WE BEGIN WHERE WE ARE · THE SERIES

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the practices, at length
insearchofpeace.fund/practice

We Begin is a community justice curriculum of the In Search of Peace Fund, written by Wilfred Henry. Not a framework or a list of best practices: meant to be held, questioned, refused, and remade by people who know their context better than any toolkit could.

This zine shares general information. It is not legal advice or therapy.

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NO.

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WE BEGIN WHERE WE ARE

a map of the practices.
start anywhere.

WE BEGIN

where we are

A PROJECT OF THE IN SEARCH OF PEACE FUND

for sexual harms
(and other relational violences)

IT'S A CLOUD

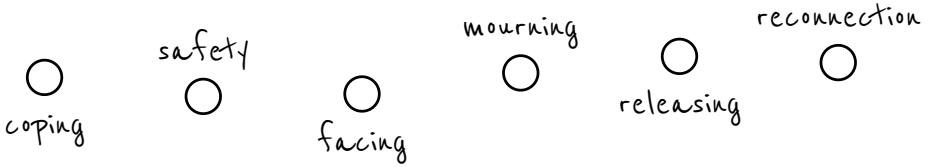
This is not a framework or a list of best practices. It's a cloud: a messy, shifting ecology of attempts. Some ancient, some barely imagined. Meant to be held, questioned, refused, and remade by people who know their context better than any toolkit could.

Seven families of practice float in it. The rings overlap. A friend calls late, needs a couch for the night. That's safety, and accompaniment, and probably boundaries. One phone call.

1
safety
planning

or here

sometimes just naming where we are is enough.
we begin where we are.



The path to healing from harm is the next number. Six places. They loop and overlap, and we can be in more than one at a time. That's No. 00.

IF RIGHT NOW IS TOO MUCH

988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, call or text
1-800-656-4673 RAINN, sexual assault
1-800-799-7233 Domestic Violence Hotline, or text START to 88788
1-888-773-8368 Stop It Now, if you're worried about your own or someone else's sexual thoughts or behavior toward children

WHERE THIS COMES FROM

Wilfred Henry, the We Begin handout, the practice sheets at insearchofpeace.one/practices and the source lists at insearchofpeace.fund/practice/families.

Hidden Water: its affinity circles, and the Path to Healing from Harm, developed by Elizabeth Clemants.

Kay Pranis, *The Little Book of Circle Processes*. Marshall B. Rosenberg, *Nonviolent Communication*; feelingsandneeds.org.

Creative Interventions Toolkit. Mia Mingus, "Pods and Pod Mapping Worksheet" (BATJC), and her four parts of accountability. Allan MacRae and Howard Zehr, *The Little Book of Family Group Conferences*.

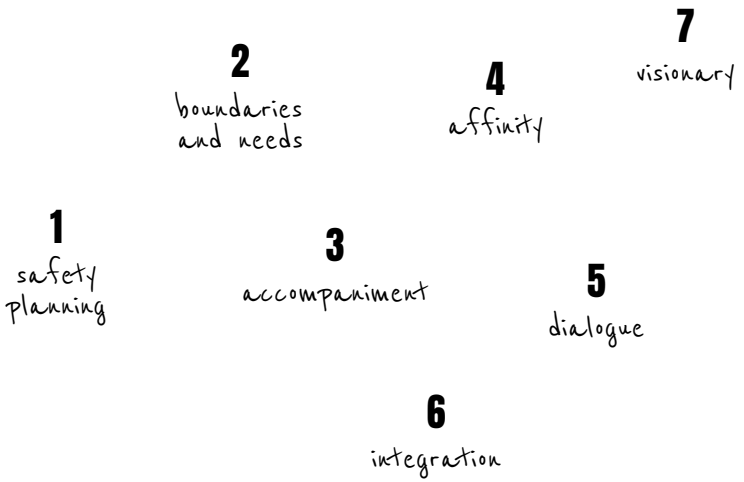
Wilfred Henry is a senior circle keeper with Hidden Water, where he has sat in circle since 2021, and a staff facilitator with Central Virginia Community Justice. He lives in Nelson County, Virginia, and carries mail.

HOW TO USE THESE

START ANYWHERE

Open what draws you. Leave the rest for another day. Every practice is an invitation, never a requirement. You don't need all seven, or any order.

