

# Peer Support for Resilience: Strengthening Well-Being Across Healthcare Teams

# Session Overview:

- Addressing Burnout, moral distress, and secondary trauma
- Leveraging structured peer support to build resilience
- Enhancing psychological safety and emotional recovery
- Fostering a culture that supports retention, engagement, and high-quality care

# Audience and Application:

- Designed for nurse leaders, educators, and frontline clinicians
- Highlights scalable peer support approaches
- Adaptable across units, roles, and organizations
- Practical strategies applicable in diverse care settings

# Speakers:

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# Disclaimer:

We have no real or perceived conflicts of interest that relate to this presentation.

*\*Some content discussed in this session may be emotionally troubling for some participants. Attendees are encouraged to step out or take a break at any time to support their personal well-being.*

# Learning Objectives:

- Describe the essential components of an effective peer support model that addresses burnout, moral distress, and trauma responses among healthcare team members
- Identify at least three evidence-based strategies nurse leaders can use to facilitate peer support and resilience with interdisciplinary teams
- Develop a draft framework for implementing a peer support initiative within their own department or organization, including purpose, structure, and confidentiality considerations.

# Trauma in Healthcare:

- Trauma in healthcare settings is widespread and unavoidable
- Nurses and clinicians are routinely exposed to high-stress, emotionally charged events
- Cumulative exposure places staff at significant risk for long-term harm

# Impact of Traumatic Events:

- Traumatic experiences contribute to:
  - Negative stress responses
  - Burnout and compassion fatigue
  - Mental health concerns Increased staff turnover
- These effects threaten both workforce stability and care delivery (Crawford & Williams, 2024)

# Disproportionate impact on Nurses:

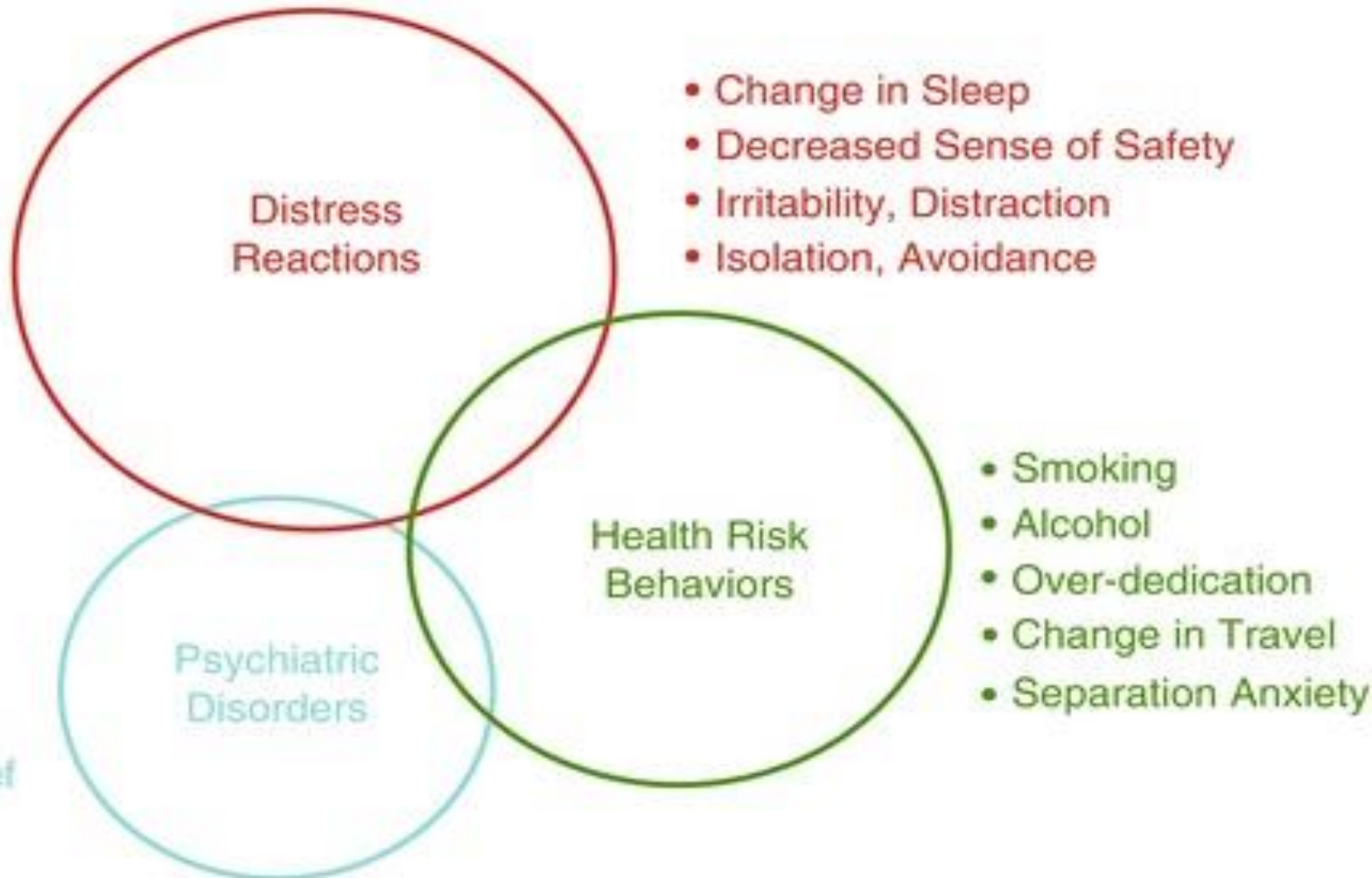
- Nurses are **3x more likely** to experience workplace trauma and violence
- Frontline roles increase exposure to emotional, physical, and moral distress (Park et al., 2025)

