

Sacred Connections

Guide to

Creating

Rituals and Events

Foreword

As the Sacred Connections community grows and expands, we are finding it necessary to limit the numbers of participants at any one event in order to keep a high level of intimacy. At the same time, we are developing ways of opening to new people. One of the ways we are doing this is by helping to develop branch or regional groups anywhere there might be interest and a few dedicated individuals willing to make it happen. We are very excited about this. **We are committed to helping anyone interested, wherever they are, to develop groups dedicated to using the powerful energies of love and sacred sexuality to help all present open up to loving, supporting, and empowering each other to be the very best we can be.**

This handbook is written as a **basic guide for anyone interested in creating rituals and events** based on our time-tested model. Our one-day gatherings have generally started at 2 PM and gone till 9 PM or much later. This booklet is written with one-day gatherings in mind, though most of the ideas can be adapted to longer or shorter events. We do highly recommend that people be asked to stay present from the beginning of the event to at least dinner in order to maintain a strong, safe, sacred container for all present. At the same time, no one is pressured to participate in anything with which they are not comfortable.

Sacred Connections has been creating powerful sacred sexuality rituals and events for over three years. We have developed certain themes and activities that have become regular parts of our gatherings. If you are somewhat new to leading groups, **we advise you to use these guidelines until you feel comfortable exploring and trying out some new things on your own.** If, however, you have a lot of experience leading groups and rituals, feel free to adapt this information in whatever way feels right to you. If you have any questions, feel free to contact us through our website at www.sacredconnections.org. You will also find useful documents there, which you are free to use. May we all come to more deeply embrace our sacred sexual energies as we strive to find ever more ways to love each other more. **We wish you all the very best!**

The Basics

Breathing

We invite you to close your eyes and take a few deep breaths right now before you continue reading.

Notice how those breaths affected your energy. You probably feel a little more grounded, a little more centered than you did before you did this. You are also likely to be a little less up in your head, more in your heart, and open to receive whatever is here for you.

Inviting everyone to take frequent deep breaths is a key way to encourage people to stay grounded and come from their hearts in our time together. Whenever you find the group energy feeling weak or scattered, and even if you as the leader find yourself feeling a bit frazzled or uncertain what to do at any time, you can invite everyone to stop and take a few deep breaths together. This not only helps to ground the energy for everyone, it also gives you as leader a chance to clear your energetic space and open to what you might want to do next.

Any time someone shares something significant or you have a shift in activity, you can invite everyone to take a deep breath. Any time a number of people in a row are doing some verbal (or non-verbal) sharing, you can invite everyone to take a deep breath after each person. Better yet, when they are done sharing, ask each person sharing to invite everyone to take a deep breath with them. You can call this the **integration breath**. It gives everyone a chance to take a moment to move inside themselves, to integrate whatever was just shared, and to give thanks to the one who shared.

At times you can invite people when they take a deep breath to **make some sound with the breath** as they let it out. On the next breath they might make louder sounds. Then you might invite them to breathe with both sound and some **movement** of their bodies. Invite everyone as they breathe and sound to feel their body and allow themselves to move however their body wants to move in that moment. We encourage you to stop reading and try this for a moment yourself right now. Deep breathing – a short, simple way to help everyone stay connected with their hearts and with each other.

Selecting Members for your Community and your Planning Team

One of the most important and challenging tasks we have as leaders is to determine who we wish to have at our events and **who will be on our planning team**. We encourage you to be proactive in this. Think of the people who you would be excited about having at your events. Think of people who would be most in harmony with your planning team. Think of **people who are in full alignment with what we are creating**. Call them, email them, and encourage them to come. Ask them to support you as leader by attending your event or joining your team.

Selecting members of your planning team is particularly important. These are the people you will be working with, playing with, and learning from. Together you will be creating rituals and events that may have a very strong impact on people's lives. Having people who are responsible, loving, and able to deal with disagreements and conflicts in an empowering way are all extremely valuable qualities in members of a planning team. It's also helpful to **identify the specific talents of each member of your team** and to make good use of them. Ideally, you will not only enjoy your time planning and playing together, you will also learn from each other as you grow, explore, and create together.

