of our partner organisations she co-founded in Portugal: Florescer

<https://waysofcouncil.net/council-in-schools/>

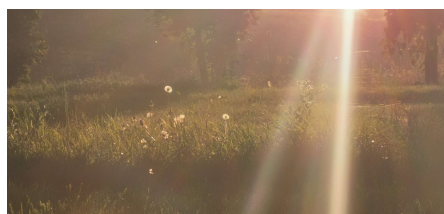
<https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=fKSh73dO49s>

Other Resources



Trainers and participant's files, pics and resources that can be shared, in a googledoc folder here –

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1yAA5M6m_cj64yD16CN2dsFIAzJWpZfTT



GRATITUDE

~ this is a connection practice that, for me, (Rebecca) has changed my life.

And it's so simple.

I invite you to begin your day with giving thanks for something, or a few things. I do this when I light a candle and I also do it when I'm out on the land by making an offering of oats or barley grain. I invite you to share gratitude at the beginning of a meeting or council and you could end with gratitude too. There are some earth-based peoples in the US who say speaking Gratitude are the words before all other words. I call it honoring Life and it helps me feel connected to it.

All information in this PDF/Booklet is given freely as a resource and support to further study, apply in social and working situations, and generally pass on. Permission is not given to alter or re-publish only parts of this booklet.

Contact TNE here - the.natural.edge.tc@gmail.com

All pictures remain the property of those participants on the Natural Edge Training who created them.

The Trainers:

Rob Dreaming, UK

Rob is a Mentor, Facilitator and Trainer of Way of Council and qualified as a wilderness guide by the School of Lost Borders, California. He has supportive trainings in Acting, 5 Rhythms dance movement, meditation and over 17 years of offering and designing programs, trainings and leading groups in consciousness and communication

<http://www.heart-source.com>

Krisztina Pasztor, Hungary

Kriszta is an Experiential/Outdoor Trainer and Counselor with Wilderness-Adventure Therapy Specialization and a Facilitator of Council. Project manager, permaculturist. She is passionate about the transformational power of nature, self-development, ecopsychology, sharing and listening to stories and is devoted to initiate the process of change, facilitate group processes.

Gyula Szabo, Hungary

Gyula is a Trainer, Green Living Coach and Historian, and Facilitator of Council. Born in 1967, has his degrees in Business Administration and History. After various types of working experiences in music industry, telecommunication and CSR, now works as a green living coach, trainer and council facilitator. He is a determined enthusiast of Mother Nature and strongly believes in the power of stories.

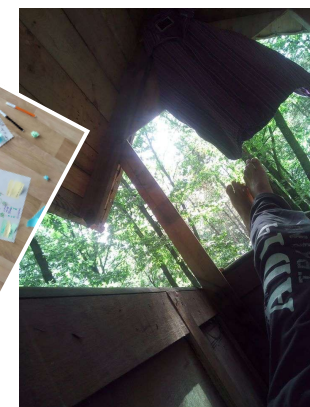
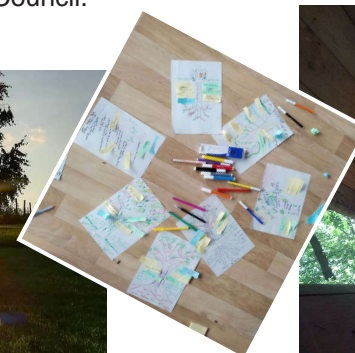
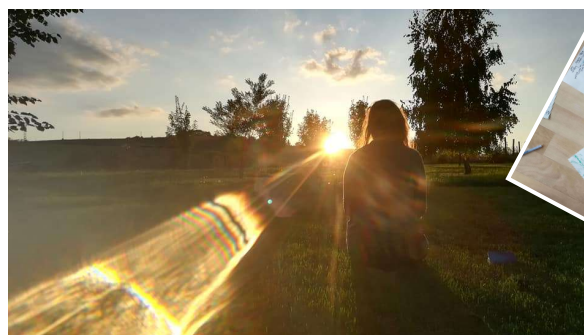
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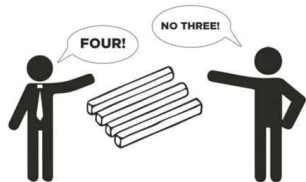
Rebecca Card, UK

Rebecca is a Transitional Rites & Vision Quest Guide, is a Facilitator and Ceremonialist of nature-based wisdom and cultural healing practices. She offers deep nature connection, Embodied Awareness, grief work and 8-Shields programs with consultancy at a local and national level.

She is also a Facilitator of Council.

