

# Shahid Empathy Circle

*a Jami'Initiative Offering*

## Format & Group Guidelines

*Please read before joining the Circle for the first time*

### FORMAT:

- Becoming present in the moment, with our Lord. Fatiha, dhikr (Ash-Shahid), centering and/or breathing
- One word or up to a couple sentence check in (dependent on size of group)
- Reminder of the Circle guidelines.
- The Shahid Circle is open for silence and sharing

### GROUP GUIDELINES:

1. Please turn cell phones off, handle distractions, leave cameras open.
2. What is said in this Circle is only for this Circle at this time. Please respect all that is said in confidence.
3. Most of the time the facilitator remains silent other than during opening, to honour guidelines, aid a newcomer to the group, or to help build safety as best they can.
4. Please speak when you feel moved (listening for your inner/hearts deeper prompting) to share something related to you, your life and the present moment or make a request.
5. When speaking, feel free to use natural language.
6. Please intentionally minimize the use of words (particularly when unconscious -disconnected from our words/going on and on or just talking too often or too much for this setting).
7. When you are finished speaking, please say; "I'm complete" or "That's my share" or something that lets us know you have ended your sharing.
8. No one is obligated to share anything. Silent presence is very filling and fulfilling for many!
9. Please do not openly eat in the circle and limit any noise or distractions, including moving around.
10. Using feelings and needs sheets or cards and resources from the University of Sufism or SSC regarding this subject is helpful and encouraged.
11. We discourage dialogue and only apply it during our opening.
12. We ask participants not to dialogue or have conversations between two people or the group.
13. Do not speak out of habit or to fill silent spaces. Do your best to stretch into the deeper listening and movements in the silence.
14. Two optional requests to aid in receiving verbal empathy and reflections:
  - a. After finishing their share, the speaker makes the request:

*"Would anyone in the group be willing to guess one or two feelings and needs you think you heard?"*

Any group member could speak up and honor the request by using one of these replies:

*“I’m wondering if you feel \_\_\_\_\_ and have the beautiful needs of \_\_\_\_\_?”*

*“Or I think I heard you are feeling \_\_\_\_\_ and needing or longing for \_\_\_\_\_.”*

b. After they are complete, the speaker makes the request:

*“Would anyone in the group, including the facilitator, be willing to reflect back a couple of nuggets from what they heard me share?”*

This can be asked of up to 2 participants if helpful.

15. After a circle member responds to one of the specific requests above, they could say “Alhamdulillah” or something similar to let us know they are done and then go back to silence, until someone else is moved to share something that is alive for them. Remember silence is a practice even before, during and after speaking, try not to get caught by the urge to start a dialogue.