As leaders, **you are the guardians of the group energy**. If an individual drags down the group energy or demands too much focus or is not emotionally prepared for the kinds of experiences the rest of the group is ready for, that person may not be appropriate for your group. We suggest that your primary consideration in deciding if a person is appropriate be **what is best for the group as a whole**, not what is best for any individual person.

You may have to make difficult decisions at times about someone already in your community. For instance, someone in your community is a continual drag on the energy; someone repeatedly disrespects others or crosses boundaries; someone seriously violates the covenant. In cases like this, you will definitely want to give them a warning that this behavior is not acceptable in the community.

If the behavior persists, you will likely have to ask this person to withdraw from the community for the good of all. If you don't, the safety and integrity of the community can be compromised. In a situation like this, try to find someone on your team who is really good with people, yet clear on boundaries. Have them talk to the person involved with compassion. You can wish them all the best, yet inform them that their behavior has made it clear that you need to ask them to leave for the good of everyone present. Giving them an opportunity for closure with individuals or the group can also help to ease their transition out of the community. A few deep breaths and asking for spiritual guidance can only help in a situation like this.

We have also developed a **list of qualities** that we use to help us decide if an individual is appropriate for our group. There are two parts to this list. The first part lists qualities we feel are both important and necessary in each of our members. These are qualities we feel are essential in order to build and strengthen our community. The second part lists qualities we feel are desirable, but not necessary or essential to be a member of this loving community. You can use this list in questioning individuals interested in joining your community. You can also use it in considering whether or not to ask someone to withdraw from your community. Giving this list out to your community members will also help them in selecting potential new members for the community. The list begins on the following page.

Essential qualities

- **Aware and respectful of boundaries!!!**

- Polysensual – comfortable giving and receiving physical touch and affection with both sexes.
- Accepting of a wide diversity of ways of being, including erotic expression
- Committed to personal growth and healing
- Able to contribute positive energy to the group
- Sex positive – share the belief that the body and sexuality are sacred
- Having a desire to see the divine in all beings
- Open-hearted
- Open to embracing both the light and the dark in others and in ourselves as our teachers
- Open to nudity
- Committed to love, support, and empower all beings to be the best they can be
- Committed to clear, open, honest, effective, compassionate communication
- Having a primary purpose of joining a supportive community as opposed to seeking a romantic partner or fulfilling sexual needs
- Able to take responsibility for major life challenges outside of Sacred Connections: not trying to use our community as a means of dealing with chronic personal problems (depression, addiction, abuse, lack of communication skills)
- Able to respect people's need for confidentiality
- Able to take responsibility for our role in whatever happens

Desirable qualities

- Commitment to try to do whatever is best for all
- Desire to invite Spirit and spiritual guidance to play an active role in our lives + community
- Intention of living with compersion (the experience of joy at seeing a partner connecting deeply with others, opposite of jealousy)
- Strong, creative, nourishing life energy
- Ability to laugh and play
- Desire to empower all beings through consciously creating energetic webs of love + support
- Ability to accept and flow with what can't be changed, yet to actively create the potential for ever more love and growth in our lives

All of these qualities are relative and some of us evaluate more harshly than others. If you are interested in inviting someone who does not have one of the essential qualities listed above, check in with others. If there is agreement that it is better not to invite someone, you might recommend other groups or workshops that can be useful and supportive. Though on the one hand, we don't like the idea of being exclusive, on the other hand, we really do want to continue to create a very clear, focused, loving community of people fully ready to dive in and explore the realms of love, pleasure, communion, and spirituality together. **Let us all focus on bringing people together in whatever way is most loving, supportive, and empowering for all.**

Planning your event

- Personal sharing (preferably with touch)
- Call in the sacred energies (when everyone present)
- Clearing between members (if necessary)
- Choose one person to take notes and one to watch time and remind about breathing
- Set intention for event
- Set agenda
- Prioritize agenda (set times if you like)
- Discussion (don't forget to breathe after each topic)
- Closing circle/puppy pile with thanking of sacred energies

How you plan your event has a crucial impact on how your event goes. If you are rushed and arguing in your planning meeting, it is very likely your event will not flow as you might hope it would. **If everyone at the planning meeting really opens their hearts to each other and holds the best intentions firmly in their minds and hearts throughout the planning meeting, that energy is very likely to infuse your event.**

At Sacred Connections planning meetings, we often end up waiting for one or more members to arrive. While we are waiting, we usually go ahead with some personal sharing. **Give each person a few minutes to share what they've been up to and how they are feeling** in that moment as a wonderful way to help everyone to be more present and open to each other.

