

# Learning Circle Orientation

## Meet Our Faculty



**Tom Tracy | VP, Strategic Business Planning | Clinical Redesign**

Tom has spent his career serving vulnerable Medicaid populations with a focus on individuals with serious mental illness. Tom has had the privilege to oversee a wide range of mental health programs including partial care, outpatient, ACT, in-home therapy, supportive housing, and juvenile justice involved, to name a few. Prior to joining United, Tom served as the Chief Administrative/Strategy Officer for one of the largest community-based behavioral health organizations in Southern New Jersey. Tom has trained at the local, state and national levels on topics such as care planning, service delivery, clinical documentation, outcome measures, gender, sexuality, diversity, suicide prevention and stages of change. He embraces the philosophy that all people can experience recovery. He enjoys growing talent and teaching to expand clinical skill sets. Tom has a Masters in Social Work and a Master's of Science in Management & Leadership. He is a NJ Licensed Clinical Social Worker, an ACS and NJ approved clinical supervisor, and a Project Management Professional (PMP). He and his husband are proud fathers to an adorable daughter.



**Terri Weisser | Instructional Designer | Learning, Replication and Dissemination | Clinical Redesign**

Terri brings over 25 years' experience in learning and development across multiple industries. She has earned a coveted Brandon Hall Award for Best Use of Blended Learning and is a recipient of the UnitedHealthcare Service Hero award. Most recently with UHC's Community and State, Terri drives to bring innovation and engagement to all facets of learning and works to help audiences interact with the content. Prior to joining Clinical Redesign, Terri worked with the Benefit Operations team where she led the creation of ground-breaking new hire program rooted in the corporate culture. She is also a UHG Culture Ambassador and enjoys mentoring others interested in instructional design and adult learning theory. Terri is based outside of Dallas with her husband, son, and rescue dog.

## Agenda



- What is a Learning Circle?
- Why Learning Circles?
- When do Learning Circles Happen?
- Who Leads Learning Circles?
- How do you Build a Learning Circle?
- Learning Circle Tips
- Takeaways and Next Steps

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## Earning CEUs for Learning Circles



- Learning Circles account for 6 of the 12 CEUs offered as part of this series
- Each Learning Circle = 1/2 credit

<b>12 30-Minute Content Sessions</b>	+	<b>12 30-Minute Learning Circle Meetings</b>	=	<b>Total Credits</b>
(12 sessions * 0.5 credits each)	+	(12 meetings * 0.5 credits each)	=	12 CEUs/CMEs

- Learning Circles cannot be made up
- Self-attest to credits earned at the end of series

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## The What & Why of a Learning Circle



Learning Circles are **small discussion groups** that give participants the opportunity to **process** training content and how it might be **applied to our work and lives**.

- ✓ Safe environment for discussion
- ✓ Explore what a principle may mean to learner
- ✓ Share personal narratives
- ✓ Build trust within teams
- ✓ Full participation and interaction

- ✗ NOT formulaic
- ✗ NOT assessment of performance
- ✗ NOT to replace regular team meetings
- ✗ NOT a place to judge people's experiences and stories

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## When Do Learning Circles Happen?



- Following the live event session
- Happens before the next live event
- Set up recurring meeting on Microsoft Outlook for group members
- Learning Circles start following Trauma-Informed Care 101 live session



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## Who Leads Learning Circles?



- Any member of a Learning Circle can lead the group
- Recommend weekly leader rotate through group members over the series
- Discussion guides provide conversation starting point



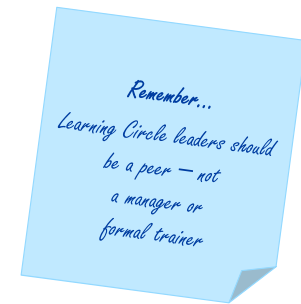
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## More on Learning Circle Discussion Leaders



- Leads the process for the group
- Do not need to be subject matter experts
- Helps the group stay on track
- Utilizes the Learning Circle Discussion Guide to help move the dialogue
- Facilitators are an important part of the process
- Rotate the role of facilitator




