

Intimacy/On-Going  
**Group Guidelines and Commitments**  
*"As I am in group, so I am in the world"*

I, \_\_\_\_\_ am making the following agreements with the intention of keeping them. I understand I will not be perfect, and I am responsible for being accountable to my group and therapist(s) when I break these agreements.

1) SELF CARE CONTRACTS:

1. I protect myself and nurture myself. I do not harm myself accidentally or on purpose, and will not provoke or allow anyone else to hurt me.
2. I respect others and myself and act in a responsible way. I do not harm another person or the environment accidentally or on purpose.
3. I will stay and work through my feelings, thoughts, and behaviors, and solve my problems. I do not run away physically or emotionally.
4. I am honest with myself and others both intellectually and emotionally. I am not sneaky and I do not lie.
5. I keep myself healthy - emotionally, mentally, physically and spiritually.
6. I will be proactive to my own and others' thoughts, feelings and behaviors. I am not passive.
7. I am committed to continued growth, open to learning and rediscovering, and keeping myself healthy.
8. I accept that I will not be perfect, and I will be accountable to my wellness both in and outside of group.
9. I structure my work so that myself and others are safe. I will not regress without a contract.

- 2) I understand that for my therapy to be successful I must make it (me) my top priority, therefore, I will be on time and attend every group. I realize I am reserving a place in my group, and I am expected to pay for each session, whether I am present or not. I am responsible for contacting the

therapist in my group if I cannot attend a group session. If I am unable to inform the leader, I will let a fellow group member know my intentions as soon as I can BEFORE group time. Not coming to group at the last minute for some "gamey" reason is a discount of your responsibility to yourself and to the group members. Not being on time can also be a "game" I play. If this becomes a regular pattern, I will be willing to look at it as a therapeutic issue.

- 3) I will pay for my group session(s) at the beginning of every month unless I have made other arrangements.
- 4) I understand there are many ways I can hurt my body and mind. Some ways are drinking and using mood-altering substances. If I am a recovering person, whether it is using chemicals, food, etc., I will remain in the recovering process and commit to continue to be abstinent. If I consider myself a social drinker, (I understand illegal drugs are not acceptable), which is by HealingHearts definition an occasional drink in a social setting, and if I use, I will be aware of my thinking and feelings before and after. I will be accountable and honest with myself, first, and if need be, I will be accountable to the group. Also, I agree I will not drink 24 hours before group night.

The use of prescription drugs needs to be discussed with the therapist.

If I am a smoker, I understand smoking is another substance (drug) that is hurtful to me. I understand I will be asked to look at my nicotine addiction and am willing to address this as a recovery issue.

- 5) I will honor the privacy of others and not talk about anything that takes place in the group that could identify another person. It is okay for me to share outside the group what I do, but do not share with anyone what another group member has done or said.

What is said in group should stay in the group. I also agree to deal directly with fellow group members and the therapist(s), and not engage in gossiping. Confidentiality is essential if a group is going to function, effectively. Confidentiality for the therapist(s) means that group work will be discussed with another professional therapist (case consultation) for your total growth.

- 6) I accept ultimate responsibility for the process and results of my therapy. I will get support and guidance from the therapist(s) and group. I also accept responsibility for my own personal safety on the property located at HealingHearts. I understand that when I participate in bodywork, as in energy release work, there is strenuous physical activity and risk involved, and I will protect myself and act responsible.

