

**SHARING CIRCLE OVERVIEW &
GUIDELINES
FOR SHE RECOVERS CERTIFIED
PROFESSIONAL VOLUNTEER
FACILITATORS**

Version .01

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THANK YOU FOR YOUR INTEREST

We are grateful for your interest in learning more about the SHE RECOVERS® Foundation (SRF) Sharing Circle Program. This document will provide you with an overview of the program and introduce you to some important directives from SRF Headquarters that are in place to maintain consistency between all Sharing Circles, and to ensure that all Sharing Circles are hosted in adherence with our 510(c)(3) non-profit charitable requirements. Please review this document closely as you consider whether you are ready and able to launch and host a Sharing Circle.

A companion document, the Sharing Circle Facilitator Toolkit, is currently under development and will provide you with detailed information about how to launch and host a Sharing Circle. The Toolkit will include templates and tools you will need, including an Introductory Letter for Potential Sharing Circle Venues, Sharing Circle Agreements, Sharing Circle Script, and more.

We have a lot of work to do, and a lot of women to help. Your willingness to be part of this next part of our movement's growth is greatly appreciated. **If, after reviewing this overview and guidelines document, you are interested in facilitating an SRF Sharing Circle, please:**

1. Complete an expression of interest form [HERE > sherecovers.org/sharing-circles/#professionals](https://sherecovers.org/sharing-circles/#professionals)
2. Fill out an SRF volunteer application [HERE > sherecovers.org/get-involved/#advocate](https://sherecovers.org/get-involved/#advocate)
3. Join us for the SHE RECOVERS Sharing Circles Re-launch Collaboration & Strategy Session on September 1 > sherecovers.org/sharing-circles/#Jointhecelebration

If you have any questions or curiosities about Sharing Circles please contact Lisa Wall, Director of Community Engagement & Online Programs via email at lisa.wall@sherecovers.org.

Yours in recovery,

Dawn Nickel & Taryn Strong

Susan Carter

Founders, SRF

CEO, SRF

TIMELINE & KEY DATES

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Thursday, September 1, 2022 @ 3:00 pm Eastern | Sharing Circle Facilitator Collaboration Meeting |
| September 6, 2022 @ 11:59 pm Eastern | Expression of interest due |
| Week of September 19, 2022 | Sharing circle toolkit and volunteer documentation made available to pre-existing & potential Sharing Circle Facilitators (round 1) |
| Week of September 19, 2022 | Launch and promotional assets made available to pre-existing Sharing Circle Facilitators (round 1) |
| Tuesday, September 27, 2022 | Web presence updated with pre-existing (round 1) Sharing Circle Listings |
| Week of October 3, 2022 : Day & Time TBA | Sharing Circle Facilitator Training for round 1 |
| Thursday, October 20, 2022 | Sharing Circle re-launch celebration + Q&A Virtual Meeting RSVP to attend |
| Thursday, October 20, 2022 | Sharing Circle expression of interest form is reshared (for pre-existing and potential facilitators) |
| Month of October & Ongoing : Starts week of October 3, 2022 | Round 1 Sharing Circles re-launch in local communities |
| Week of November 7, 2022 | Revised Sharing circle overview, guidelines, volunteer documentation, and launch assets made available to pre-existing & potential Sharing Circle Facilitators (round 2) |
| Thursday, November 17, 2022 | Web presence updated with round 2 Sharing Circle Listings |
| Week of November 21, 2022 : Day & Time TBA | Sharing Circle Facilitator Training for round 2 |
| November 29, 2022 @ 11:59 pm EDT | Expression of interest due (round 2) |
| Week of December 5, 2022 | Round 2 Sharing Circles re-launch in local communities |
| January, 2023 | SRF Volunteer Trauma & Inclusivity Training |
| Spring 2023 | Online portal & toolkit launches for SHE RECOVERS Certified Professionals |

ABOUT THE SHE RECOVERS FOUNDATION

As a designated SR® Professional you are already familiar with our Vision, Mission, Values, and Intentions & Guiding Principles. They are provided below as a refresher, and so that you can see how closely our Sharing Circle program aligns with our overall philosophy and approach.

