

Kind Meeting Toolkit

How Kind Meetings Work

Meetings can be coordinated by anyone. All that is needed is a group of people with a shared intention of kindness and a space where they can gather. When those elements come together, a meeting can happen.

Community-Led

Meetings begin with volunteers reading relational agreements. Anyone can open the meeting by inviting volunteers to read the relational agreements out loud.

Everyone is welcome to volunteer, regardless of experience. It's okay for volunteers to lack confidence; it's okay for accidents to happen; and it's okay to try again another time. If you volunteer and discover that you're unable to continue at any point, you are welcome to pass the role to someone else. Simply ask for another volunteer to pick up wherever you left off.

A community-led meeting is created by everyone in the room. Throughout the meeting, participants help ensure that everyone who would benefit to share has an opportunity to do so. This may include being mindful of time, listening respectfully, and encouraging people's participation. Our goal is creating a space where people feel heard, respected, and supported together.

Feedback

Feedback is optional.

After each person shares, they are invited to choose whether they would like to receive feedback. Some people just need space to be heard. Others may benefit from reflection, encouragement, help thinking through something, or support identifying unmet needs.

If someone would like feedback, they may also wish to share what kind of feedback would be most helpful. For example, they might ask for help identifying unmet needs, ideas for next steps, encouragement, additional perspectives, or simply gentle reflection.

If someone does not want feedback, the kindest response is no feedback.

Feedback Is Not Advice

The purpose of feedback is to help reduce suffering by responding to unmet needs with kindness.

We avoid telling people what they are feeling, what they should do, why something happened, or meanings about their experiences. Even when our intentions are kind, replacing another person's understanding with our own can block people from having support. Rather than imagining what we would feel in their situation, we stay curious about what it is like for them.

Gentle Guardrails for Kind Feedback

Feedback is a response to the person who shared, not opportunity to take a turn sharing. When offering feedback, we try to:

- Respond to what was shared.
- Validate experiences.
- Reflect unmet needs.
- Be curious instead of making assumptions.

Kind feedback does not require having the right answers. Sometimes the best support we can offer each other is our willingness to understand before trying to explain.

Meeting Length

Suggested Meeting Time

The total length of a meeting depends on the number of people participating and the needs of the group.

For smaller groups of five or fewer participants, a 90-minute meeting with untimed sharing often provides enough space for everyone to speak naturally without feeling rushed.

For groups of six or more participants, using a timer for individual shares can help ensure that everyone who would benefit to share has an opportunity to do so. The group may also choose to extend the meeting—to allow adequate time for both sharing and feedback. When shares are timed, it is useful to include planned time for feedback too.

Participants are welcome to arrive late, leave early, or step away as needed. Meetings are intended to be flexible and accessible for everybody.

Time	Activity
10 minutes	Welcome and volunteers read the relational agreements out loud
5 minutes	Brief introductions and check-ins
60 minutes	Open sharing one person at a time
25 minutes	Open discussion
5 minutes	Closing check-outs and meeting close

Meeting Format

1. Welcome (5 minutes)

- Welcome everyone.

- Remind people that anyone can volunteer to read.
- Emphasize that confidence is not required and mistakes are welcome.

Ways to Participate

People who are unable to speak, use alternative forms of communication, or simply benefit from remaining non-speaking are valued members of the group. If invited to share, you are always welcome to say "pass" or decline without explanation.

You are welcome to introduce yourself, use an alternate name, or choose not to introduce yourself at all. Some people use a nickname or chosen name to maintain privacy.

There is no expectation that participation looks the same for everyone. We are here to share kindness, connection, and support in ways that meet each person's needs and abilities.

2. Relational Agreements (5 minutes)

Invite volunteers to read the meeting's relational agreements out loud.

If a volunteer decides they no longer wish to continue, they may simply ask for another volunteer to pick up where they left off.

A sample of kind relational agreements are located at the back of this guide.

3. Opening Check-In (Optional – 30 seconds to 1 minute per person)

Invite participants to briefly introduce themselves, share how they are arriving today, or share what it's like for them to be here.

4. Open Sharing (60 minutes)

Participants take turns sharing as they feel ready.

Everyone helps create balanced participation by:

- Listening respectfully.
- Allowing space for quieter voices.
- Being mindful of time so everyone who wishes to share has an opportunity.

5. Closing Check-Outs (5 minutes)

Invite participants to share a final thought, takeaway, or intention if they wish.

Thank everyone for participating, share any announcements about the next meeting time and location, and formally close the meeting.

Relational Agreements for Kind Meetings

Intention of Kindness

Our primary action together is acknowledging reality with the intention of kindness. Our relational agreements function as kind guardrails that enable us to benefit from each other's company without being harmed by the harms of each other's experiences. When any of us become disabled from remembering or practicing our relational agreements, each one of us may kindly request an agreement be reread.

Peer Facilitation

Meetings are run by peers. Nobody is the boss, and nobody is in charge. Together, we make the meeting happen by sharing. We all create the group, and the group is the container. This way, no one individual is responsible for making it run. We do our best to remember that we are all just fellow peers. We agree to regard each other as equals who each may have our own needs at any time.

Privacy

We agree to not reveal the identities of people inside of the group with people outside of the group. During group we agree to not reference other group members during our own share, and we do not share memories, dreams, or inside experiences that we have about others in the group.

Disability

We agree to practice boundaries that allow disabled people to be disabled. In meetings, we will not require anyone to demonstrate or prove their disability – we will just accept and do our best to support each other. Disabled people have the same rights to community, participation, and having their needs met. This is true of the most visible disability and those that appear invisible, too.

Ongoing Harm

We agree to acknowledge reality that many of us may be experiencing active conditions of harm, abuse, neglect, violence, or exploitation. Our relational agreements function to protect the special needs of people who are contending with active abuse conditions, and those who are otherwise lacking agency and left disabled by abuse they have survived.

Triggers

We agree to do our best to help our own systems modulate our contact with traumatic and disturbing material. The number of different things that can trigger others are pretty much impossible to avoid. We are practicing building kind-enough and safe-enough spaces where people can just be direct about our experiences. We are not trying to trigger each other, and it is going to happen incidentally. It is always okay to leave the meeting to take care of yourself and come back when you are ready, or to modulate your experience by any way you know how.

Active and Involuntary Suicidality and Self-Injury

We agree to hold the likelihood that people come to the meeting actively and/or involuntarily suicidal or in active elevated system harm, with no ability to tell each other about it. When someone openly shares about these experiences, we acknowledge this and offer support throughout the meeting.

Friendship and Accidental or Incidental Hurting

Mistreatment, abuse, and neglect, especially in childhood, can create obstacles to community and connection. For many, openly connecting or expressing ourselves directly is a dangerous action in many areas of our life. This frequently obstructs meeting our own needs, whether it is for friendship, community, love, comradeship, etc. In meetings, we accept that we all come from imperfect histories and conditions and that all of us are going to make accidents. Accidents are not intentions. Accidents can create messiness and confusion and are simply unavoidable. We acknowledge accidents as such, and we try to help each other experience accidents as exactly that – without high-stakes consequences, and without pathologizing each other. We know that we may hurt each other accidentally, and we promote self-protection alongside acceptance.

Optional Opening Share Prompts

- What's at the top of your head and heart?
- How can we be helpful for you today?
- Is there anything lost, invisible, or imperceptible that may be helpful to make known amongst people who have a chance at perceiving it?

Optional Closing Share Prompts (to read 5 minutes before closing the meeting)

- What was the effect like for you of being together today?
- What is one thing you might do to take care of yourself today?
- What is an intention you are leaving with today?