



## Welcome to ACSW Peer Circles

### About Peer Circles

Peer Circles are a facilitated, group-based learning experience designed for registered social workers (RSWs) in Alberta. Through discussion of practice-based case scenarios, participants engage in reflective dialogue, collaborative learning, and professional connection with peers. The goal of Peer Circles is not to identify a single "correct" answer. Instead, the circles are intended to create space for reflection, exploration of professional considerations, and discussion of diverse perspectives and approaches to practice.

### Why Peer Circles?

Social work practice is often complex, nuanced, and continually evolving. Peer Circles were developed to support:

- Reflective practice and professional growth
- Ethical decision-making and professional judgement
- Meaningful discussion of complex practice situations
- Professional connection and engagement
- Reduction of professional isolation
- Collaborative learning among peers

### Pilot Initiative

The pilot phase allows ACSW to explore how Peer Circles can support professional engagement and reflective practice across Alberta while gathering feedback from participants and facilitators.

Your participation and feedback will help inform future development, improvements, and potential expansion of the program, including future virtual and in-person opportunities.

### How Were the Cases Developed?

Peer Circle case scenarios were created by RSWs from a variety of practice backgrounds and experiences.

The cases were subsequently reviewed by a second group of RSWs to strengthen reflective discussion opportunities, consistency, and overall quality.

Some case writers and reviewers also chose to become Peer Circle facilitators.

Facilitators received facilitation training and support from an external consultant in collaboration with ACSW staff. This occurred from February to April with circles being launched in June.

### What Can Participants Expect?

Participants can expect:

- A respectful and psychologically safe learning environment
- Facilitated discussion and reflection
- Opportunities to share perspectives and learn from others
- Diverse viewpoints and professional experiences
- Collaborative exploration of practice considerations
- A post-circle ACSW resource on the case scenario

Participants are encouraged to engage at their own comfort level and contribute to a respectful and professional discussion environment.





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### **Thank You and Questions**

Thank you for participating in ACSW's Peer Circles pilot initiative. We appreciate your willingness to contribute to reflective practice, professional engagement, and the future development of this program.

At the end of your Peer Circle, you will be asked to complete a survey for quality improvement.

Questions or feedback can be shared with:

[practice.consultation@acsw.ab.ca](mailto:practice.consultation@acsw.ab.ca)





## Frequently Asked Questions

### **What are Peer Circles?**

Peer Circles are facilitated, small-group learning discussions designed to support reflective practice, professional engagement, and collaborative learning among registered social workers (RSWs) in Alberta.

### **What is the purpose of the program?**

The program was developed to create meaningful opportunities for RSWs to connect with peers, discuss complex practice situations, strengthen reflective practice skills, and reduce professional isolation.

### **What happens during a Peer Circle?**

Participants will engage in guided discussion of a practice-based case scenario led by trained facilitators. Discussions may include ethical considerations, application of Standards of Practice, decision-making processes, and reflection on professional perspectives and approaches.

### **How were the Peer Circle case scenarios created?**

The Peer Circle case scenarios were developed collaboratively by registered social workers (RSWs) in Alberta with diverse practice backgrounds and experiences. Following development, the cases were reviewed by a second group of RSWs to provide feedback, strengthen reflective discussion opportunities, and support consistency and quality across scenarios.

### **How were Peer Circle facilitators selected and prepared?**

Peer Circle facilitators are RSWs who volunteered to support reflective discussion and collaborative learning within the program. Some facilitators also participated in the development and review of Peer Circle case scenarios. Facilitators received facilitation training and support from an external consultant in collaboration with ACSW staff.

### **Is this a presentation or workshop?**

No. Peer Circles are designed to be interactive and discussion-based rather than lecture-style presentations. The focus is on collaborative reflection and professional dialogue.

### **Do I need to speak or actively participate?**

Participants are encouraged to engage in discussion. Your contributions as a participant will impact the group learning. Facilitators may ask a participant to contribute as a scribe for their group.





**Will I be expected to share personal or client information?**

No. Participants should not share identifying client information or confidential workplace information. Discussions will focus on provided case scenarios and professional reflection.

**Is the environment confidential and respectful?**

Yes. Peer Circles are intended to foster a psychologically safe, respectful, and professional learning environment where diverse perspectives are valued. Facilitators may take appropriate action if significant safety, ethical, or professional concerns arise.

**Who can attend?**

Social workers registered in Alberta are able to register for peer circles. There is no cost to attending a peer circle. In the future, we may expand registration to other professionals and students.

**Does participation count toward competence or professional development?**

Participants may use participation as part of their professional reflection and continuing competence activities, where appropriate to their individual learning goals and competence requirements.

**What does “pilot” mean?**

This is ACSW’s launch of peer circles. We will actively gather feedback from participants and facilitators to inform future development, improvements, and expansion of peer circles.

**How large are the groups?**

Peer Circles are designed as small-group discussions to support meaningful dialogue and participant engagement (between 8-12 participants). If circles are less than 6 participants, the circle will be cancelled.

**Who facilitates the sessions?**

Sessions are led by trained facilitators who support discussion, encourage reflective dialogue, and help maintain a respectful and collaborative learning environment.

**Is there anything I need to prepare in advance?**

Participants may be provided with brief information or materials before the session; however, no extensive preparation is required. Participants are encouraged to review ACSW’s Standards of Practice and/or practice resources in advance, if desired.

**Will food or transportation costs be provided or covered?**





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No. Participants are responsible for their own food, parking, mileage, transportation, and any other costs associated with attending the session.

**Will there be future Peer Circles?**

ACSW plans to continue and expand Peer Circles in the future, including virtual circles. Future circles will be informed by participant and facilitator feedback and registrant input.

