



## Welcome!

Being part of a community coming together can be a delight. There can also be personal challenges and group dynamics that feel uncomfortable. It is important to set clear intentions and establish a sense of respect among our group members. This enables us to create a supportive environment for us all.

The following Group Approaches assist us to build a foundation of healthy communication and a way of *being* in our sessions. They can also be transferred into your relationships outside our course; such as family, work colleagues, community, friends.

Please familiarize yourself with our Group Approaches and consider if there's anything you'd like to add or discuss. We will be reviewing them in more detail when we meet.

Your time and attention is greatly appreciated!



**BE MINDFUL** Be mindful of the talking piece and listen deeply. This approach is a gift to both the speaker AND the listener. The listener is given an opportunity to practice listening skills. Listening deeply is a skill to be practiced and does not always come easily. Notice how it feels to listen without interrupting the speaker. Listen to the space between words. Listen with all your senses, not just your hearing. Speakers are invited to share what is in their heart and can always pass on their turn and share silence. Either way, savour the experience of being in the company of others doing their best to listen deeply.



**BE AWARE** Be aware of your tendency to over-share or under-share. Contribute to our conversations with *awareness*. When feeling passionate about a subject, you may find you tend to go on a little longer, while others may feel more timid and hesitate speaking up at all. When contributing to a conversation with awareness, you speak what is alive for you in the moment and the message is clear and concise. Remember, both silence and playfulness are natural and welcome.



**BE CURIOUS** Embody curiosity for what emerges in the group. Make an effort to understand first rather than pre-judge yourself or others. It is said that in the mind of the expert there are very few possibilities, but in a childlike mind there are infinite possibilities because the moment is welcomed with curiosity. Be open to not knowing; this is often referred to as 'beginner's mind'. Throughout our sessions, even when something seems familiar, rather than lean on your past experiences and assumptions, do your best to stay present and curious.



**BE RESPECTFUL** Respect others within and outside our sessions. Each of us has a unique perspective, and we don't have to agree with, or like, what others share about their experience. This approach asks us to respect people's privacy; do not share information about other group members outside our sessions. Confidentiality is so important! Speak about your experience not about anyone else's.



**USE "I" STATEMENTS** Share your experience using "I" statements. Take responsibility for your process. It often happens that people share their personal experience using "we" and "you" language. If this comes up, you may be invited to reframe your phrases using "I" statements which can feel more vulnerable. With practice "I" statements will support you to take ownership and accountability for your experience which can lead to a greater sense of empowerment.