As soon as all expected members are present, we stop sharing and come into a group hug to **call in the sacred energies**. By asking for spiritual guidance in all we do, we open to more direct assistance from forces much wiser than ourselves. Once that is done, we finish with the group sharing before moving on. While sharing, you might consider having whoever is sharing sit or lie in the center of everyone else and invite them to receive a gentle massage as they are sharing if they are open to it. **Touch is a wonderful way of inviting people to open their hearts.** You could also have a massage circle or massage exchange of some sort after everyone has shared.

It is important that your planning meetings feel enjoyable and satisfying to everyone present. Breathing, touching, and giving everyone a chance to share about their personal lives all help everyone to feel more connected. Occasionally, we will also **set aside special times for clearing between members**. When some members are not feeling clear with each other or feel somehow disempowered by another, it can keep the whole meeting and group energy from flowing freely and powerfully.

Times for clearing can be done with the whole group witnessing and supporting, or one on one. It is vital that everyone remembers that **the purpose of clearing is not to blame or make anyone wrong**. It is about empowering each other through letting others know what is blocking us from being able to fully open and support each other. **It is about finding ways to love each other more.** Frequent deep breaths and remembering our deep intention to love, support, and empower each other are very helpful in this process. If we can keep our interpersonal dynamics clear and loving, this will certainly carry through to our events.

Once you are ready to move into planning your event, there are a few things that are helpful to do. Choosing someone to **take notes and type them up for distribution** (by email preferably) is very helpful. This helps us remember everything that was decided, everything that needs to be done, and to inform anyone who couldn't make it to the meeting of what happened. Choosing a **time watcher** to help remind the group to stay on track can also be helpful if you are short on time. And if you're having your event immediately after the planning meeting, don't forget to leave some time for set up and a break for everyone.

Next, before jumping into any details and other topics, it will be very helpful to come up with the planning group's **overall intention for the event/gathering**. You may possibly change or modify your intention after hearing someone's ideas later, but having a general intention for your gathering can be very helpful in maintaining a clear focus as you discuss your ideas.

Then you can come up with an **agenda**. Everyone can brainstorm about what you need or want to talk about at this meeting. Once you have all the suggestions, prioritize your agenda. What absolutely has to be talked about, and what can be put off till the next meeting if needed? You might also want to look at how much time you want to spend on different topics and make sure there is enough time to discuss everything that is essential. We soon will have an idea list from which you can choose an activity you might want to use for a gathering. This may be particularly useful if you don't have time to come up with your own ideas for activities.

Now you're ready to dive in and move through your agenda. And don't forget; take a deep breath or two after finishing any topic. In this type of meeting it's generally impractical to take a breath after every person speaks, but by remembering to **breath after each topic and at any time the energy feels intense or there is disagreement**, your meeting is likely to flow more smoothly. If you are short on time, the timekeeper's role may also be essential in keeping people focused.

At the conclusion of your planning meeting, coming together in a **group hug or puppy pile is essential**. You can then **thank the sacred energies** for their help and call in the energy of everyone who will be present at your gathering (and even those who want to be present but couldn't make it).

Our planning meetings for a single event at Sacred Connections started out taking three hours or so. We would sometimes get together the evening before the gathering for some personal sharing and hot tubbing. Other times we would gather between 10 and 11 AM to plan for the gathering that would start at 2 PM. As we've been doing this for a while, we now often plan our events in just an hour or so just before the gathering.

