

The Clearing ToolKit

Empowering Communities through Change

Welcome to *The Clearing* Toolkit

The Clearing is a transformative space where communities reconnect, heal, and move forward during times of change. This toolkit provides resources and guidance to create your own Clearing—a safe and empowering space for your group, team, or community. If you'd like a toolkit customized for your group, please reach out.

Why *The Clearing*?

In times of uncertainty or transition, communities often struggle to stay connected and aligned. This isn't due to a lack of care but the presence of fear and confusion that come with change. The Clearing offers a structured way to pause, reflect, and rediscover a shared path forward. Whether navigating intentional change or a sudden crisis, this toolkit is your guide to meaningful transformation.

What's Included in The Clearing Toolkit?

- 1. Facilitation Guide**
 - Step-by-step instructions for planning and leading a Clearing gathering.
 - Tips for creating a safe and inclusive space.
 - 2. Conversation Starters**
 - 25 thought-provoking prompts to inspire connection and meaningful dialogue.
 - 3. Activity Templates**
 - Guided exercises for reflection, creative expression, and group problem-solving.
 - Examples include *Collective Visioning*, *Story Circles*, and *Gratitude Mapping*.
 - 4. Meditation & Grounding Practices**
 - Simple meditations and breathing exercises to center participants and foster presence.
 - 5. Visual and Physical Setup Ideas**
 - Suggestions for designing an environment that encourages openness and connection, whether virtual or in-person.
 - 6. Follow-Up Tools**
 - Templates for reflecting on the gathering and tracking ongoing community goals.
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How to Use This Toolkit

- 1. Prepare:**
 - Decide on your community's objectives and intentions for the gathering.
 - Use the facilitation guide to outline the structure and flow of the session.
 - 2. Create the Space:**
 - Choose a physical or virtual setting that is welcoming, comfortable, and accessible.
 - Incorporate elements that reflect themes of connection and renewal (e.g., nature-inspired visuals, calming music).
 - 3. Facilitate with Intention:**
 - Begin with a grounding practice to center the group.
 - Use the conversation starters and activity templates to guide meaningful interactions.
 - 4. Reflect and Act:**
 - End the session with a reflection exercise, allowing participants to share takeaways and next steps.
 - Follow up with participants to keep the momentum alive.
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Facilitation Guide: Step-by-Step

Step 1: Set the Intention

- What is the purpose of The Clearing? (Examples: team-building, processing loss, preparing leaders during times of change.)

Step 2: Invite Participants

- Clearly communicate the time, place, and purpose of the gathering. Provide any necessary materials or instructions in advance.

Step 3: Open with Grounding

- Start with a short meditation or breathing exercise to help everyone arrive fully in the space.
- Clarify the purpose of your gathering and identify your goals. Establish whether this is a one-time event or an ongoing series.

Step 4: Facilitate the Conversation

- Use the conversation starters to guide the dialogue. Encourage active listening and mutual respect.

Step 5: Lead an Activity

- Choose an activity template from the toolkit that aligns with your group's needs and energy.

Step 6: Close with Reflection

- End with a gratitude circle or a collective reflection to solidify the experience.
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Sample Conversation Starters

1. "What is one thing you're grateful for today?"

2. "What is a challenge you've faced recently, and how did it shape you?"
 3. "How can this group better support one another in times of change?"
 4. "What does community mean to you?"
 5. "What is one hope you have for the future of this community?"
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Sample Activities

Tip: Be sure the activity aligns with your group's objectives and culture.

1. Collective Visioning

- **Objective:** Create a shared vision for the group's future.
- **Materials:** Large paper or whiteboard, markers.
- **Instructions:** Ask participants to contribute words, drawings, or ideas that represent their hopes for the group.

2. Story Circles

- **Objective:** Share personal experiences to build understanding and empathy.
- **Materials:** None needed.
- **Instructions:** Each participant shares a story based on a common prompt (e.g., "A time I overcame a challenge").

3. Gratitude Mapping

- **Objective:** Foster a culture of appreciation within the group.
- **Materials:** Sticky notes, markers.
- **Instructions:** Participants write something they're grateful for about another member and share it with the group.

4. Give What You Can/Take What You Need Wall

- **Objective:** Build a shared sense of support within the group.
 - **Materials:** Sticky notes, markers.
 - **Instructions:** Participants write one thing they can offer on a sticky note and one thing they need on another sticky note. Arrange the notes on a central wall or board.
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Visual and Physical Setup Ideas

For In-Person Gatherings:

- **Seating Arrangement:** Arrange chairs in a circle to foster equality and openness.
- **Decor Elements:** Use natural elements like plants, candles, or calming colors to create a serene atmosphere.
- **Materials Table:** Provide journals, pens, and activity supplies in a central location.

For Virtual Gatherings:

- **Platform Selection:** Use tools like Zoom or Microsoft Teams with features for breakout rooms.
- **Background Setup:** Encourage participants to use calming virtual backgrounds, like nature scenes.

- **Shared Documents:** Provide digital templates and resources via shared screens or links.
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Meditation & Grounding Practices

1-Minute Breathing Exercise

1. Sit comfortably and close your eyes.
2. Inhale deeply for 4 counts, hold for 4 counts, and exhale for 6 counts.
3. Repeat for one minute, focusing on the sensation of your breath.

Visualization Practice

1. Close your eyes and imagine a peaceful clearing in the woods.
2. Visualize the group coming together in this space, creating connection and strength.

Drop-into-Heart Exercise

1. Sit comfortably and close your eyes.
 2. Have the group take 4 deep breaths together.
 3. Ask participants to think of three words describing how they feel and share those words with the group.
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Follow-Up Tools

Reflection Template:

- Ask participants to write down:
 1. One thing they learned.
 2. One action they'll take based on the session.
 3. Feedback on the experience.

Community Goals Tracker:

- Use a shared document or platform to track ongoing goals and updates for the group.
- Include columns for goals, assigned leads, progress notes, and deadlines.

Post-Event Survey:

- Create a quick survey to gather feedback and insights to improve future gatherings. Tools like Google Forms or Typeform work well.
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Next Steps & Resources

1. **Start Your Clearing**
 - Use this toolkit to host your first gathering.
2. **Join the Community**
 - Connect with others leading Clearings around the world. [Coming Soon!]
3. **Explore Additional Resources**
 - Access guides, videos, and templates to deepen your practice. [Sign up to stay updated!]