



SUPPORT-BASED PROGRAMS

**SHARING
CIRCLE**

**SUBSTANCE USE
SHARING CIRCLE**

**VIRTUAL
HANGOUT**

Support-based programs in a mental health peer support setting create a safe, non-judgmental space where people can share their experiences with others who truly understand. By connecting with peers who have lived experience, participants often feel less isolated and more validated, which can build trust, hope, and a sense of belonging. These programs emphasize mutual support, empathy, and shared learning, helping individuals feel empowered in their recovery while strengthening community connections and resilience.

SHARING CIRCLE

Vision Statement

To create a compassionate, inclusive, and culturally respectful space where participants can safely share, listen, and support one another on paths toward healing, resilience, and growth.

Purpose of the Group

Purpose of the Sharing Circle: A structured, peer-facilitated space rooted in mutual respect, support, and healing. Participants explore mental wellness, life experiences, and shared understanding through open dialogue.

Common themes include:

- Mental wellness and recovery
- Community healing and resilience
- Trauma-informed peer support
- Identity, purpose, or life transitions

Program Objectives

- Provide a safe, respectful space to share stories, feelings, and experiences.
- Reduce isolation and foster belonging through peer-led support.
- Promote healing, connection, and self-reflection within a structured format.
- Encourage mutual respect, non-judgment, and open-hearted listening.
- Build trust, empathy, and emotional awareness among group members.

Sharing Circle Procedure

1. **Welcome (5–10 min):** Facilitator welcomes participants and reviews the Comfort Agreement.
2. **Opening / Check-In:** The day's topic or definition will be introduced and participants are invited to add what it means to them (share-or-pass).
3. **Main Sharing Round (30–45 min):** The facilitator will introduce a prompt or theme (e.g., "Dealing with change"). No one is required to share; passing is always respected.

4. **Closing Round (5–10 min):** Invite one gratitude and one self-care action for today.
5. **Final Thank You & Wrap-Up:** Offer appreciation, note upcoming circles, and close the session.

Open Group Policy

The Sharing Circle is an open group, meaning:

- New participants are welcome at any time.
- No prior attendance is required.
- Individuals may join as often as they find it helpful.
- This structure ensures accessibility and flexibility for all who need support.

Session Overview

- **Schedule:** Weekly.
- **Format:** Hybrid – online and at NISA. Participants may sign-up for virtual attendance at nisa.on.ca/calendars.
- **Open group:** New participants may join at any time.
- **Attendance:** Join as often or as little as is helpful.
- **Eligibility:** Anyone registered with NISA may sign-up for this group.

SUBSTANCE USE SHARING CIRCLE

Vision Statement

To create a compassionate, inclusive, and culturally respectful space where participants can safely share, listen, and support one another on their paths toward healing, resilience, and growth.

Purpose of the Group

The Substance Use Recovery Sharing Circle provides a safe, structured, peer-facilitated space to explore recovery across physical, emotional, social, and spiritual dimensions. Using psychoeducation, dialogue, and experiential activities, participants deepen understanding of addiction and recovery, practice skills, and build supportive connections that sustain change.

Program Objectives

- Promote understanding of addiction & recovery: Frame addiction as a biopsychosocial condition; reduce stigma; explore diverse pathways (harm reduction, abstinence, SMART/peer models).
- Build emotional & mental health tools: Emotion regulation, cravings management, relapse-prevention skills, trauma awareness.
- Strengthen relationships & identity: Communication, boundaries, trust, attachment, self-forgiveness, identity beyond “addict” labels.
- Address co-occurring disorders safely: Open conversation on PTSD/C-PTSD, BPD, OCD, dissociation, schizophrenia, and the role of trauma.
- Develop life skills for long-term wellness: Goal setting, sober coping, digital safety, recovery capital, practical harm-reduction.
- Encourage creativity, reflection, & goal setting: Art/journaling, storytelling, values work, milestones.
- Provide ongoing peer connection & support: Normalize vulnerability; cultivate mutual aid and leadership opportunities.

