

Guidance for 20min care space

Setting up

The purpose of #20minCareSpace is to provide a space for self-care through facilitated connection and support.

It needs 20 minutes with a group of up to ten colleagues. Arrange chairs in a circle (where possible) giving people enough space, mindful of current COVID-19 precautions. Ask people to arrive in time for a prompt start. If you're expecting latecomers, ensure it's possible for people to arrive late and still feel welcome.

Our experience has been to have two health professionals holding the space; one to host, and one to facilitate. It is important that the person facilitating has experience in working psychologically, and with groups, and has access to regular supervision/consultation/coaching.

Have resources available for local support services (e.g., staff wellbeing services, employee assistance programmes) for onward signposting.

Introduction: *Welcome* [2 min]

Host: "This is an opportunity to think about our self-care during what is a difficult time for all of us. This is a space for you, and we invite you to bring your whole self. This should take about 20 minutes."

"Why is this important? For ourselves, for our patients, for our systems, for our families, for our colleagues; whatever it is that might motivate you to give yourself to this space right now when time is so precious."

"I'm [NAME], I'll be hosting the space, my job is to keep to time and ensure everyone is comfortable"

"I'm [NAME], I'll be facilitating, and taking everyone through this process."

Initial grounding exercise: "Welcome. Feel your feet on the ground, notice that you are here, notice that you are amongst colleagues [leave pause to breathe]."

"This will be a mix of pairs work and work in a circle."

"We'll be asking a series of questions and inviting you to share your thoughts, what you feel comfortable to share, and to listen to each other as attentively as possible. It's always okay to pass – no one has to say anything if they don't want to. It's a confidential space – please rest assured that none of your contributions will be recorded or shared with anyone outside this space."

"At the end of our time together, if anything has come up and you want to talk to one of us after, we'll be available".

Round 1: *"One thing going well at the moment, inside or outside of work" (As a round)* [3min]

Facilitator: "In this round we're inviting you to share one thing that is going well for you at the moment, try and be specific. If you can start by saying your first name that would be helpful."

"When someone is ready to begin, please do, then we'll go around to the left. Clearly it's a very challenging time, so it might be hard to find something positive. It doesn't matter how small the positive is – it's also ok to pass. If someone wishes to pass, I'll come back to you at the end to check if there is anything you would like to contribute."

Round 2: *"[NAME] what is going on for you at the moment?"* [1min intro + 4min]

"We would like you to work in pairs with the person next to you."

"We invite you to think about what is coming up for you at the moment. We appreciate this is a difficult time and everyone responds differently. You can share as little or as much as you want to."

"Each of you will get a turn to be the thinker and to be the listener." (Host times 2min each, precisely)

"Thinkers – you have 2 minutes to consider what is currently going on for you. If you run out of things to say (and you might be surprised how long 2 minutes feels) don't feel you have to keep talking. Just take the time to keep thinking."

"Listeners, it is your role to ask: *"[NAME] what is going on for you at the moment?"* and then listen with undivided attention and appreciation. Resist the urge to chip in with your own experiences as you might in a normal conversation – your role is simply to create the space for your partner to think. If your partner seems to run out of things to say you can prompt them with – *'and what else?'*"

Round 3: Appreciation: “[NAME] what I appreciate about what you said is....” [2 x 30sec]

“We’d like you to take a moment to appreciate what you’ve heard from your partner.”

“We don’t often take the time to appreciate others and we’re not always great at receiving appreciation. Try to really take in the appreciation you are offered.”

So continuing in pairs... please ask one another:

“[NAME] what I appreciate about what you said is....” (30sec each)

Round 4: “How can you take more care of yourself” [4min]

Staying in your pairs...

“[NAME], how can you take more care of yourself?” (2 minutes each)

Follow same instructions as Round 2 for Thinker and Listener.

Round 5: “What one thing will you do to care for yourself?” (As a round) [3min]

“We’ll now come back into the larger group; this is an invitation to share a thought, briefly, in response to the question:

“What one thing will you do to make sure you care for yourself?”