# Why Trauma Matters:

- Unresolved trauma negatively affects:
  - Job performance
  - Team functioning
  - Patient safety and outcomes
- Addressing trauma is essential for sustaining healthy, effective care teams (Park et al., 2025)

# Psychological and Behavioral Responses to

# Traumatic Stress (Morganstein, J. C., West, J. C., & Ursano, R. J., 2017).



# Most Frequently Reported Traumatic Events in Healthcare (Crawford & Williams, 2024). (Morganstein, J. C., West, J. C., & Ursano, R. J., 2017).

BIRTH  
COMPLICATIONS/EMERGENCIES

DEATH

MEDICAL ERRORS

COVID-19

WORKPLACE VIOLENCE/MASS  
VIOLENCE

PROVIDER COMMUNICATION  
BARRIERS

DISAGREEMENT WITH PROVIDER  
PLAN/CARE/ETHICS

OVERCROWDING &  
UNDERSTAFFING

Exposure to Chemical, Radiologic,  
or Infectious Agents

Treating Seriously Ill or Injured  
Children

# Support Needed

Healthcare workers lack the support and professional training to recognize and manage their own trauma related exposures and resulting trauma responses. (Lalovic, et al., 2025).

Limited interventions aimed at promoting post-traumatic recovery and support exist (Park, et al., 2025)

Emotional Support from managers, supervisors, and colleagues (e.g. listening, offering sympathy, acting as a confidant), decreased the risk of developing stress responses following traumatic events among healthcare workers (Crawford & Williams, 2024)

# Interventions

## Associate Preferences (Crawford & Williams, 2024).

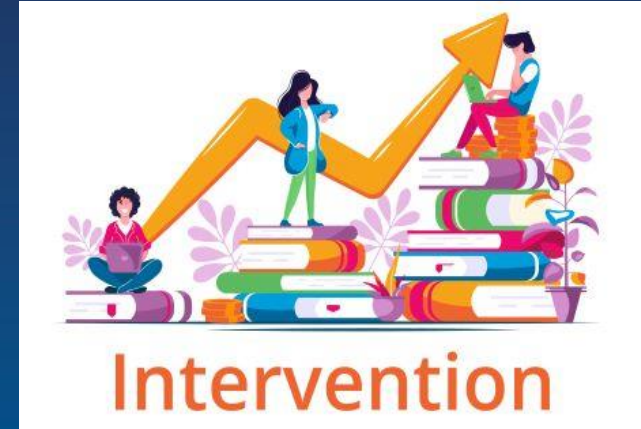
- Peer-to-peer
- Manager
- Peaceful Location to Recover
- Employee Assistance Program or Hospital Counselor



# Interventions:

## Proven Interventions

- Meditation (Lalovic, 2025).
- Mindfulness-based interventions (Lalovic, 2025).
- Discussion with peers and managers (Crawford & Williams, 2024).
- Time to step away (Crawford & Williams, 2024)
- Text Mining (Park, et al., 2025).



# So, we started the PEER Support Group..

- Not a formal counseling or therapy session
- Offers connection and understanding from others who relate to similar experiences
- Focuses on listening, validation, and coping strategies
  - Offers low-cost, high-impact



# Agenda Template

- Introduction
- Ground Rules
- Mindful Moment/Meditation/Team Activity
- Sharing of Suggested Topics/Events
- Additional Topics
- Positive Highlights
- Commitments (Future and Past)
- Follow-Up/Round Table
- Thank you

# GROUND RULES

- Judgement Free Zone
- What is shared is confidential and should not be discussed outside of support group. If you need to discuss outside of support group setting, must obtain consent from original sharer first.
- Make sure you are in a private place if attending via virtual platform.
- Session is not intended for working process change or performance concerns. These may be noted and followed up on at a later time.
- This group is intended for collaborative participation, but sharing may not be required.
- Conversations can include all aspects of life – not just work based

# EXAMPLES OF MINDFUL MOMENTS OUR GROUP HAS COMPLETED...

# Leverage the 'One-Word Opener'

*The "one-word opener" is a mindful start for meetings. During 30 seconds of silence, everyone considers one word that describes what they are experiencing or feeling. There are no "wrong answers, and no explanation is needed. The word might be "excited", "tired", "overwhelmed", "curious", for example. "By acknowledging where everyone is , people can center themselves on the meeting and we can understand where people are." - Amy Lafko, Cairn Consulting Service*

# One-Word Opener...

Words mentioned in our session:

Potato

Exhausted

Overwhelmed

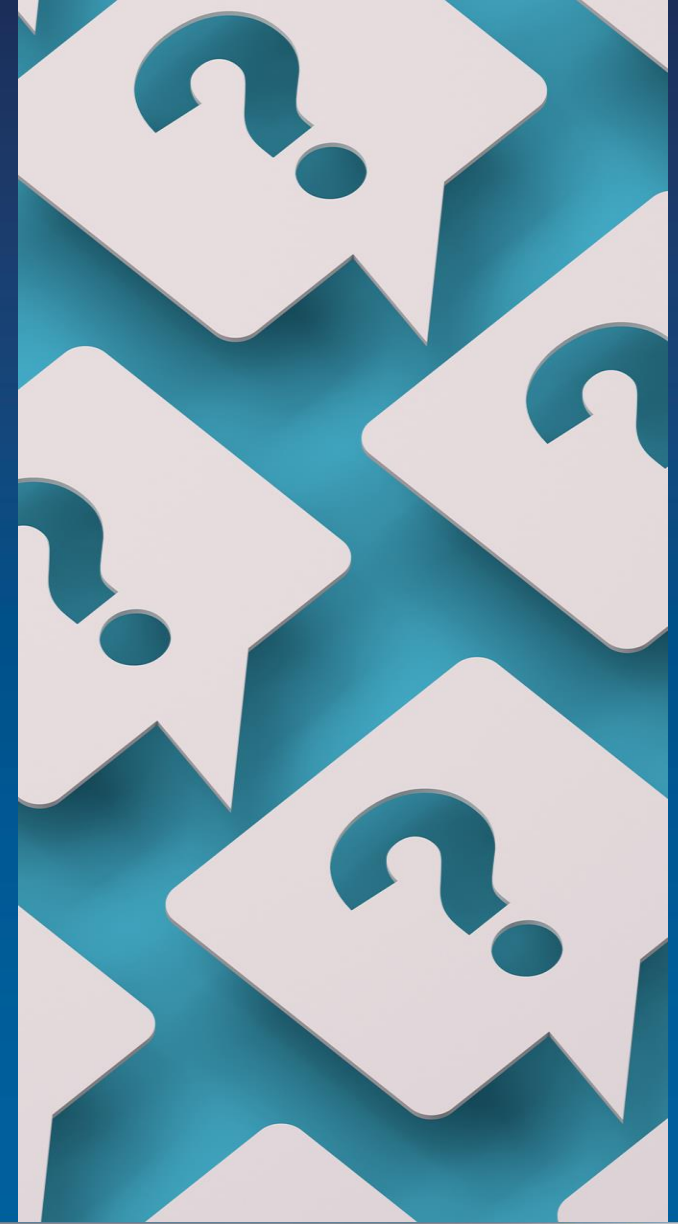
Excited

Nervous

# Fun and Games:

Let me ask you a Question...

- Leader begins the conversation with a question.
- All participants engage in a conversation but can only answer using questions.



# A WALK IN YOUR SHOES



# A WALK IN YOUR SHOES



THINK OF A PAIR OF SHOES THAT  
ARE EMBEDDED INTO YOUR  
MEMORY. CAN BE YOUR SHOES OR  
SOMEONE ELSE'S.



TAKE A MOMENT TO PERSONALLY  
REFLECT ON WHY THOSE SHOES  
REMAIN ON YOUR MIND.

# Session Content

**MTP – leading to hysterectomy**

**Fetal Losses**

**Pt with epidural allergy**

**Lotus Birth**

**Safe-Haven Baby**

**Hospital Fire**

**Diaphragmatic Hernia**





# Positive Highlights

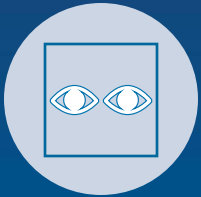
*“Either you run the day or the day runs  
you”*

Jim Rohn

*“Choose to be optimistic, it feels better”*

Dalai Lama

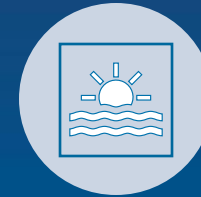
# Previous Commitment Check in:



See something special in every person you know.



Stop looking at your phone while eating meals



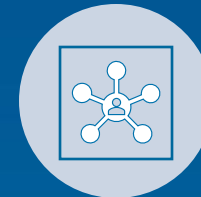
Feel the sunshine on your skin... really take it in



Relieve stress in a way that is fit for you (exercise, warm bath, quiet time).



Focus your attention on your own breathing in times of stress.



Reach out to a friend/peer that needs the support.

# Follow-Up & Round Table

- List any items/topics that came up during session to discuss at next meeting

# THANK YOU to group!

Thank you all for sharing so openly. We know vulnerability can be challenging, and we truly appreciate your openness, effort, and commitment to this group.

Award Inspire Points to those who shared.