SRF Vision

A world where all women* in or seeking recovery are celebrated, supported, and deemed essential to healthy communities.

**All expressions of women are welcome.*

SRF Mission

To inspire hope, reduce stigma, and empower women in or seeking recovery for substance use and/or mental health challenges to increase their recovery capital, heal themselves, and help other women to do the same.

SRF Core Values

Commitment to Mission. All SRF programs, activities, and efforts should support the mission.

Integrity. SRF acts with uncompromising honesty, integrity, and openness. Public trust and confidence in SRF's stewardship of resources is critical to the achievement of our mission.

Accessibility. SRF believes we are all recovering from something and that ALL women must be supported to find their individual pathways and patchworks of recovery. We create and hold healing spaces to serve women from all walks of life.

Diversity. SRF recognizes that diversity is our strength and all women and non-binary individuals who identify with women's communities are welcomed and respected in our movement. We honor, celebrate, and make space for difference in our healing communities.

Collaboration. SRF works collaboratively with individuals, organizations, and institutions whose missions align with SRF. Collaboration maximizes impact and enhances outcomes for individuals who engage with our organization.

Trauma-Responsiveness. SRF is committed to being trauma responsive. We examine every aspect of our language, programming, environments, and values to ensure trauma-sensitivity, trust, and inclusion.

Impact-Focused. SRF believes that success is measured by outcomes. We strive to deliver results that benefit our constituents and society at large.

SRF Intentions and Guiding Principles

- We are all recovering from something.
- We don't have to hit rock bottom to pursue recovery in any area of our lives. We believe in early intervention.
- We must be supported to find & follow individualized pathways & patchworks of recovery.
- Recovery is a journey to wholeness. We learn to take care of our body, mind, emotions, and spirit.
- We answer the call to heal our past wounds and intergenerational traumas so we can live fully in the present.
- We focus on our strengths, not our defects. This is how we change.
- We do our individual work in order to create & hold healing spaces for everyone. All women deserve recovery.
- We understand that the practice of radical self-love is paramount to our well-being.
- When we're ready, we recover out loud so that women who are struggling can find and join our movement.
- Connection is our sole (soul) purpose. We're stronger together.

WHY SHARING CIRCLES?

“Energy moves in cycles, circles, spirals, vortexes, whirls, pulsations, waves, and rhythms—rarely if ever in simple straight lines.” - Starhawk

Like energy, recovery is rarely linear. Many individuals describe their healing journey in recovery as *cycles* that move, turn, and deepen over time. SRF Sharing Circles are named as such to create a container reflective of this cyclical nature; not only of recovery, but of our lives and the world around us.

Herstory, Resurgence and Power of Women's Sharing Circles

"Circles with a sacred center are ancient, the oldest form of social interaction."

~Ann Landaas Smith~

Human beings have gathered in circles across time and across cultures. In ancient times, women gathered ceremoniously in their communities in circles to connect with one another to share wisdom, traditions, medicines and more. Such circles began to decrease in popularity between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries when male religious leaders started to express fear of women's power and to persecute female spiritual leaders.

A resurfacing of women-only circles in North America began in the 1970s and can likely be traced back to the feminist spirituality movement guided by social activists and eco-feminists such as Starhawk. Largely due to its non-linear and matriarchal approach, this ancient and cross-cultural form of gathering has proven, over time, to be particularly healing for women, non-binary, and two-spirited individuals. Bringing back the healing power of sharing in community is part of the collective recovery process occurring across our world today.

The Evolution of SRF Sharing Circles

SRF Sharing Circles were first held during SHE RECOVERS retreats. Feedback from attendees indicated that women wanted these Sharing Circles as part of their regular recovery program so that they could foster in-person connections with like-hearted individuals in their communities. With that in mind, the first two SHE RECOVERS Sharing Circle groups were born!