Substance Use Recovery Sharing Circle Procedure

1. **Welcome & Check-In (5–10 min):** Facilitator greets the group, reviews the Comfort Agreement, and invites a brief “temperature check.”
2. **Topic / Activity (30–45 min):** Short teaching (e.g., cravings, emotions), skill practice, discussion, or creative task (e.g., recovery timeline, values card sort).
3. **Sharing or Journaling (10–20 min):** Participants reflect and, if they choose, share insights or next steps.
4. **Tools/Takeaways (5 min):** Provide a practical tool (grounding exercise, prompt, affirmation).
5. **Closing Check-Out (optional, 5 min):** One gratitude + one self-care action for the day.

Open Group Policy

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- New participants are welcome at any time.
- No prior attendance is required.
- Individuals may join as often as they find it helpful.
- This structure ensures accessibility and flexibility for all who need support.

Session Overview

- **Schedule:** Weekly.
- **Format:** Hybrid – online and at NISA. Participants may sign-up for virtual attendance at nisa.on.ca/calendars.
- **Open group:** New participants may join at any time.
- **Attendance:** Join as often or as little as is helpful.
- **Eligibility:** Anyone registered with NISA may sign-up for this group.

VIRTUAL HANGOUT

Vision Statement

To cultivate a compassionate, inclusive community—virtual and in-person—where individuals feel heard, valued, and connected, and where personal growth, wellness, and mutual respect are encouraged. We envision a space in which every participant can show up authentically, explore their voice, and build meaningful relationships without judgment. Through ongoing connection, creativity, and shared experience, we aim to reduce isolation, celebrate diversity, and foster a culture of empathy and empowerment.

Purpose of the Group

The Virtual Hangout is a peer-led group that promotes connection, creativity, and conversation in a relaxed, non-clinical setting. Through light activities, open sharing, and community-building, the group helps reduce isolation, support mental wellness, and foster meaningful relationships.

- The group aims to:
- Provide a safe, welcoming virtual space for social connection and emotional support.
- Support positive mental health through regular, low-pressure interaction.
- Create opportunities for peer-to-peer engagement, storytelling, and shared reflection.
- Offer pathways to additional support when needed, including referrals to Peer Support Workers.
- Reduce loneliness, stigma, and disconnection through inclusive, uplifting online interaction.

Program Objectives

- Foster Connection and Belonging: Create a welcoming virtual environment where participants feel included—no pressure, only presence. Encourage Lighthearted Sharing: Provide opportunities for enjoyment and self-expression through casual conversation, prompts, and activities.
- Support Mental Wellness Through Social Interaction: Reduce isolation and promote emotional well-being in a safe, consistent setting.

- **Build Comfort with Virtual Engagement:** Increase confidence in online participation while respecting individual boundaries.
- **Uphold Group Agreements:** Ground the space in mutual respect, confidentiality, and choice.
- **Promote Positive Takeaways:** Ensure participants leave feeling affirmed, uplifted, or lighter than when they arrived.

WRAP Program Procedure

1. **Welcome (5-10 min):** Facilitator welcomes participants and reviews the Comfort Agreement.
2. **Icebreaker/Opening Prompt (5-10 min):** The facilitator will ask a brief question.
3. **Discussion or Activity (30-40 min):** The facilitator may introduce a sharing circle, theme-based discussion, show-and-tell, or low-stakes creative activity.
4. **Closing Reflection (5-10 min):** The facilitator will invite one takeaway, appreciation, or positive closing comment.

Open Group Policy

Virtual Hangout is an open group, meaning:

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- This structure ensures accessibility and flexibility for all who need support.

Session Overview

- **Schedule:** Weekly.
- **Format:** Hybrid – online and at NISA. Participants may sign-up for virtual attendance at nisa.on.ca/calendars.
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- **Attendance:** Join as often or as little as is helpful.
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