Source: [https://poorvucenter.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/discussion\\_leading.pdf](https://poorvucenter.yale.edu/sites/default/files/files/discussion_leading.pdf)

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## Learning Circle Tips




- Ensure equity of voice
- Allow the group to respond / ask for the group's feedback or thoughts
- Embrace silence
- Model a judgement-free zone
- Allow for natural discussion

**Sample Ground Rules**

- Leave titles at the door
- No electronics
- What is said here, stays here
- Everyone participates


Establish your own ground rules as a group



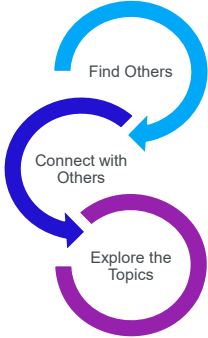
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## How Do You Build a Learning Circle?



- Start with your peers or department
  - Do you have teammates participating in the series?
  - Others in your larger department?
- Virtually connect with others with no natural Learning Circle
  - Varied roles and backgrounds spark robust discussion
  - Use Microsoft Outlook to schedule the recurring meeting



Find Others

Connect with Others

Explore the Topics

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## Engage with HubConnect

HubConnect Offers:

- Learning Circle guides
- Session handouts
- Recordings of live sessions
- Presentation deck in PDF
- Discussion threads
- Links to external resources

Engage • Interact • Learn

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## Find and Join a Learning Circle

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- Use HubConnect tool to connect, if necessary
- CTRL+F to search the page
- Enter your email to join an existing group
- Claim a new group with a descriptive name
- Remember to publish your edits for all to see

## Learning Circle Discussion Guides



1. Navigate to the **Learning for Complex Health and Social Needs** HubConnect site
2. Select tile for a **desired topic**
3. Under Training Materials choose the **content to view / download**



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## Experiences with Learning Circles



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## Key Takeaways and Next Steps



- Learning Circles are for teams and individuals to **process learning and discuss implementation strategies**
- Be **empathetic** and **use good judgment** in how we share and listen
- **All teach, all learn**
- Be **BOLD**, volunteer to organize

### Next Steps


- 1 Find your Learning Circle
- 2 Send calendar invites for Learning Circle discussions are sent
- 3 Make sure you know where to find discussion guides

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# Additional Resources

## Learning Circles





## Active Listening 101



- **Pay Attention** – Be focused on the moment. Nod verbally to show you are listening using phrases, like "right", "mmmmm", and "I hear you".
- **Withhold Judgement** – Be open to new ideas and perspectives without arguing or giving your opinion too quickly.
- **Reflect** – Mirror the other person's emotions in your tone of voice. Rather than assuming you understand correctly, paraphrase key points.
- **Clarify** – Ask open-ended questions (what, when and how) to encourage the other person to expand their ideas, while inviting reflection and thoughtful response.
- **Summarize** – Restate key themes throughout conversation to solidify your understanding of the other person's point of view. Ask them to do the same.
- **Share** – After understanding the person's perspective, share your own thoughts and experiences that may have been triggered by something they said in the conversation.

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## Sample Phrases to Respectfully Disagree



**Always practice empathy and consider the other person's perspective before responding.**

- "I want to ask \_\_\_\_\_ a question about what he said because I'm not sure I agree."
- "I want to piggy back on what \_\_\_\_\_ said."
- "I see your point, and..."
- "I disagree, but would like to know more about your point of view."
- "I can tell this is an issue you're passionate about. Can you tell me how you arrived at this viewpoint?"
- "Since I've listened to your point of view, can I tell you more about what I believe?"

Sources: <https://www.weareteachers.com/teach-students-respectful-disagreement/>

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## Additional Resources



### Use these resources for extra learning:

- Harvard Business Review: What Great Listeners Actually Do  
<https://hbr.org/2016/07/what-great-listeners-actually-do>
- UnitedHealth Group LearnSource/Skillssoft course titled "[Using Active Listening in Workplace Situations](#)"
- UnitedHealth Group LearnSource/Skillssoft course titled "[Polishing Your Feedback Skills](#)"