# Survey Monkey

Anonymous

Goal = utilize feedback to improve meeting support

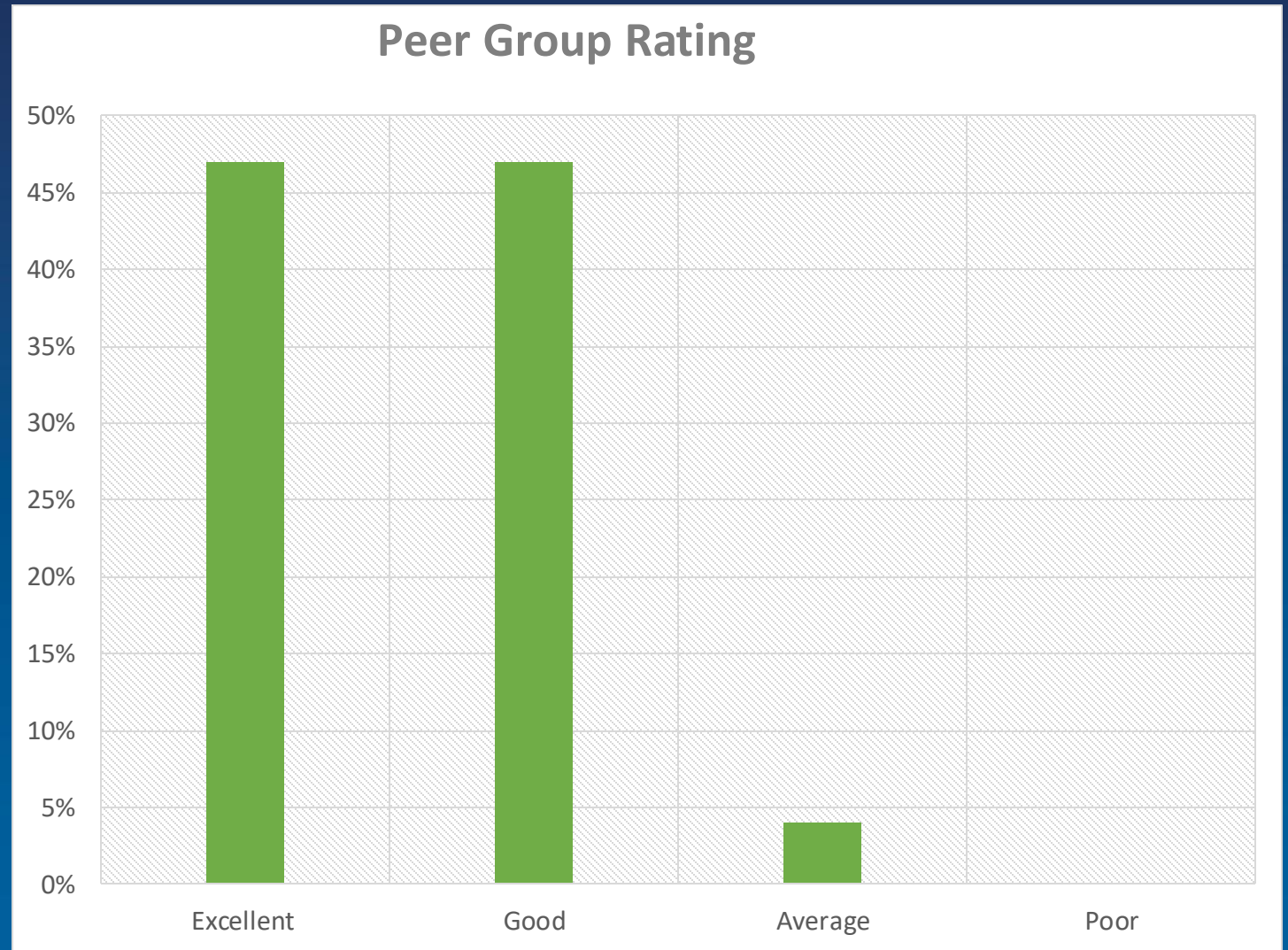
Send to all WH staff to complete

Some comments have been reworded to keep anonymous

Completed after 3 meetings

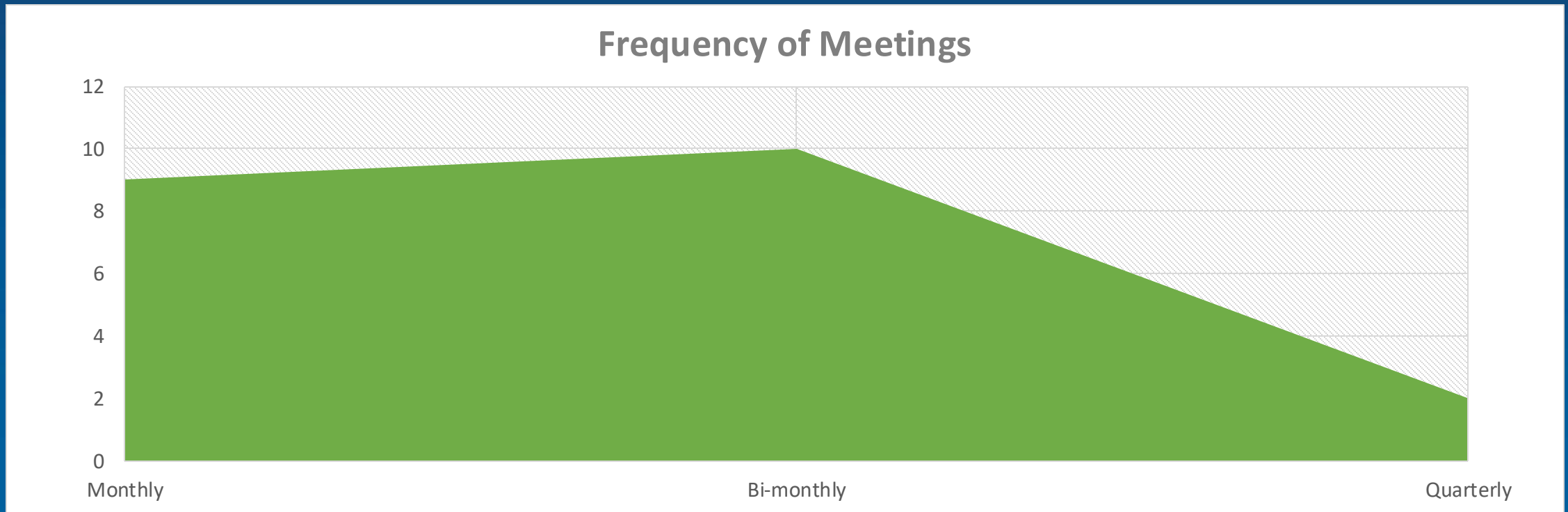
# Survey Results

**Q1: Overall,  
how would you  
rate the PEER  
Support Group?**



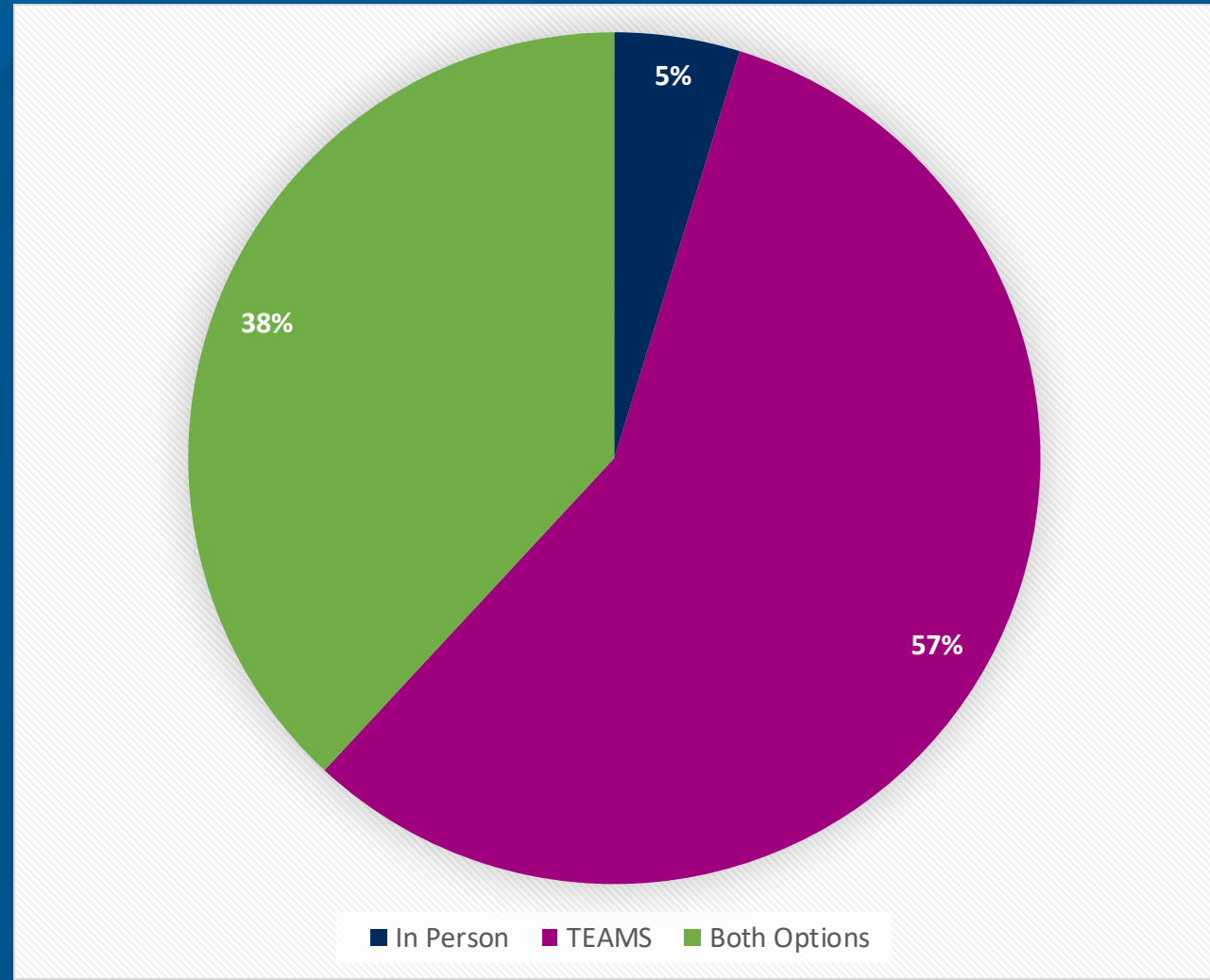
# Survey Results

**Q2: How frequently would you prefer the PEER Support Group be held?**



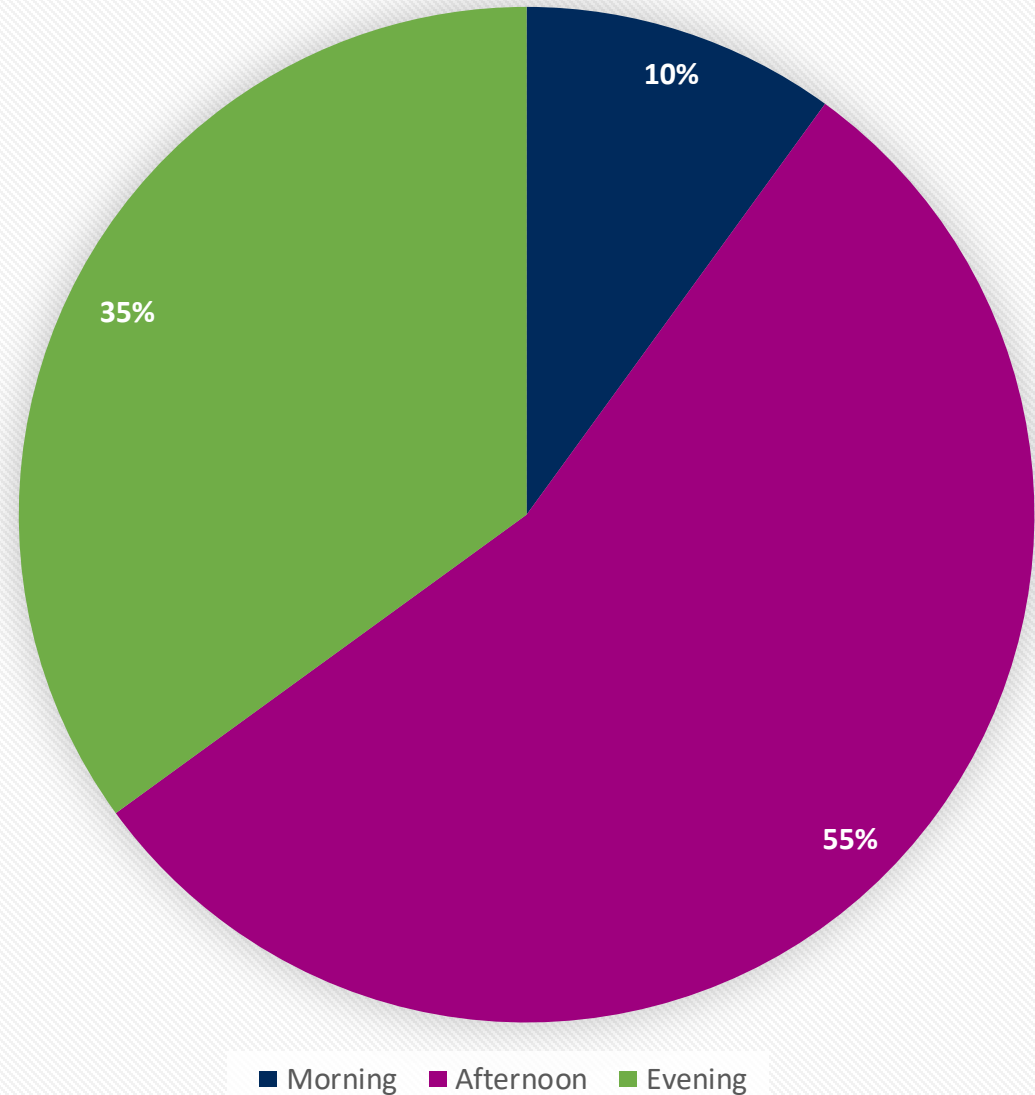
# Survey Results

**Q3: Would you prefer to meet in person or via TEAMS?**



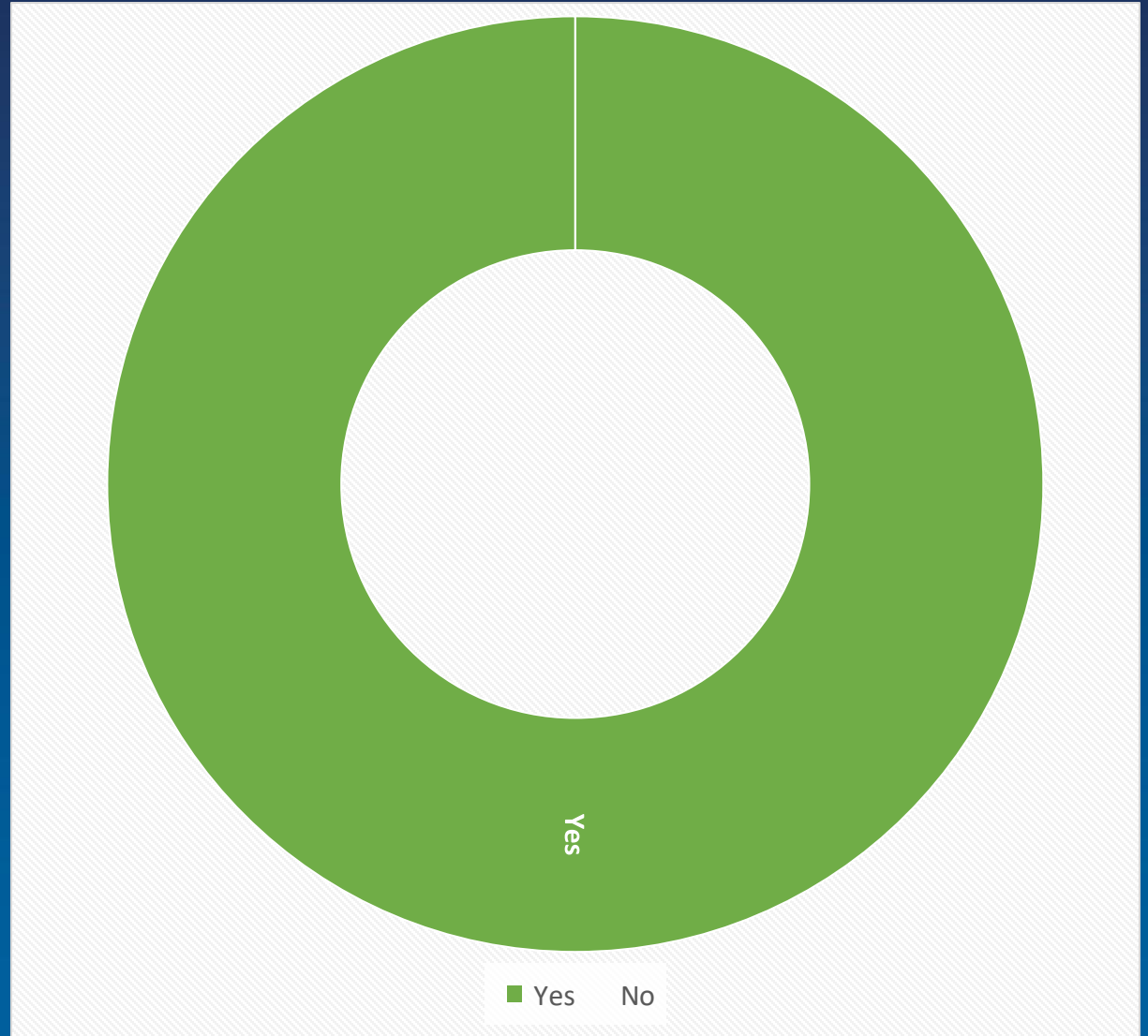
# Survey Results

**Q4: What time works best for you to attend the PEER Support Group?**



# Survey Results

**Q5: Do you enjoy the mindful moments at the beginning of the meetings?**



# Survey Results

## Q6:How can we encourage more people to share during the meetings?

- Continue reminding everyone that it is a safe space with no judgement. Everything stays within the group and is not shared outside of the group (x3)
- When people begin sharing, it helps others feel comfortable sharing
