

EAST COAST SAGE CIRCLE EMPOWERMENT CIRCLE POLICY

Business Area of Responsibility: Director of Empowerment Circles

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POLICY:

The East Coast Sage Circle (ECSC) Board of Directors supports the building of local communities through the development of Empowerment Circles. The ECSC Board of Directors retains responsibility for the content of the Empowerment Circle Manual, Guided E-Circle Protocols and Guide Training Protocols. ECSC Director of Empowerment Circles maintains a list of qualified apprentices, guides and guide trainers. The ECSC Board of Directors functions as an advisor to local area counsel regarding the administration of Empowerment Circles.

DEFINITIONS

An Empowerment Circle is a group of ECSC members who meet independently to continue personal transformation in a supportive environment. The purpose of Empowerment Circles is to support women in their growth and healing and is not intended as therapy and as such has no leader.

A member is a woman who has completed the Women Within Training Weekend (WWTW) and resides in:

- One of the ECSC territories as identified in the licensing agreement with Woman Within International. (WWI)
- Resides in and may be a member of another territory who elects to become a member of ECSC by notifying ECSC.

To support the growth of community and the creation of E-Circles, a woman who has not yet completed the WWTW, and who resides in the ECSC region, may join an e-circle for a limited time as agreed to by the local area council and the group norms determined by the members of the circle.

A local area within ECSC is a local organization of women with voluntary affiliation to ECSC. The geographic territory of a local area is determined by what works best for the women in maintaining a supportive community, including but not limited to Empowerment Circles.

Outlying areas are those geographic areas within ECSC territory that are not yet a part of a local area.

The Empowerment Circle Manual is a manual maintained by the ECSC Board of Directors that includes a curriculum that may be used in the programs for Empowerment Circles. The manual is available to women who have completed the Woman Within Training Weekend.

The Guided E-Circle protocols are the weekly and intensive programs that prepare women to maintain a safe and supportive environment in Empowerment Circles. The Guided E-Circle protocols are designed for women who have completed the Woman Within Training Weekend and for use by qualified E-Circle guides and apprentices.

Qualified guides and apprentices are women who are recognized by the local area council for their training and experience in the curriculum and methods used in conducting the weekly and intensive guided Empowerment Circles.

Guide Trainers are those women who train E-Circle guides, as determined by the ECSC Director of Empowerment Circles. Guide trainers have sufficient experience in guiding Empowerment Circles, as determined by the ECSC Director of Empowerment Circles. Guide trainers are proficient in and actively guiding circles using the most current Empowerment-Circles protocols.

A weekly, guided Empowerment Circle is a program conducted over a ten week period as determined by the guide conducting the program using the E-circle manual and the weekly Guided Circle Protocol.

The E-Circle Intensive Workshop is a 2-day workshop designed to introduce women to the concept of sitting in an E-Circle, bonding, safety, and communication skills etc. It provides the skills to prepare women to then use the E-Circle Manual in an E-Circle without a guide.

A self-guided Empowerment Circle is a leaderless group who conducts a guided Empowerment Circle using the materials contained in the Empowerment Circle Manual.

Guide, apprentice and guide trainer Fee Schedule is a fee structure set by the ECSC Board of Directors to provide a uniform payment structure for guides conducting weekly and intensive programs for Empowerment Circles and guide trainings.

PROCEDURES

Guided Empowerment Circles

Local Areas

Local areas are responsible for scheduling and conducting weekly and intensive programs for Empowerment Circles. The ECSC Board of Directors recommends that each local area council designate an Empowerment Circle Coordinator.

Within two weeks of a Woman Within Training Weekend sponsored by ECSC, the local Empowerment Circle coordinator should contact the Administrator for the roster to identify women residing in the local area who have completed the training weekend.

A local area council is financially responsible for the guided Empowerment Circles conducted

in its territory. Financial Responsibility includes, but is not limited to, setting participant fees and payment of all expenses associated with the program. At a minimum the expenses will include:

1. Guide and apprentice fees and expenses as set forth in the Fee Schedule set by the ECSC Board of Directors;
2. Participant materials;
3. An Empowerment Circle Manual; and
4. All supplies required by the training protocols.

The local area retains all monies collected from participants that are in excess of the total cost of conducting the program. If the cost of the program exceeds the monies collected, the local area will be responsible for the deficit.

Fee & Expenses Payment Procedure:

At the conclusion of a weekly or intensive guided Empowerment Circle, the guide(s) and apprentice(s) who conducted the program will determine the fee based on the ECSC Fee Schedule. The guide will communicate the fee calculation to the designee of the local area or outlying area responsible for issuing payment.

The designee of the local area or outlying area responsible for issuing payment will forward a check made payable to the East Coast Sage Circle in the amount of the calculated fee to the Bookkeeper of East Coast Sage Circle.

Within two weeks of receiving payment from the local area or outlying area, the Bookkeeper of ECSC will forward payment to the guide(s), apprentice guide(s) or guide trainer(s) who conducted the training.

The local area council or outlying area is responsible for the guide(s)'s travel expenses and these are reimbursed directly to the guide(s) or guide trainer(s). Travel expenses for an apprentice guide are to be determined in advance of training by apprentice's home area and are the responsibility of the home area council.

Outlying Areas

Women residing in outlying areas not yet a part of a local area council may conduct guided Empowerment Circles. The ECSC Board of Directors recommends that the group requesting a guided Empowerment Circle select a contact. The group's contact should communicate with the ECSC Director for Empowerment Circles for assistance in identifying a guide and obtaining the required supplies.

