COMMUNITY MEETINGS

Purpose: To provide a short check-in in which you are able to connect with others and identify issues that may support or impede your work together. Community meetings structure time together in a predictable way. It models caring and building bridges. Community meetings reinforce the power of the circle— the idea of shared responsibility for each other and the community—and serves as a way to establish some safety within the group.

The Community Meeting Questions:

How are you feeling? We ask this to assist and encourage feelings identification and transfer feelings into words as well as to support the importance of recognizing and managing emotions. We increase emotional intelligence by learning new words for feelings. Knowing the emotional climate of a group can help us feel safe. Participating in more than one Community meeting per day helps us to understand the transient nature of feelings. This is NOT a meeting to process, explain or justify the feeling, it is for identification purposes only. This part of the meeting is one sentence: “I feel ____.”

What is Your Goal for the Day? The purpose of this question is to help focus on the future (remembering that many people who experience trauma get stuck in the past or can’t envision a future). This is the bridging question from the present to the future. Goals create structure and cognitive focus, help everyone stay on track and provide us with a purpose. This also implies hope and a sense of being able to master or accomplish something, linking to self esteem.

Who Can You Ask for Help? We ask this question to build relationships among community members. Asking for help repairs damaged relationships. Helping others takes us out of our own problems and promotes self worth. Whenever possible, we should ask for help from a member in the room. Some people may indicate they will receive help from an inanimate object (i.e. “my computer/telephone will help me with that…”). This will not serve the purpose of building relationships among community members. It can be beneficial to reframe the question “if I run into a problem with meeting my goal, who will I ask for help?”