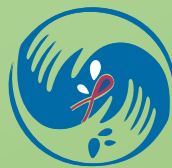



How to Support a
Deeper Check-in
with Colleagues, Peers,
and Community Members
using a
Holistic Model



**AIDS Bereavement and Resiliency
Program of Ontario**

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Our experience of grief and stress can show up in many different ways. One way to understand these differing experiences is a holistic model that divides our experience into physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual aspects. Often, in a swell of grief or stress we relate to ourselves with an emphasis on only one or two quadrants. Leading a deeper check-in with colleagues, peers, and community members, individually or as a team, is an opportunity to name how grief and stress are affecting us and to get an awareness of our whole selves. It is an act of collective care and solidarity.



Additional Resources

Refer to our worker resource kit, [Essential Tools for Support and Stability](#), for skills that support check-ins such as bracketing and emotional first aid.

Considerations before you start

When a colleague, peer, or community member approaches you needing immediate support...

Check in with yourself first to see if you have the capacity to support them in this moment.

Sometimes we might not have the time or capacity to support in the moment – and that is okay! You can still support them by helping them get grounded or connecting them to other immediate supports that exist (another team member to talk to, or a call to Employee Assistance Program (EAP) [if available]). You can also book a time to talk in the future when you may have more capacity.

If you are able to support in the moment, make sure you have at least 30 minutes to devote to supporting them, and then give yourself a few minutes before transitioning back to other tasks.

Make sure the environment is conducive to supporting your team member to being present (eg. phones on silent, private space, limited distractions, have water to drink etc.).



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Process for a one-on-one check-in with colleagues and community members

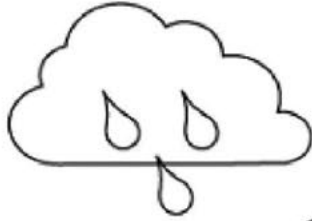
1. Start with getting **grounded**. This might look like a few deep breaths, feeling your feet on the floor for a few moments, or turning your phone off to stay present.
2. Establish **safer space agreements**: that it is a process free of advice, what is said in the room stays in the room, and will not be shared with management.
3. Your task leading the check-in is to **stay grounded and hold space** as an active listener.
4. Have an image of the **holistic model and the reflection prompts** on hand (available at end of this document) to direct the flow of the check-in. Briefly speak to the importance of considering our experience holistically and the value of checking in.
5. Offer the diagram of the holistic check-in and ask them if they can identify where they are feeling full or challenged. What part of the diagram stands out first? If you are providing support online, you can screen share the tool.
6. The person might want to **check-in one quadrant at a time or in only one quadrant**. Do not push them to check-in across the whole model if they would rather check in on just one.
7. If they are not sure where to start, **use some of the prompts** included on the last pages of this document.
8. Use **reflective listening** to affirm that you are hearing them, "I hear a lot of frustration in your voice." "I see you tense up when you talk about that."
9. Focus on **empowerment**, highlighting their strengths and resilience. "As tough as that has been, you keep showing up and sharing your skills. That matters."
10. When they are done checking in, ask them how the check-in process was for them.
 - a. "Is there anything else that needs to be said?"
 - b. "How are you feeling in the moment?"
 - c. "What might you need before ending this session?" They may need extra time or some more grounding.
 - d. "Are there any supports you need right now?" (Be ready to offer options like a glass of water, more time to talk, take a walk around the block, some reassurance or positive feedback, call a friend)
11. As a closing, **thank them** for their honesty in sharing.
12. Before you end, take some time to get **grounded and close the space**. This might look like a few deep breaths, feeling your feet on the floor for a few moments, or turning your phone on to resume work.

