

Steps to Certification as a Council Facilitator

The Trainers Mentoring Circle (TMC)

The following is an outline of the process by which individuals can become skilled council facilitators and, in some cases, choose to expand their experience in diverse council settings by pairing with trainers authorized by the Trainers Mentoring Circle (TMC), an independent body that serves at the pleasure of the community of trainers. Since each individual's path as a carrier of council is unique, the process discussed below, of moving from skilled facilitator to Certified Council Facilitator, is a general guide. Many enter formalized training with a wealth of life and work experience in circle practice. Other types of self-development and group work are highly recommended to support the process of becoming a Certified Council Facilitator. The more authentic and at peace you are with yourself, the better you will master the art of facilitation.

Council belongs to all people and all can bring council into their lives, their work, their communities, their partnerships, etc. from the time of their first council training. Those who embrace the practice are encouraged, over time, to take advanced Council Trainings 2 and 3 to hone skills, work with different forms and learn how to respond to whatever shows up in the circle. Facilitators are further invited to take other trainings such as *The Nature of Council* on their way to becoming true carriers of council. Periodic rereading of *The Way of Council* by Jack Zimmerman and Virginia Coyle is highly encouraged for active facilitators.

For many, this is enough. Skill in forming and leading circles is an enduring gift to the world and to all families and communities. This is the highest goal for those who offer or lead all levels of council training.

However, some facilitators may be invited or called to bring council to endeavors for which compensation is offered. In this situation, we encourage association with the legacy of council practice as articulated by Zimmerman and Coyle in *The Way of Council*, and as taught by certified council trainers independently, at The Ojai Foundation (TOF) or via Center for Council (C4C). When you choose to facilitate for remuneration, and identification with a recognized council-based organization such as TOF or C4C would serve you, consider that this activates issues of accountability and integrity. While staying committed to openness and inclusiveness, the TMC upholds the care, professionalism and high standard of work identified with *The Way of Council* and teachings in the tradition of TOF. There are many paths to walk; please walk with care.

Step 1: Taking Council 1 and Initiating Facilitation

After Council 1 training, you may be invited or drawn to initiate council practice in a personal, community, school, business or organizational setting. Some may already be part of the leadership of a circle practice, and ready for Council 2 training.

Step 2: Taking Council 2 and Working with a Practice Group

After Council 2 training, and continued deepening as a facilitator, it's recommended that you participate in councils with peers and find existing councils where others are facilitating. It's also recommended that you engage with a group or partner to explore the mysteries of council leadership. Some Council 2 participant circles continue as a practice group and some trainers offer facilitation practice and mentoring. In 2017, ongoing groups exist in British Columbia, Colorado, Los Angeles, and Vermont.

Step 3: Taking Council 3 and Seeking Individual Mentoring

When one has embraced the reality of "living council," it's a good time for Council 3 training. To live or carry council means not only to take it into one's public life but also to practice it in one's personal relationships, ideally with a partner or family member. This three-step process is meant to provide multiple experiences in council trainings led by skilled, certified trainers and as a facilitator in programs involving on-going councils.

At some time along this path, facilitators interested in certification may seek the mentorship of a trainer authorized by the TMC to provide such to those seeking to become a Certified Council Facilitator. Conversations about co-leadership, field-reading, holding a strong container, trusting the process and thinking like a circle should arise. Deep and frequent witnessing of a future Certified Facilitator in action is one of the major responsibilities of the mentor.

Step 4: Certification as a Council Facilitator

For those who have engaged deeply in these steps, and sought the considered, long-term reflection of a mentor, it is possible to be certified by the TMC. The facilitator must provide the dates of all three levels of council training, along with a written history of council facilitation. The mentor may then arrange for a call of completion with the TMC. The TMC may acknowledge completion or recommend further steps.

The TMC's Council Facilitator Certificate recognizes that the facilitator has completed training, and has had ongoing facilitation experience with sufficient mentoring to assure the type of grounding in and mastery of council practice expected by those who carry

the title. We recommend a ceremony, perhaps in the company of the Certified Facilitator's circle of practice, to mark the occasion.

Those seeking to facilitate council in school-based and social justice programs may seek additional information from Center for Council or other TOF-affiliated entities.

Regarding Certification as a Council Trainer

Certification as a Council Facilitator does not authorize the recipient to lead council trainings. Please contact the TMC or your mentor if this is of interest.

Regarding Those who have Facilitated for Many Years

Those who have taken Council 1 and 2 and are active facilitators are invited to contact the TMC for certification.

TMC – April 2017 – Zimmerman, Tamblyn, Lipkis, Austein

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This "living" document was drafted in August 2008 by Bonnie Mennell, Gigi Coyle & Jack Zimmerman and revised in February 2010 by the Center for Council Training Advisory Council ("The Nine"). It will continue to be refined to reflect the work and progress of Council in the world.