- Sometimes listening is therapeutic instead of sharing (x3)
- Reminder that the group includes all aspects of life
- Encourage face to face meetings



# Survey Results

## Q6: Continued...

- Have topics ready to discuss (x3)
- Have focused topics (Hemorrhage, falls, teamwork, group saves)
- Leading questions to stimulate conversations
- Give examples
- Discuss areas that are going well
- Like how the conversations are specific to Women's Health but can be from other experiences not just at PMH
- Longer time between meetings

# Survey Results

## Q7: What feedback do you have on what is going well in the PEER Support Group?

People are becoming more comfortable as the meetings continue.

Everyone is supportive and understanding (x4)

Love Moments that matter

Love that we can all talk about things together including things outside of work. We have trauma there as well.

Some people have really opened up and it can be cathartic

When people share, the feedback is positive and supportive

People are really opening up and sharing but it can be hard for some of us (x2)

Talking about different situations on the units

Enjoying hearing about how others feel certain situations have been navigated in their career

Truly is a judgement free zone and people can see the need for this support

Opportunity to decompress and an outlet to escape with an emotionally taxing situation

# Survey Results

## Q8: What suggestions do you have for improving the PEER Support Group?

Honestly cannot get over how great of a resource this group is

Have a focus topic for the beginning of the meeting to drive interest

Have specific topics to discuss

Making sure no one is pressured to share since some people are quiet and benefit from listening

Separating with small table groups to allow each area to discuss situations separately

Offering conversation to spark questions or stories

Having associates share and be more active



# Survey Results

**Q9: Would it be beneficial/helpful to have a subject jar so people could add things to discuss/bring up at future meetings?**

**yes**

# Survey Results

**Q10: Do you like ending with positive highlights at the end of the meetings?**

yes

# Survey Results Action Items:

Switch to bi-monthly meetings with in-person option, then reassess timing

Adjust agenda and topics for future meetings as needed

Plan for afternoon and evening meetings when possible

Continue mindful moments at the beginning of meetings

Subject Jar: add topics/items for group discussion





# Peer Support Group: Growth Plan

Expansion into Women's health

Expand program availability across additional OhioHealth campuses and departments

Integration of Education on workplace trauma exposure (Lalovic, et al., 2025).

Equip staff with evidence-based strategies to mitigate trauma-related effects

Exploring the introduction of text mining to support resilience and growth for frontline staff (Park, et al., 2025)

# Expansion: Women's Health and Beyond

“Supportive leadership from hospital managers is essential to improving nurses’ capacity to manage occupational stress” – (Xie, et al., 2025).

“Data highlights the need for enhanced support, as nurses who feel valued and recognized remain more engaged in their roles” – (Xie, et al., 2025).

"Organizational support has a direct impact on empathy fatigue." - (Xie, et al., 2025).