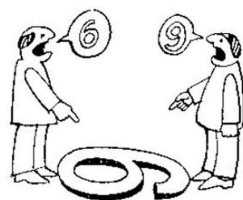
<http://naturewisdom.life>





SPEAKING FROM THE HEART

- Tell your personal story
(vs. philosophizing)
- Use "I" statements
(vs. "you" – avoid characterizing others' thoughts and feelings)
- Favor feelings
over mere facts & opinions
- Reveal your process
(how you got where you are)
as well as your conclusions
- Tell the fullest possible truth
(vs. edited truths)
- Cut to the chase
(avoid "fill" or "thinking out loud")
- Be spontaneous
(vs. rehearsing or editing)
- Move toward vulnerability
(vs. away from it)
- Trust your listeners & the circle
- Honor the Still Small Voice Within



LISTENING FROM THE HEART

- Seek understanding
(vs. agreement)
- Accept others as they are
(vs. fixing them)
- Empathize
(vs. criticize or judge)
- Read the field
(the group's energy & mood)
- Stay centered
(calm your "monkey mind")
- Stay present
(vs. withdrawing emotionally)
- Witness your internal responses
& put them on "hold"
- Honor feelings
(both yours & the others')
- Find the gift in the wound
- Listen for the soul of the circle

COUNCIL is about relationship. It is about creating an experience of bonding, empathy, teamwork, trust, rapport, fellowship, community, and ultimately love.

Several core maxims express the heart of council:

The truth is in the center of the circle.

No one of us is as smart as all of us.

The whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

The health (of the individual, circle, or organization) is a function of participation.

Everything is connected to everything else.

Everything must go somewhere.

Trust is a function of self-revelation.

What we are unaware of holds us prisoner.

Advocacy must be balanced with inquiry.

The bottom line is:

The quality of our work in the world flows from the quality of our relationships.

The quality of our relationships flows from the quality of our communication.

The quality of our communication flows from the integration of Mind, Heart, Body, and Spirit.



WAY OF COUNCIL BASIC GUIDELINES

From Rob – <http://www.heart-source.com>

WELCOME!

OPPORTUNITY

It isn't therapy, It isn't a workshop but it is an opportunity to share something from the heart, to be real and to be witnessed in truth, whether joyful, sad, serious, humorous: whatever is alive in us in the present moment.

As for every opportunity, talking it isn't compulsory, so if you are unsure or don't have anything you want to share when the stick is passed to you, just pass it on. There will be several opportunities to speak, and lots of opportunity to listen.

'SPEAKING'

Speaking from the heart doesn't necessarily mean using words – sound, movement, theatre etc. are welcome, as are spontaneous song or poem.

THEMES

Themes arise naturally from the beginning of sharing. Good idea to do warm-up rounds to engage the voice and loosen up any tension. These usually are meant to be fun and encourage spontaneity. Best done in traditional way or each person chooses the next to go by handing them the piece – web variation.

Some circles may have a prescribed themes in which case it is for the circle to be aware of the focus and the spaceholder's discretion how this is maintained or if it needs to diversify.

Hold hands to open the circle or offer a meditation or prayer and or invite attributes, dedication, wish etc to be present for everyone, such as Harmony, love, truth etc.

IMPORTANT: Logistics/announcements should be dealt with before beginning or after the circle is closed

FOUR INTENTIONS

There are four intentions that hold the space together, which when observed, create safety and allow truth and trust to build in this very simple but powerful practice.

'SPEAKING FROM THE HEART'

We are learning the difference between this and the 'head' all the time. It can help to visualise actually speaking as though it were coming through the heart, not the mouth. Refraining from "We or "you"" statements empowers the speaker to stay responsible and in personal experience; wherever possible, speak from the "I"

'LISTENING FROM THE HEART'

Most important of all. Attentive listening, 'witnessing', can reveal truths that speaking or movement may not show, and help another to reach their truth more easily.

'SUCCINCTNESS'

Being of lean expression, **getting essential** helps us to attend to what is important, and as we are often many, allows time for all to share. It is important, though, that a person takes the time they need to really express what they need to.

'SPONTANEITY'

Surprise yourself by not planning on what or rather how you will speak. Focusing on your own story will reduce capacity to 'listen' to others when they speak. It also tends to hold a more heartfelt energy when expression is spontaneous. The heart does not plan.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Another intention to be mindful of is confidentiality. It is important for the sake of trust and respect to those in the circle not to discuss specific issues with people outside of the circle; what is said in the circle, stays in the circle.

COUNCIL GUIDELINES 2

(For the facilitator)

ABOVE ALL

Stay connected to your heart, intuition and keep stepping back. Use the guides that you know work, but do things your way. The purposes of Council are sharing and transparency. Resolving problems or conflicts are specific topics or agendas for council but not so much for general circles. Nevertheless, transparency and sharing in the format of the circle can be extremely effective in going a long way toward resolving problems etc.

