

CLEARING ROUND FOR STAFF MEETINGS



Clearing Round Leader: Watch the video teachings on the Clearing Round available on the website. These videos in the “Staff Portal” section of the website and are password protected (Beloved). This document is divided into two parts.

- **PART I:** the actual process to be used for the Clearing Round during staff meetings.
- **PART II:** a fuller description of what the Clearing Round is about and why we do it. It is the background information that you can draw on when people ask questions about the Clearing Round.

PART I: The Clearing Round for Staff Meetings

A. Describe the Clearing Round

- The Clearing Round is about staying clear with one another and having a clear heart.
- “Clear” means that you are not blocked or hindered from being present (present in love and positively engaged, not simply physically present) to other persons in this circle.
- To be “not clear” means that you have something blocking your connection to another person. It could be a judgment or feeling about someone. You may be triggered by something that happened, or an imagination, that creates a wall or block. Or they may remind me of someone else that evokes a block.
- Any questions?

B. Why we do the Clearing Round

- To create and maintain safety in the circle and on the weekends.
- Ask: **What happens when people are not clear with one another?**
(It may be that I choose to hold onto bitterness, resentment, unforgiveness, imaginations, judgments, and I may become a toxic holding tank - that will come out and hurt others somewhere, sometime.)
- It is our goal to stay clear throughout this staffing and through the weekend for the sake of the staff and for the attendees.
- We do this here so that we can take this home and put it into practice in our daily lives.

C. Leading the Clearing Round

- Have the group members look around the circle at each person in the group. Ask them to become aware of any person(s) in the group with whom they experience a trigger, an awareness of judgments, feelings, or some block that keeps him/her from willing to be fully present and engaged with that person. (Do not rush through this part. Give 10-15 seconds for this part.)
- Have each person check in: 1st Name and “I’m clear” or “I’m not clear” (Skip the “Bless you”). Do not have him/her go into any details about who it is they are not clear with, but finish the check in with everyone first. Then, go back to those who are “not clear” and follow the process below.

D. Facilitating a Clearing

- Have the person who is “not clear” say who he is “not clear” with. Ask the person just named if he is willing to participate. If a person does not want to be cleared with then ask a volunteer to stand in for that person.
- Have the two of them stand facing one another. Ask both how we can support them (not: do they need support?). Explain that support is part of what our community is about and what support could look like: Support could be a person standing behind them, or next to them, touching or not touching.
- Remind the person being cleared with that this is not about them, but about the person who is not clear. Tell him/her to put up a semipermeable shield and to let in only what he wants to as the person is clearing.
Say, “There may be something that you can own and look at in your own life.”

E. The Actual Clearing (Direct this to the person who is “not clear”)

- **What are the facts?** Keep them on track if they diverge to judgments or feelings stop them and have them get clear on what the facts are only. If they speak a judgment as a fact, tell them – “That’s a judgment/imagination.”
- **What are you imagining?** (thoughts/opinions/judgments) Again, keep them on track with thoughts/opinions only.
- **What are you feeling?** Only feelings here, no judgments/opinions. Sometimes people say “feel” when they mean “think/imagine”. Keep this to feelings and bring clarity to the person if they are confused about feelings or judgments.
- **What do you own?** Typically, this relates back to the facts or imaginations. They can own that they have either done the same “fact” or the thing(s) they imagine the other person has done.
- **What do you want?** (it may help to say “what do you want for yourself, for the other and for your relationship)

F. Opportunity for the other person to respond

- This may or may not need to happen. The person clearing may not need it, and that’s ok.
- If the person wants to respond note that this is not about explaining their position or defending themselves.
- It could be an acknowledgement of:
 - Something they own
 - A willingness to give the person who cleared what he wants from them.

To end, the facilitator should ask the person clearing: “Are you clear?” (applaud to encourage their work)

PART II: A fuller description of the Clearing Round

Clearing is an important strategy for maintaining a safe container. If people are “unclear” within the group this will give rise to division, a toxic environment, a lack of awareness, and potentially a dissolution of relationships and the group itself. The Clearing Round is a way to foster a clean and clear way of expressing thoughts, feelings, and desires. Maintaining clarity between members of the staff is imperative for creating a spirit of openness, authenticity, and honesty. Without this the group will not be safe within itself or for others.

