

Self-Kindness Group: Online Group Policies

1. Current members, new members, and invited visitors are welcome at any time and may be present, both with and without notice. Sharing by group members and visitors is always encouraged but never required. When visitors are present, group members are invited to share or not share, to stay or not stay, their choice.
2. Mental illness is stigmatized in the U.S. and substance use is criminalized. If diagnoses are disclosed, people may lose their social standing, employment, scholarships, child custody, medications, even their very freedom. **To protect the safety of all, it is imperative that the identities of those who attend and the content of what is shared remain absolutely confidential.**
3. To protect the identity, confidentiality, privacy, and safety of all, take no screenshots and make no recordings of any kind, of anyone, or of anything during the session. Materials used during the session are available on our website. If you can't find what you seek, please email or text the counselor.

Group Protocol

- Arrive on time.
- Safety first.
- Practice self-kindness and other-kindness.
- Use "I-statements." Avoid "you-statements" (intrusion without permission) and "we-statements" (inclusion without permission).
- Observe silence during each other's sharing.
- If you find yourself wanting to react or respond to a group member's statements, become aware of what you are feeling and thinking first. Even if you choose not to follow up, practice being able to state your feelings and thoughts to yourself in reaction or response to others.
- Ask for permission—and wait to receive it—before asking a clarifying question or making a suggestion. With your request, identify the type of follow-up you want to offer. Examples: "Are you open to a clarifying question?" "Are you open to a suggestion?" Reflect the content first, then ask your question.
- Be cautious about giving advice. This is usually experienced, consciously or unconsciously, as a violation of the other person's autonomy and personhood.
- Balance gaining and giving.
- To foster open communication and discourage triangulation, disclose making contact outside of group. You are welcome—even encouraged—to have contact with group members. If you have had contact, please share that with the group.

Group Procedures

1. Reading of group policies and group protocol.
2. Welcome and announcements.
3. Sharing of any contact outside of group.
4. Brief sharing of insights, observations, questions, and/or concerns from last session.
5. Brief explanation and demonstration of new concepts and skills by counselors.
6. Q & A and discussion with members and counselors.
7. Check-out statements. Please open an email, address it to anne@annegiles.com, and use the subject line "I learned." Compose a two-sentence statement of observation, awareness, insight, and progress, beginning with "I learned..." Please state what you learned as a result of the session and how you think it will be of value to you. When each person reads the check-out statement aloud, a "Buffet of Wisdom" is created. This statement will be recorded in your progress notes.
8. Statements of appreciation, if time permits. Group members take turns choosing and acknowledging the individual who helped them gain the most awareness during the session. They also share the insight the person helped them realize.