LOOK FOR

Watch the overall energy in the group, the 'field'.

Be aware of the body language. If it gets restless, is it an indicator of wandering attention or something uncomfortable brewing?

Look out for too many 'we' and 'you' words, as they indicate speaking out of the personal and the heady stuff of ideas rather than personal experience. Watch also for talking 'about' something rather than bringing a story on the topic. Where possible bring story in your sharings and encourage this in others, otherwise people may get lost in their 'process'.

If people need to leave the circle or there is a disturbance out of the circle, allow what needs happen for remedy but keep the energy together, keep the focus from getting too diverted. What happens in the ceremony is part of the ceremony, but if necessary remind of the theme in hand, hold hands, rededicate, whatever...

STRATEGIES

'TURNING INTO THE SKID' is a good way of dealing with problems by tackling them head-on with transparency. If the group is getting too restless introduce the theme: 'What keeps good attention' or if the group is too heavy/angry etc., introduce 'What ways have you found to express anger positively' etc.

Be aware that the first to speak sets a precedent. You speak first or give it on. Each time someone speaks a new precedent can be expressed or the theme continued. If you feel to change the focus discreetly, share something real with a different tone and see where it goes. If the group goes elsewhere, go with the group, but keep checking the field.

GUIDING

Use the form to change the form - Interruption for guidance is the last resort, if ever. Waiting until your turn is better, keeps the flow, and allows others to bring awareness or rebalancing so the circle is self regulating. Preface anything to be said with a reference to 'guidance' to make it clear the difference between your participation and your facilitation role.

Stay flexible, sometimes the guidelines can/should be stretched in order for a truth to be made known. Follow intuition.

If a person repeatedly disrespects guidelines, turn into the skid by introducing the theme of respect, ask others in the circle for feedback about so and so's comments or finally if it is too disruptive ask them to leave or to take a witness seat.

GENERAL

RESPECT is the keynote to whatever is present, needs be expressed. All is welcome.

Ensure the safety of all

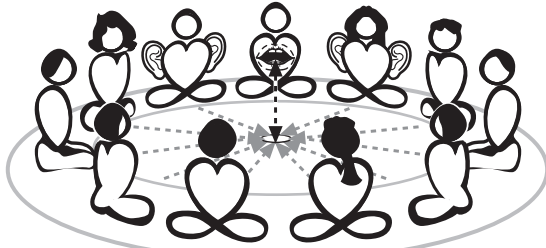
No direct confrontation (there are specific things to do in the case of conflict but they must be agreed to by both or all parties.)

KEEP CLEAN

Be aware of your personal agendas, position in the group and ego, but be real - participate fully.

WAY OF COUNCIL

THE CIRCLE
IS ANCIENT
ITS BEEN A
ROUND
FOR A VERY
LONG TIME...



IT IS THE
STRONGEST
AND MOST
RESILIENT
NATURAL
FORM

THE 4 INTENTIONS + 1 (or 2) BASED ON THE TEACHINGS OF WAY OF COUNCIL, WITH GIGI COYLE & JACK ZIMMERMAN

LISTEN FROM THE HEART



Listening to the centre, the circle, the spaces in-between, the sound of a person's voice, the body language, the environment, the truth.

Try to give others my best attention, accept others as they are, empathise, stay present, become empty of agenda, not looking for agreement or to fix anything unless the person specifically asks for remedy.*

NOT THERAPY



* Council is not a "treatment" nor a replacement to relieve or heal any medical condition, emotional upset, mental or psychological disorder

Avoid:
Too much attention on "my story", judgments, filters and comparing – It reduces capacity to listen to others.

EXPRESS FROM THE HEART



Share what is authentic, what is and present Tell my story – word, song, poem, silence, movement. Be transparent in the process.

Use "I" Statements to express my feelings, needs, values, beliefs, appreciations, affirmations, empathy, resentments, concerns, fears etc.

Use caution with "we / our / you" statements as not everybody sitting here today may feel as I do. The talking/listening piece invites me to speak for myself.



LANGUAGE

Move toward vulnerability. If feeling trapped, or emotionally charged, at least I let the circle know, even if it does not come to share the story.



BE SUCCINCT & TO THE POINT



Be aware of the time available for others to share, the size and energy of the group. Paying attention to the people I am speaking to, helps me to know if I am making my point well.

Speak only the essence of what I need to say. Tell the story – don't repeat it... Life story is not required!



Avoid:
Thinking out loud
Philosophical outflow
Being analytical
Lecturing & "teaching"
These tend to detach the heart, reduce listening and awareness.