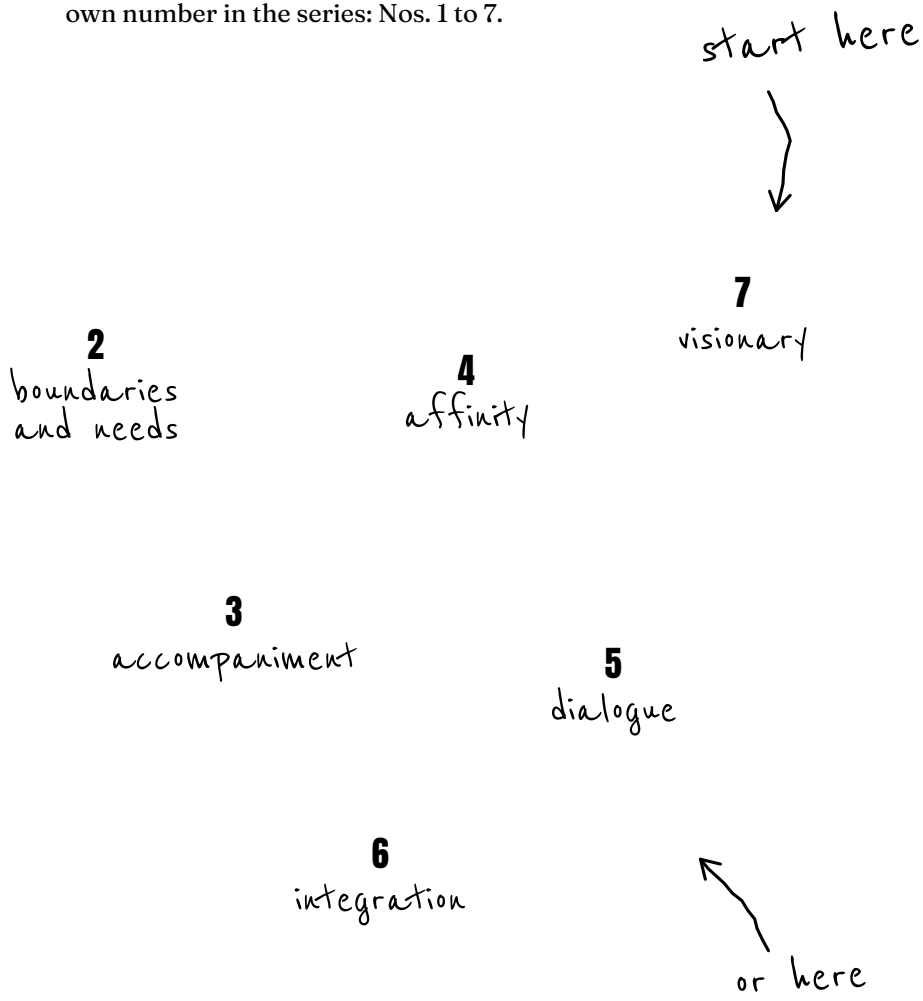
Some of this you already do. The friend who stays on the phone. Soup left on a porch. The walk home after. The practices are named plainly so you can recognize them.



mark where you'd start, today.

THE SEVEN FAMILIES

Each ring gets its own pages in here, and its own number in the series: Nos. 1 to 7.



UNDER THE CLOUD · NO. 000 GOES DEEP

THREE THINGS

Three practices hold up all the others. They come with you into every family.

CIRCLE

People gather, take turns speaking, and listen. The circle slows time, redistributes power, and makes visible that truth is collective.

NEEDS

A shared language for speaking from feelings and needs instead of blame or defense.

I needed acknowledgment.

you disrespected me

CIRCLE

NEEDS

art + creative expression
the work only has to be true

collective dreaming
small experiments: a shared meal, a pod

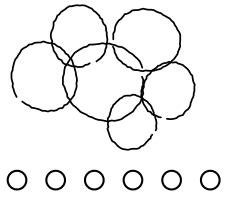
advocacy + collective voice
stories carried outward, only when people choose

pleasure education
joy as a sign of safety

cultural organizing
study circles, story sharing, learning together

FAMILY 7 OF 7 · NO. 7 GOES DEEP

VISIONARY

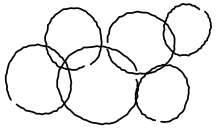


imagining, and remembering, what else is possible.

Ritual, art, song and storytelling that turn private healing into collective remembrance. What we learn in circle, carried outward with consent.

FAMILY 6 OF 7 · NO. 6 GOES DEEP

INTEGRATION



letting change settle in, and carrying what we learned forward.