The outlying area will be financially responsible for the training program, including setting the participant fees and payment of all expenses associated with the program. At a minimum the expenses will include:

1. Guide and apprentice fees and expenses as set forth in the Fee Schedule set by the ECSC Board of Directors;
2. Participant materials;
3. An Empowerment Circle Manual; and
4. All supplies required by the training protocols.

The outlying area retains all monies collected from the participants that are in excess of the total cost of conducting the program. If the cost of the program exceeds the monies collected, the outlying area will be responsible for the deficit.

Fee & Expenses Payment Procedure: applies as above for Local Areas:

Self-Guided

A group of women may elect to self-guide. The Empowerment Circle Manual may be purchased through the ECSC Director for Empowerment Circles, by a woman who is a member of ECSC.

Self-guiding groups may choose to contract for a guide to be a phone coach. The self-guiding group may contact the local Empowerment Circle coordinator or the ECSC Director for Empowerment Circles for assistance in identifying an available guide. Fees for phone coaches are set forth in the Fee Schedule set by the ECSC Board of Directors.

Empowerment Circle Guide Training

Local area councils must hire an ECSC approved E-Circle guide trainer to prepare local women to become E-Circle guides. A list of qualified guide trainers is available from the ECSC Director of Empowerment Circles.

A local area is financially responsible for the Empowerment Circle guide training conducted in its area. Financial responsibility includes, but is not limited to, setting participant fees and payment of all expenses associated with the program. At a minimum the expenses will include:

1. Guide fees and expenses as established between the guide trainer and the local area;
2. Participant materials;
3. Empowerment Circle manuals as needed; and
4. Any supplies required by the training protocols.

The local area retains all monies collected from the participants that are in excess of the total cost of conducting the program and paying the guide trainer.

Fees & Expenses Payment Procedures:

Fees for guide trainers are to be established between the guide trainer contracted and the local area. For fee payment procedure see Fees & Expenses Payment Procedure as written above

under Local Areas.

EMPOWERMENT CIRCLE MANUAL

The ECSC Board of Directors offers to local areas and women who have completed the Woman Within Training Weekend the Empowerment Circle Manual for a fee that is approved by the Board and is reflected in the Fee and Reimbursement Schedule maintained by the Treasurer of the ECSC Board of Directors.

Reserves from the sale of Empowerment Circle Manuals will be used to fund review and updating of the manual.

On a periodic basis, the ECSC Director for Empowerment Circles will conduct a review of the Empowerment Circle Manual and protocols for the weekly and intensive guided Empowerment Circles and guide training protocols. The review may be performed by the Director or delegated to an experienced guide or team of guides selected by the ECSC Director of Empowerment Circles.

A summary of recommendations resulting from the review will be communicated to the ECSC Board Directors. Any significant change in instructional format and/or materials must be approved by a majority of the ECSC Board of Directors.

Within four weeks of approval by the ECSC Board of Directors, a summary of the changes will be provided to the Local Area Directors, local Empowerment Circle coordinators and all active guides.

The Empowerment Circle manual is not to be copied in its entirety. Handouts may be copied for each member of the circle.

E-circle Guides, Apprentice Guides and Guide Trainers

Fees for guides and apprentice guides hired for consultation and fees for guide trainers will be established between the local area or outlying area and the guide, apprentice guide or guide trainer.

The ECSC Board of Directors recommends that the local area establish evaluation criteria and methods for advancement of women through the guide structure. The guide's skill level (apprentice or guide) as identified by the local area council will influence her fees and responsibilities.

E-Circle Guides, apprentices and guide trainers may not solicit business and will not market personal goods and services while conducting a guided Empowerment Circle, Intensive or guide training, nor enter into a any new formal or informal commerce relationship with participants for a period of three (3) months following the completion of the Empowerment Circle or guide training

as determined by the local center (with the exception of offering other ECSC workshops such as the One Day Staff Training or WILTOP, if guide is a qualified presenter for these workshops.)

Furthermore, guides, apprentices and guide trainers may not initiate or participate in a new sexual relationship with a participant from their Empowerment Circle or guide training for a period of one year following the completion of the Empowerment Circle or guide training.

SAFETY PARAMETERS FOR WORK IN E-CIRCLES

Due to the supportive and leaderless nature of E-circles, the following parameters must be adhered to as a woman “works” her issues:

1. There will be no “birthing” processes, nor will there be anything offered that is regressive, that asks a woman to act younger. Childhood wounds are dealt with only as they affect the grown woman in the here and now. Role-playing is to be stopped if any woman goes out of her adult woman and behaves in a child like manner (to be observed through body movements, voice and speech patterns.) If this occurs, the participant will re-ground and continue only if she is able to remain in her adult woman. This kind of work is not emotionally safe to do in E-Circles and is not condoned by ECSC for work therein.
2. There will be no physical process used or offered to a woman to “work” her issue in the E-Circle. Examples of physical processes are lift, trust falls, holding down or holding back, gauntlets, under sheet break-aways or break-aways of any kind. This type of work carries risk of physical injury and is not condoned by ECSC for E-Circle work.
3. E-Circle guides, whether guiding the ten-week or the intensive format, will not teach or guide women to use physical or regressive processes. It is the responsibility of the guide to inform the new E-Circle of these parameters when describing what type of “work” can be done in Empowerment Circles.
4. The safety of women participating in E-Circles is the paramount concern of ECSC and its local councils. ECSC and its area councils take speech or activities regarding suicide with the utmost seriousness. E-Circles are not replacements for personal or group therapy. Women who state suicidal ideations may not participate in an E-Circle.
5. ECSC does not assume liability if an individual E-Circle chooses to include a woman or women with suicidal ideations in their E-Circle.