THE HIGHER GOOD - SPEAK WHAT SERVES YOURSELF - THE CIRCLE & THE HIGHER GOOD - WHAT IS SAID IN THE CIRCLE STAYS IN THE CIRCLE



CONFIDENTIALITY
WHAT IS SAID IN THE
CIRCLE STAYS IN THE CIRCLE

BE SPONTANEOUS



Not to plan or rehearse what to say. Trust what comes in the moment I receive the talking piece

AND

Take a breath to check in with what serves me, the circle and all.

Spontaneity can sometimes be confused with reaction...
– Recommended –
I wait at least one round before speaking – paying attention to others first can bring remedy or relief.



For best practice :
Sit in peace with the unknown, humility and patience. Listen for the soul of the group, not depend on an outcome, or 'rescue' another unless requested. I keep listening!



Designed and Created by Rob Dreaming
www.heart-source.com

COUNCIL IN PRACTICE

EVERYONE HAS A PLACE, A VOICE, AND
IS EQUAL DISTANCE FROM THE CENTRE



Council is a practice, added to and gifted by many, handed down from First Nation Peoples, Earth-cherishing traditions and others along the way. The basic guidelines are offered as a practice and remain adaptable and in service to the culture that emerges.

This card is designed as a light-hearted facilitator/participant guide and reminder. It is not intended as a replacement for learning council by first-hand experience, nor reading The Way of Council.

INSTRUCTIONS - IN FLIGHT CEREMONY MODE

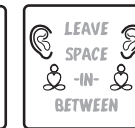
- FIND A GOOD LOCATION/SUPPORTIVE SPACE
- SPEND TIME PREPARING IT FOR PEOPLE TO COME INTO
- CHOOSE A CO-LEADER (Optional)
- CHOOSE A TALKING LISTENING PIECE
- CHOOSE A CENTRE



CHECK!
CULTURE CHECK
WHAT IS
APPROPRIATE
HERE?

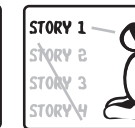
OPEN THE CEREMONY

Invite anyone start; offer dedication, wish, prayer or blessing for the circle.



BEGIN WITH A CHECK-IN ROUND

Could be with a prompt: 'What am I sitting with today/what is present?'



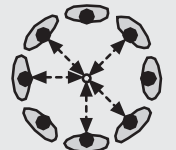
- Person holding the listening/talking piece is not to be interrupted.
- Use a bell if the circle feels to be off track, or to bring 30 seconds of silence.
- If the piece is going round and round there is no need to say everything on my mind the first time I get it. Tell one story, avoid four!
- Occasionally a Circle may agree a theme for a particular sharing.
- I may ask a question in the Circle, but there is no obligation any answer it.
- When a Circle is devoted to solving a problem, a higher intelligence emerges that embraces the wisdom of the entire group.
- The facilitator must endeavour to sense the time available for the sharing circle and invite the group to close the circle when the sharing feels complete, in keeping with the time allotted.
- Closing the ceremony takes equal care and creativity as does the start.

BASIC FORMS OF COUNCIL - SUGGESTIONS

TRADITIONAL ROUND
USUALLY SUN-WISE

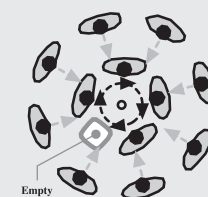


WEAVING THE WEB
USUALLY TO CENTRE



Go around at least once in a check-in to feel the circle before returning the piece to centre for web form

FISHBOWL COUNCIL
CIRCLE WITHIN CIRCLE



Fishbowls are good for transparency in meetings and inclusion for all who are interested

Can also be used in community process regarding conflict situations, or to explore a topic specific to a few. Takes less time than if all are one circle

The outer circle witnesses and supports the inner circle. Witnesses can be called upon for comments and input, or a person asked to join the inner circle on empty cushion if called on some specific topic

LISTENING IN SERVICE TO... SPEAK WHAT SERVES, YOU, THE CIRCLE AND THE HIGHER GOOD



COUNCIL INCLUDES AGE, SEX, RACE, RELIGION, ANCESTORS, NATURE, ANIMALS, DREAMS, THE WORLD, WHAT IS NOT SAID, WHAT IS NOT KNOWN...

Designed and Created by Rob Dreaming www.heart-source.com
Based on the teachings of Way of Council, with Gigi Coyle & Jack Zimmerman.
Original inspiration from Jock Millenson, kalikalos.com, with additional contributions; Gigi, Jack and Jock



*How
Did the rose
Ever open it's heart*

*And give to the world
All it's
Beauty?*

*It felt the encouragement of light
Against its
Being*

*Otherwise,
we all remain*

Too

Frightened

~ Hafiz