How we metabolize change and carry it forward. Justice doesn't end with dialogue or repair; it continues in the choices made afterward, where insight becomes practice and practice becomes culture.

archiving + story transmission
maps for whoever comes later

community reflection circles
what held, what failed

meaning making + reflection
for coherence, not closure

accountability maintenance
trust rebuilt by evidence, over time

ritual + commemoration
a meal, a song, a letter

VALUES

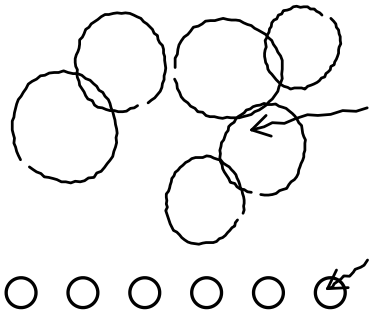
Living agreements to return to when trust falters.

consent and choice.
shared responsibility.
non-punishment:

accountability is relationship, not retribution.

Circle has Indigenous and Black-liberation roots. We who sit in circle now are its descendants, with a responsibility to remain in relationship with that lineage.

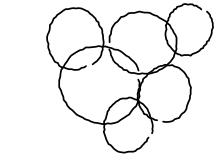
on each family page, a small map:



VALUES

FAMILY 1 OF 7 · NO. 1 GOES DEEP

SAFETY PLANNING



how we respond to danger and make room for life again.

Risk assessment without surveillance or control. The essentials that let a nervous system settle.

risk assessment
what's dangerous, honestly, and what can be done

pod mapping + safety networks
the people you'd actually call

relational harm reduction
small agreements: contact, timing, place

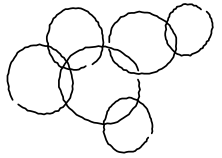
violence interruption + de-escalation
slowing a dangerous moment down

crisis response networks
who comes, who stays on the phone, who follows up

stabilization
housing, food, warmth, rides, rest

FAMILY 5 OF 7 · NO. 5 GOES DEEP

DIALOGUE



talking directly, with support, about harm.

How, when readiness exists, we meet across difference. Only after safety, readiness and accompaniment are in place.

DIRECT DIALOGUE
Face to face, with a facilitator, after long preparation apart.

SHUTTLE
Messages carried by a go-between, at each person's pace.

TRUTH CIRCLES
The community looks at what happened, and at its own part.

SURROGATES
Someone with a similar experience stands in.

FAMILY GROUP
Those closest to the harm decide. Drawn from Māori practice.

AMENDS
Self-reflection, apology, repair, changed behavior. Judged by the people affected.



preparing, apart

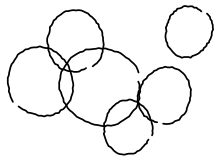
after safety. after readiness. never before.

preparing, apart



FAMILY 4 OF 7 · NO. 4 GOES DEEP

AFFINITY



being with people who've been through something like what you've been through, so no one has to translate.

Healing circles, gathered within shared experience. Not a waiting room for something larger; part of justice itself. The names in capitals are Hidden Water's.

experienced harm
GREEN CIRCLE

shared identity

caused harm
PURPLE CIRCLE

grief

a talking piece. no advice.

across roles
MULTICOLOR EXPERIENCES

family + supporters
ORANGE & BLUE CIRCLES

holding both
DUALCOLOR CIRCLES

needs-based communication
feelings and needs, without blame

feedback literacy
practiced while the stakes are low

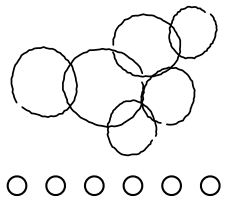
relational boundary support
friends who know what your no protects

embodied consent education
yes, no and maybe, felt in the body

power + role mapping
who holds what: age, role, money

FAMILY 2 OF 7 · NO. 2 GOES DEEP

BOUNDARIES & NEEDS



saying what we need, and protecting each other's limits.

How we orient in relationship and make care legible. Protecting each other's no. Mapping how power shapes what consent can mean.

FAMILY 3 OF 7 · NO. 3 GOES DEEP

ACCOMPANIMENT

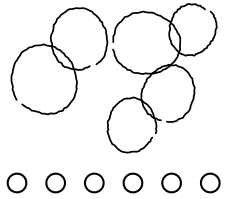
walking with someone. staying near while they go through something hard.

How we stay with one another through rupture and repair: the practice of not turning away, without taking over, disappearing, or demanding change on our timeline.

It belongs to every place on the path. Witnessing. Companions who walk with people who caused harm. The check-ins and shared meals that outlast the crisis.

one mark for every time someone showed up.

care as duration, not an event.



witnessing + presence
staying steady, without fixing

accountability companionship
walking with someone through apology, repair, change

a check-in.
a meal.
a ride.
a call.
again.

circles of support + accountability
a small group that keeps showing up

transformative pairing
two people, each teacher and student

spiritual companionship
grief, shame, doubt. no belief required

long-term accompaniment
for years. healing is slower than any program