The first SRF Sharing Circle was formed in Seattle, Washington (USA) in September 2017, shortly followed by the Victoria, British Columbia (Canada) Circle. Private Community Facebook groups were created to help build community and enable communication for these two inaugural Sharing Circles, and other coaches in other cities soon launched Sharing Circles and FB groups of their own. By March 2020, there were over thirty Sharing Circles across the world, including 24 in the United States, 5 in Canada, 2 in the UK, 1 in France, 1 in Australia. Sharing Circles were hosted monthly, in-person by SHE RECOVERS Coaches, averaging 10-20 attendees per Circle. With the arrival of the Covid-19 Pandemic, the Sharing Circle program was put on hold, although some Sharing Circle coaches and members met virtually or outside over 2020 and into 2021 and 2022.

SRF set Fall 2022 as the appropriate time to relaunch – and grow – SRF Sharing Circle offerings. And here we are!

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF SRF SHARING CIRCLES

SRF is a leader in the recovery community when it comes to providing free online support – something that became an important focus in 2020 when the Covid-19 pandemic shut down most in person offerings. As we round out 2022, SRF is committed to getting back to supporting women through in-person recovery groups. SRF Sharing Circles are community containers of support for women in or seeking recovery. Professionally facilitated and peer-supported, SRF Sharing Circles support women to connect, share, learn and heal within a group of like-hearted individuals.

Each Sharing Circle plays an integral part in achieving the mission of the SRF Foundation by:

- Providing a holistic and unique recovery experience that is peer-supported, topic-focused, trauma-informed, and voluntarily facilitated by SRF Certified Professionals.
- Celebrating diversity through embracing all recovery pathways and patchworks, all races, sexual orientations, and all those differences of life situations, backgrounds, and abilities.
- Supporting individualized recovery pathways to help women build recovery capital and utilize all holistic practices and resources.
- Serving as a free healing resource within a recovery-oriented system of care that complements other professional recovery supports such as, but not limited to, trauma therapy, counseling, addiction treatment, coaching services, psychiatric and/or medical care.
- Fostering co-created experiences built on a foundation of set intentions, agreements, and mutual respect for all participants, volunteers, and facilitators.

THE IMPORTANCE OF TAKING A TRAUMA-INFORMED & INCLUSIVE APPROACH

“Core experiences of psychological trauma are disempowerment and disconnection from others. Recovery, therefore, is based upon the empowerment of the survivor and creation of new connections” ~Judith Herman~

As SHE RECOVERS Designated Professionals, we have the privilege and responsibility of holding space in a trauma-informed way that welcomes women and non-binary individuals of all races, sexual orientations, and differences of life situations, backgrounds, and abilities. We do this by:

- Adhering to Sharing Circle agreements and encouraging all participants to co-create a welcoming and supportive environment
- Infusing the SRF Intentions & Guiding Principles into the experience
- Supporting all pathways and patchworks of recovery and criticizing none
- Recognizing trauma and its associated manifestations
- Providing resources for a higher level of care to those who appear to be in distress/crisis/ in need of trauma-focused, therapeutic support
- Using inclusive and invitational language and practices
- Maintaining consistency in frequency, duration, and format of Sharing Circles
- Encouraging participants to identify and build healthy support systems and relationships
- Adopting healthy communication processes to address and navigate situations where potential hurts, conflicts, misunderstandings or disagreements might arise
- Empowering participants to develop and practice personal agency
- Guiding participants to identify their own pathways and patchworks of recovery

GUIDELINES

Please consider the following SRF Guidelines as part of your decision-making process related to facilitating an SRF Sharing Circle:

Hosting a Sharing Circle

All Sharing Circles must be voluntarily facilitated by a SHE RECOVERS Designated Professional (SHE RECOVERS Coach, SHE RECOVERS Yoga Teacher, or other SHE RECOVERS Professional Designees).

Facilitators are Part of the SRF Volunteer Network

As will all SRF volunteers, Sharing Circle Facilitators are required to complete a volunteer survey, execute an agreement and to participate in any SRF volunteer training (or refresher training) deemed requisite by SRF Headquarters.

Financial Accessibility

In keeping with SRF's mission, we must remove barriers to accessing lifeline recovery resources and support for all women in or seeking recovery; therefore, all SRF Sharing Circles must be offered free of charge. Facilitators will be provided a Letter of Introduction about SRF to help secure free meeting space.

Location of Sharing Circles

SRF Sharing Circles must be held in neutral, public spaces or within private recovery-focused facilities (such as a residential treatment center, recovery house, hospital, jail, etc.) Sharing Circles cannot be held in a private residence.