To not clear means that we open the door for disruption of the safe container we are building. We are left seeing the other person as the one having the problem, and we then justify our own judgments and feelings, potentially keeping us in a toxic state, and consequently creating immature ways of relating to others. Failure to see that the clearing is ABOUT ME is a failure to own the one thing you can control – how you show up in life – your own judgments (imaginings), feelings and wants.

The goal of this model is that the speaker maximizes the opportunity for connection with the listener. The results of using this model may or may not change the listener’s response and future actions. However, it does accomplish one very important thing. This is a respectful, mature way of communicating. Following this model has the potential of freeing the speaker from becoming “toxic.” We become toxic when we do not keep our hearts clean of the weight and debris of hurts, judgments, and feelings. When we let these things add up without effectively facing them and communicating about them, they poison our hearts and minds and our ability to connect with others in a mature and loving way. That is why Paul talks about “not letting the sun go down on your anger.” In other words, deal with it now or as soon as it is appropriate.

The Container

In this document, and often during the clearing round, we refer to building and maintaining a "safe container." Keep in mind that some staff may not be familiar with the concept of the container and it can be helpful to explain what we mean by that. The **container** is the space that we are creating to contain or to hold the inner work the attendees will do on the weekend. The container is represented metaphorically by the configuration of the main meeting room on the weekend. The staff horseshoe surrounds and contains the attendee circle. Similarly, in the staff meetings, we sit in a circle and the space inside the circle is the container. These are symbols that represent the reality of what we want the Attendee to experience on the weekend - a safe place where they can experience whatever comes up for them.

The goal for us as a staff is to create and maintain safety in the container for the attendees. This means that whatever comes up for a man on the weekend is welcome. It means that we maintain confidentiality. It means that we honor the energy and spirit of each process and ritual on the weekend. It means we stay clear with one another so that the attendees aren't distracted from their work by division they perceive or sense in the staff. It means we stay clear with one another so we can give the attendees our undivided attention and support.

How to introduce the Clearing Round:

To begin, introduce that you are going to lead the clearing round. Some teaching will be necessary whenever there are new people to the group and to this process. Assume that there are rookies and others who may not be familiar with this process. Here are the points to cover when teaching is necessary:

- This is about awareness
- This is about ownership
- This is about creating a safe space for everyone in the group and those who are impacted by the group
- This is about encouraging a way of living in all of your world, not just this particular group. Our goal is to use our group experiences as a means to practice new behaviors and ways of living so that in our everyday relationships we show up clear and more mature. We do this work diligently in our groups so that we understand and put into practice these key principles of mature living with spouses, family members, and friends.
- Refer to the Communication Model handout for the parts of the clearing process. It is the facilitator's job to keep the person who is clearing on point. Pay attention to whether or not the person is confusing facts with "imagining" or "feelings" with "imaginings" and so on.
- Depending on the circumstances the person being cleared with may or may not respond. Particularly, he may respond to the person's WANT, expressing whether he can give it to him or not.
- Check in with the person doing the clearing: "Are you clear?" The process is complete.

The COMMUNICATION MODEL used for The Clearing Round

FACTS:

Facts are the data relevant to the conversation. Facts are not the story, and it is not the interpretations or conclusions one might draw from the facts. These are objectively true statements. An example of facts would be: “We decided last month that we would spend only \$xxxx for our monthly budget. You overspent by \$300. Now we do not have enough for next month’s budget.”

IMAGINATIONS/JUDGMENTS:

These are thoughts, opinions and beliefs. They are my interpretation of the facts, the meaning I get from them. These interpretations may or may not be true. Start each statement with “I imagine...” because it helps to own that these are thoughts, not facts. Owning them as thoughts helps the listener to hear without being judged.

FEELINGS:

Feelings are emotions. While there are many different feelings, they can usually be traced to five primary emotions: mad, sad, glad, fear and shame. Do not give qualifiers or justifiers. Resist the temptation to explain it away or diminish it. Not “I feel a little upset because you...” Just say “I feel angry and sad.”

WHAT I OWN:

A vital piece of being heard by another person is your capacity to take ownership of your part in the issue at hand. Are you able to own that you have done the same thing, or something similar? Go back to your judgments and consider how those might be true of you. “I own that I have been controlling in different circumstances and that this has hurt you.”

WHAT I WANT:

It can often be helpful to simply express what you want in a particular situation. Be specific, “I want you to be a better wife” is not helpful. Rather “I want us to enjoy each other’s company” is more helpful. Consider what you want, both in the situation and in the relationship. Recognize the person may, or may not, give you what you want: be clear without controlling the other person’s response.