“When someone is ready to begin, please do, then we’ll go around to the left. You are free to pass. If someone wishes to pass, I’ll come back to you at the end to check if there is anything you would like to contribute.”

Round 6: Grounding exercise to end [2min]

Host: “Thank you for taking time to be here.”

“This is an opportunity for a moment’s pause – a bit of breathing space in all the busyness. To start with, we’d like you to close your eyes for a moment or lower your gaze. Become aware of the ground under your feet [PAUSE]. Take a breath and notice that you have a moment to slow down. You are amongst others sharing similar challenges and it’s helpful to keep sharing and connecting [PAUSE]. And when you are ready, bring your attention back to the room.”

“We know the pressure in the system is unprecedented and we are all rushing around and faced with difficult decisions. We encourage you to *move more slowly* when you can, even if just for a moment, to check in with yourself and one another.”

“Thank you. That’s the end of the 20min care space.”

END. Be available afterwards if anybody wishes to talk or share anything that has come up, for signposting. As a pair of facilitators, debrief if possible.

Things to consider

Who can run these sessions?

The 20min Care Spaces in North Bristol NHS Trust have been led by clinical psychologists. Our sense is that at least one of the people holding the space should be working psychologically, and have access to regular supervision/consultation/coaching. Our experience is that committing to the structure is a key part of the space feeling safe and containing.

What happens if someone’s late?

It’s intentionally a short meeting, and sticking to structure is key, so our experience has been that it’s important to start on time. It’s also important to recognise that people might not be able to be exactly on time for all kinds of reasons, so a generous spirit and some facilitation skill is important both to start on time, and leave space for people to arrive late and feel welcome. The host should form part of the pairs if there is an odd number but if someone arrives late, they can take the host’s place in that pair.

What happens if someone gets upset?

It is important that people in the Care Space can bring their whole selves and feelings are welcome. It is important that tissues are available. People will cry – this is okay. The facilitators' role is to ensure there is capacity to create safety, and there is resource to support any emotional needs that arise, and meaningfully signpost to supportive services if necessary.

What if someone dominates the space?

Committing to the structure is key to signalling that everyone has equal opportunity and space to participate. The structure means that nobody dominates the space. If people jump in out of turn, they should be kindly told that the structure is different to normal discussion and that everyone has their turn.

Who looks after the facilitators?

It is important that facilitators are accessing clinical supervision or equivalent. The facilitator and host should make time to debrief afterwards, even if it is brief.

Can I just get on with it?

Yes. Our experience was to start with close colleagues to build our own confidence, before venturing wider. We used word of mouth to build momentum. Participants routinely have a positive experience and typically share this with colleagues. We receive requests to host a Care Space, and we also proactively offer the Care Spaces, e.g., to Emergency Department colleagues.

Does it matter if participants know each other?

We don't think this particularly matters. Our experience is that teams that know each other benefit from this, and also a collection of colleagues who do not know each other so well also benefit.

What's the evidence for this?

Andy Bradley (recognised in 2012 by Nesta as one of Britain's most radical thinkers) has been sharing his work on Compassion circles for over 10 years. Compassion circles have been adapted for use in Aneurin Bevan University Health Board where over 1000 healthcare staff have participated in rounds over the last 5 years. Evaluation indicates that the experience is highly valued. Compassion circles have also become an integral part of the Compassionate Mental Health gatherings offered as a space for transformation and dialogue in Wales. The 20min Care Space is a short version of a Compassion circle which we have developed and tested with multiple groups in North Bristol NHS Trust. Our intention is to gain the benefits of a Compassion circle while providing something which is brief enough for staff to realistically engage with it during this unprecedented time. It is not 'validated' in any formal way, but our experience as clinicians and colleagues is that this is effective. We encourage you to try it and see for yourself.

Is there any support available?

There is a core of people, including Andy Bradley, who are keen to be available virtually to support people wishing to take this forwards locally. If there is a need, we will be available to offer some kind of regular online forum or community of practice, details of which we are working out.