Process for a Team Check-In

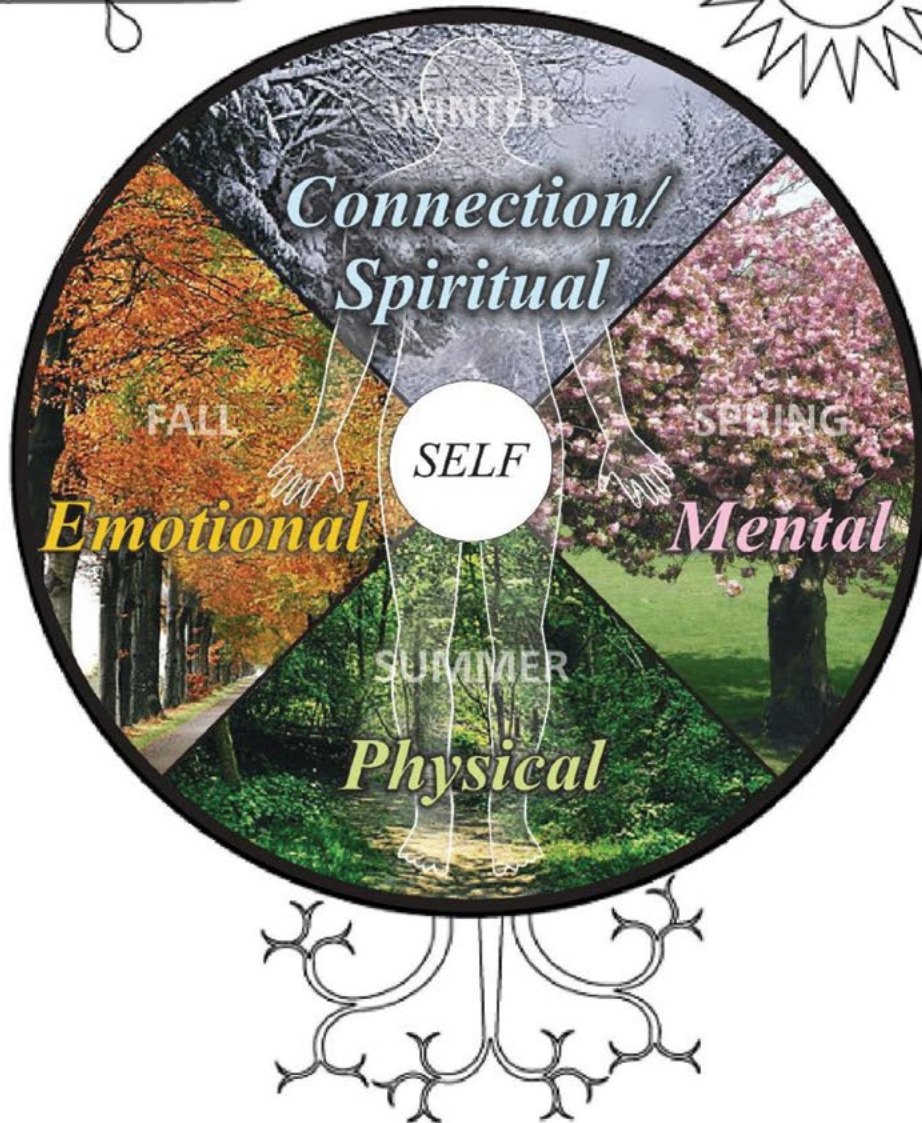
1. Anyone can facilitate a group check-in, it doesn't have to just be managers or supervisors. It can also be a peer to peer group check-in. As the person holding the space for the group, your role is to stay grounded, reminding people to **breathe, thank them** for checking in, asking **who would like to go next**, and keep track of the circle to ensure that folks are okay. If you notice that someone is in **distress** it is ok to stop the group check-in and ask that person what they need (some support, need to take a break, to share something, to talk in private later).
2. Make sure everyone has a **copy of the holistic check-in tool** and reflection prompts.
3. Start with inviting the group to get **grounded**. This might look like a few deep breaths, feeling your feet on the floor for a few moments, or turning your phone off to stay present.
4. State the **intention** to the group that it's a time to share and listen, not give advice. A **safer spaces agreement** means that what is shared will not be used in supervision or shared with management. Tell the team that unless someone asks for it or approaches you, please do not approach them with advice outside the check-in. Also, what is said in the room stays in the room.
5. Invite folks to have a look at the **holistic check-in tool**, and speak to what area of the model has the most relevancy to them in this moment. Invite people to speak up in **popcorn style** (people speak up when they are ready, not around the circle). Alternatively, if folks are uneasy about popcorn style, the facilitator could model the way and check-in first, then the order can proceed with the next person beside them.
6. There's **no pressure** for everyone to speak, people are welcome to pass. Even listening will have benefit.
7. It is also important for **the facilitator to share as well** to receive the collective care of a group check-in.
8. Some **closing** prompts
 - a. "How was it to share today?"
 - b. "How are you going to take care of yourself or access care moving into the rest of this day?"
9. As a closing, **thank the group** for their honesty in sharing. Remind them of the safer spaces agreement that what they share with the group stays with the group. Encourage them to take home the print out of the holistic check-in tool to use on their own.
10. Before you end, take some time to get **grounded and close the space**. This might look like a few deep breaths, feeling your feet on the floor for a few moments, or turning your phone on to resume work.

Holistic Check-in

What is nourishing you?



What is bringing joy?



What is grounding you?

This version of the holistic model diagram was edited and added to by Indigenous peers of the Turning to One Another program to reflect an Indigenous world view.



Reflection Prompts for a Holistic Check-in

PHYSICAL

(Our body, our health, sleep and eating habits, our movement or exercise)

- "What are you noticing in your body right now?"
- "Can you put some words to what you're feeling right now?"
- Resist the temptation to try to figure it out, and instead just be with it and breathe into it. If they do not know, offer some suggestions: are you feeling tension anywhere, heat/cold, etc.?

EMOTIONAL

(Our feelings, moods, state of our relationships)

- "What emotions are present right now?"
- If they are not sure how to describe what they are feeling, offer, "Can you put some words to how you're doing right now?"

MENTAL

(Our thoughts, attitudes, inner voice, and concentration)

- "What's going on for you mentally right now?"
- If they're not sure how to label what's happening in their mind, "Can you put some words to what you're thinking right now?" "Is it feeling hazy and foggy, or racing and loud?"

SPIRITUAL / CONNECTION

(Our sense of connection to ourselves, others, nature, something beyond us)

- "Is there anything you want to say about the spiritual quadrant right now?"
- "How connected are you feeling to the people and things you care about?"

CLOSING

- How was it to share today?
- How are you going to take care of yourself or access care moving into the rest of this day?

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