

A Guide for Strengthening Relationship-Centered Care within Groups and Organizations



EMPOWERING MENTAL HEALTH
DECISION MAKING

<i>Five Key Attributes of a Healthy Community/ Milieu</i>	1 Unsatisfactory	2	3 Average	4	5 Superior
<i>A) How strong is the <u>feeling of emotional and physical safety</u> within your community; group or organization?</i>					
<i>B) How strongly do you feel your presence in your community helps you to feel a sense of <u>belonging and purpose</u>?</i>					
<i>C) What is your assessment of our community's healing environment; are <u>kindness, respect and open and honest communication</u> the norms?</i>					
<i>D) Is your <u>participation</u> in the work and social life of your community <u>welcomed and appreciated</u>? Do you believe your input and ideas are valued?</i>					
<i>E) <u>Mutuality</u>: As you think of the <u>needs of others</u>, how would you rate your <u>community's capacity to offer each other a sense of belonging, safety, kindness and appreciation</u>? Are <u>empathetic relationships</u> encouraged?</i>					

In hoping we are entering a post-pandemic phase, we yearn for reconnection. We want to feel a greater sense of belonging to our communities again. This is natural and we tend to thrive in community, because most of us were meant, indeed, to live and work in close relationship with others. It is time to pay more attention to the quality of our relationships, to the attributes of healthy community that are important in any mental health 'gathering'.

Here is how to do it: Periodically, every member of your gathering, group, organization or community should be invited by a convener to anonymously check one box on each line in the matrix above showing his or her assessment of the strength of each attribute within your gathering/community. Have one trusted member, not the convener, confidentially collect and tally the results for presentation by the convener to the gathering. The convener guides an appreciative dialogue about the results, with a leading question like, "Why is the emotional safety score so high?" During the dialogue interest in the attributes will be re-vitalized and relationship improvements will naturally emerge. This collection of 'data' and dialogical process is repeated once a year. Note: Each dialogue will naturally cause some members to do even more between sessions to pay attention to and improve the relationship-centered care and support of the group.

When you pay attention to these attributes, you will naturally strengthen your organization's ability to help all of its members to achieve and sustain an increased sense of belonging, purpose and resilience.

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