- 7) A variety of techniques may be used in group from time to time. Some of them include various exercises in body awareness, role playing, "Creative Fantasy," and "Creative Movement," which puts one in touch with elements of ourselves or things which may be happening in us at the time.
- 8) Group members are responsible for how the group goes. If you are bored, speak up, don't wait for the therapist.
- 9) Speak with the first person "I." When speaking about yourself, use "I." Don't speak for someone else, they can speak for themselves. Instead of "people feel" or "you get the feeling..." etc., say, "I think" or "I feel." This gives more of the flavor of you, rather than broad generalities.
- 10) Speak directly to individuals. To improve communication, we encourage you to look at the person you're speaking to. When referring to someone in the group, remember to speak directly to that person. If another person asks you, "How do you feel about Bill right now?" for example, turn to Bill and say, "Bill, I feel you were very kind to me a minute ago when you said..." or "I resent you right now" or whatever – rather than answering the one who questioned you, originally.
- 11) Be aware at all times of your thoughts and feelings at the moment. Express them at the earliest appropriate time. Be aware, even if you cannot express your thoughts and feelings at the moment.
- 12) Read the messages from your body. Your body is the most basic, tangible aspect of yourself. It is continually giving you messages. The open or closed portion of your limbs, sweating palms, feeling "fidgety," rapid heartbeat, moving to a closer or more remote seat, flushed face, increased elimination needs, all those and more may tell you that you are afraid, angry, irritated, worried, embarrassed, wanting to be closer to a person, anxious, etc. These messages can be noted and understood.
- 13) Be as spontaneous as possible. Too often we "mull over," think about, choose careful language, wait too long, try to be too polite, or react. This may "water down" ideas, thoughts, and feelings. Finding the balance of not interrupting (controlling or taking over) may be challenging. The point is to be real and honest.
- 14) Be aware of the roles you take on and your characteristic behavior. It has been observed that we tend to behave similarly in many situations. For instance, some of us tend to be ready for a scrap in many situations. Others tend to withdraw or run away from confrontation, while others are "peacemakers" or "compromisers." Another person may behave very differently in each situation, carefully "sampling" the popular opinion, then conforming to the prevailing view. Sometimes we behave in group much as we do with our mate, friends, parents, associates, or in other groups. By

observing yourself and others in this group, you can come to helpful insights.

- 15) Be aware of how people in this group remind you of other significant people in your past or present life. For instance, a certain woman may remind you of your mother, your wife or an old girlfriend. A certain man may remind you of your father, boss or rival. Interacting with these people can often work out old problems, affections, hurts, joys, sorrows, even if the person is not actually or completely like the person of whom he/she reminds you of.
- 16) Listen actively. When someone in the group is speaking, there should not be side conversations. One person speaking at a time improves communication. Good communication involves clear expression of not only what you think and feel, but also listening to the words, feelings and behavior communications of others. It is good to attempt to occasionally "crawl into another's skin" or "wear his moccasins" in your imagination in order to understand him. There is a strong tendency to read into things or ignore things a person is expressing because we may be redefining from our own unresolved past experiences. Techniques such as repeating back to a person what you thought he/she said before answering may be helpful, if it does not dampen spontaneity. We can learn to allow for one's biases and prejudices – it is not our job to change others' biases and prejudices.
- 17) Don't speak for others, such as, "...most men think...," "a man always feels...," "I think Bill feels you don't like him...," etc. Speak for yourself or ask the person or all the men present what he or they are feeling or thinking. If you feel empathy for a person or feel like defending or attacking someone, speak about what you are experiencing at the moment rather than attributing it to others or bouncing your own feelings onto others.
- 18) Expect periods of silence. Although silence may be uncomfortable, creative things can occur in our awareness and consciousness. Use silence to help you be aware of how you are feeling and possible new awarenesses.
- 19) After the group process...feelings, awarenesses and anxieties are normal. Know that follow-up appointments with the therapist are available and often desirable.
- 20) To prevent unnecessary distractions during the group, we do not allow eating, drinking, smoking or leaving the room while the group is in process.
- 21) I have been informed that in this kind of therapy touching occurs at each group and is considered healing and therapeutic. It is okay to touch someone (as long as you have their permission), to hold them, and support them. No physical violence. I understand that at no time will this touching be sexual in nature.

- 22) I have been informed that this therapy involves emotional vulnerability and there is a danger of confusing nurturing support with sexual behavior. Therefore, I will not be sexual with any group member or allow them to behave sexually with me during the course of this group both inside and outside of group.
- 23) It is not appropriate to make the group or group leaders responsible for your decision to quit group before the completion. Often, when we want to quit, we are running. For the safety and trust of the group, you must leave in an "okay" place and give at least one week notice to the group so a healthy closure can be done, and to discuss honestly with the therapist, beforehand. This is about doing our "leaving" in a healthy way.

1<sup>st</sup> Week: Announcement and feedback

2<sup>nd</sup> Week: Plan for continued recovery

3<sup>rd</sup> Week: Closing ceremony

My therapist and I have verbally read over the guidelines and commitments, and I am clear and understand them.

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Witness \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_