Holding Trauma Informed and Inclusive Space

SRF is currently developing a SRF Volunteer Trauma-Informed & Inclusivity Training program. All current and new SRF volunteers will be required to take this 20 hr training when it becomes available in 2023. In the meantime, Facilitators are expected to access and watch the following trainings:

- Holding Trauma Informed Space with Taryn Strong
- Creating Inclusive Spaces with Lisa Wall & Liana Kennedy
- Cultivating Safe Spaces with Elaine Alec

Access @ <https://vimeo.com/showcase/8574105>

password: SRFVideos123!

Promoting Sharing Circles

Facilitators are responsible for promoting their Sharing Circles; the SRF Sharing Circle Facilitator Toolkit provides guidance on this topic. SRF Headquarters will also provide a listing of Sharing Circles on the main SRF website.

Frequency & Duration

Sharing Circles must be held on a consistent basis: weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly, and be hosted at the same time and same day of the week. Sharing Circles should be 60-90 minutes in length, but exceptions can be made depending on the availability of the venue and at the request of participants.

Accessibility of Venues

We ask that all prospective Sharing Circle venues be as accessible as possible. Accessibility criteria can include:

- Near public transit and passenger drop-off areas
- Free and ample parking available and in close proximity
- Clear and easy to read signage
- Dedicated and private
- Little to no noise pollution or distractions
- Wheelchair accessible entry and washrooms
- Outdoor and indoor surfaces and pathways free of barriers that might cause problems for people who use canes, crutches, or walkers
- Automatic doors or ability to prop open doors
- Accessible seating (chairs provided) with enough room to space out chairs
- Good acoustics (minimal echo) and appropriate lighting for folks who are hard of hearing who may lip read
- A relief area for service animals

General Insurance & Liability

All registered SRF Volunteers are covered by SRF general & liability insurance to host SRF Sanctioned events (i.e. Sharing Circles and Movement=Medicine Fundraisers). Individuals who are not volunteers who host activities aka “meetups” within a Community Group do so at their own risk separate and apart from SRF sanctioned events. Unsanctioned events must not appear to be endorsed or supported by SRF and cannot have an associated cost or be hosted by a for-profit business.

Public Health Concerns

In-person Sharing Circles are permitted as long as there are no restrictions on in-person gatherings imposed by local/state/province Health Departments due to public health concerns.

Reporting and Monitoring

Public trust and confidence in SRF's stewardship of resources is critical to the achievement of our mission and we strive to have processes in place that demonstrate this commitment while still protecting participant privacy. We also believe that success is measured by outcomes, and we strive to deliver results that benefit our constituents and society at large by providing timely and relevant program information for each of our Sharing Circles. We want to hear about the outcomes of Sharing Circles so we can amplify the message and reach even more women in or seeking recovery.

Facilitators will be required to submit monthly attendance reports (#s only) and provide online voluntary Sharing Circle experience surveys to all participants for SRF to gain feedback, review impact, and evaluate program outcomes. This outcome and programming data will be gathered anonymously to protect the privacy of Sharing Circle participants.

SRF Headquarters Support for Facilitators

Sharing Circle Volunteer Facilitator meetings will be held quarterly so all can learn from and with each other, share ideas and tools, and maintain a connection with SRF HQ.

See Appendix: Topics for Sharing Circle Facilitator Toolkit

APPENDIX: TOPICS FOR SHARING CIRCLE FACILITATOR TOOLKIT

The Sharing Circle Facilitator Toolkit is currently under review and will be available mid September. It will include guidance and tools on topics related to the following:

Securing a Venue

- Introductory Letter for Potential Sharing Circle Venues

Promoting Your Sharing Circle

- SRF Branding Guidelines
- Promoting via social media
- Promoting in your community

Facilitating a Sharing Circle

- Sharing Circle Format and Facilitator Script
- Sharing Circle Participant Agreements
- Sample Sharing Circle Topics
- Grounding Yourself as Facilitator Before the Circle
- Trauma-Informed Facilitation
- Opening the Circle
- Closing the Circle