# References

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**Q&A**

# Thank you!

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# Mindful Moment Activity Ideas

# MINDFUL LISTENING

Mindful listening is an important skill and can be a great group mindfulness exercise. In general, people thrive when they feel fully "heard" and "seen" and mindful listening offers a break from focusing on the self or our own response.

# MINDFUL LISTENING

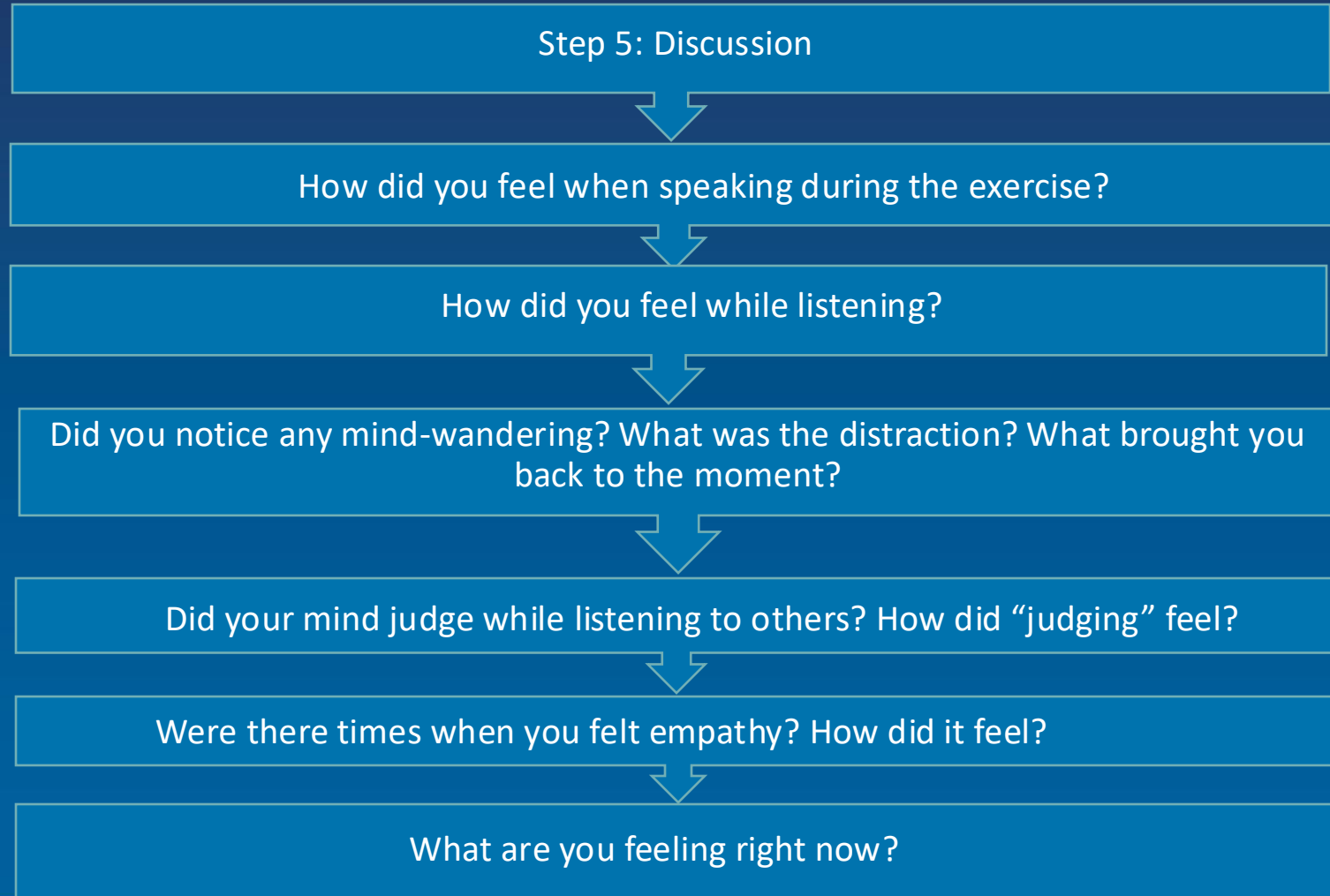
Step 1: Think of one thing you are stressed about and one thing you are looking forward to

Step 2: Share with the group

Step 3: How does it feel to share with the group? How does it feel to speak out loud about the stressors and positive things going on in your life?

Step 4: Observe your own thoughts, feelings, body sensations both while talking and listening

# MINDFUL LISTENING



# MINDFUL LISTENING

Reflection

What would happen if you practiced mindful listening with each person that spoke with?

Do you think mindful listening would change the way you interact and relate with others?

How would it feel if you set the intention to pay attention with curiosity, kindness, and acceptance to everything you said and everything you listened to?

# It's how we grow together

Think of your favorite number 1-11.

Put your number in the chat.

When your name is called, answer the question associated with your number.

# Numbered Questions:

1. Share a favorite hobby or past time
2. If you won the lottery, what would you do with it?
3. Name your favorite food.
4. What is one thing you would never want to taste again?
5. What was your favorite thing you did this past summer?
6. What was the best vacation you ever took?
7. Who inspires you to be a better person?
8. If you were famous, what would you be famous for?
9. What are two things are on the top of your bucket list?
10. What is your favorite tradition or holiday?
11. Where in the world would you live if money wasn't an issue?