In our experience, **small is beautiful for planning meetings**. If you have more than six or seven people at a meeting, it can get very time consuming when everyone wants to share their opinions and ideas. If you have a lot of interested people, consider forming committees that meet separately to deal with issues delegated to them. Try to get the most responsible, enthusiastic, and loving people to be on your core planning team. We wish you all the very best in your planning and your event! Take a deep breath!

Ritual Summary

Planning meeting

- Personal sharing (preferably with touch)
- Call in the sacred energies (when everyone present)
- Clearing between members (if needed)
- Choose one person to take notes and one to watch time and remind about breathing
- Set intention for event
- Set agenda
- Prioritize agenda (set times if you like)
- Discussion (don't forget to breath after each topic)
- Closing circle/puppy pile with thanking of sacred energies

The Event

1. Welcoming Circles/Registration

- Invite everyone to center back into themselves between each person
- Each person receiving is helped to sit up and surrounded with hugs

2. Opening

- Invite in the sacred energies
Spirit/God/Goddess/All That Is
Love and heart energy of everyone present
Guiding spirits/guardian angels of everyone present
Any spirits/beings fully aligned with whatever is best for all
Spirits of all those who want to be here but couldn't make it
Invite everyone to call in whatever energy they would like present
Tone together to call all these energies in strongly
- Read the Vision Statement
- Introduce the planning team and volunteers
- Read of the Covenant
- Personal sharing around the circle
Integration breath and prayer hands after each person shares
- Welcome latecomers
- Breathe/move in preparation for next activity

3. Activity(s)

4. Healing Circle

5. Closing

- Announcements/thank yous (breath after each one)
- Thank you to sacred energies
- Group tone and/or Yummmmm!!!

6. Pot Luck Dinner

7. Schmooze Time

The Event

Here's the basic format for our Sacred Connections one-day events:

- Welcoming Circles/Registration
- Opening
- Activity(s)
- Healing Circle
- Closing
- Pot Luck Dinner
- Schmooze time

Before starting your welcoming circles, you will likely want to have **registration** set up. We like to have two people handling this as a number of people can come at once, and it's always good to have at least one person available to give welcoming hugs. The registration people can have a list where each person signs in, gives a donation, and signs the informed consent. A copy of our current informed consent form (which is a work in progress) is included at the end of this guide. We recommend you use it with your group. We generally ask for donations of \$10 – 20 and \$10 more if people did not bring a potluck dish. We usually spend \$60 – 80 buying extra food (don't forget drinks) before the gathering for those who don't bring food. It's generally best to have one volunteer in charge of bringing this food for each gathering.

You will need to decide how you are going to handle your money. If you choose to set up your own bank account for your group, you can talk to Fred about all that is involved in doing this. Basically, you will need to choose your own group name, register with the county, apply for a number from the IRS, and open your bank account with this info. You will definitely need to have someone to do the accounting, though you are not required to file with the IRS unless your net proceeds exceed \$25,000.

If you want to avoid the extra work of dealing with your own finances, you can choose take the risk of simply not informing any government agency of your existence, or you can choose to be an affiliate of Sacred Connections. If you choose to affiliate, you would take any money needed for reimbursement out of your registration receipts and give the remainder to our treasurer, who would deposit it in our Sacred Connections account. Make checks payable to Sacred Connections. This money is used for scholarships and other expenses of the group. Our accounting books are open to anyone interested.

Up to this point, no one in Sacred Connections has been paid for any of their services and we would ask the same of any of our affiliated groups. If, however, you set up your own group with your own bank account, you are free to do as you please, as you would be an independent group. We do give free admission at our events to all people on the core team. When we use someone's house for a gathering, we generally offer \$50 – 100 (up to them how much in that range) for cleanup and as thanks for using their space. Take a deep breath and get ready to dive in!

1. Welcoming Circles

Any of you who have been to our events know about the welcoming circles. They help to set a magical, loving, sacred space before we get started. As soon as three or four people have arrived you can start a welcoming circle. It's best to have one or two people leading each circle. One person is invited to lie in the center of each circle to be welcomed. The leader asks that person their name and if there is anywhere they would prefer not to be touched. If they state nowhere, it is best to ask specifically if they are Ok having their genitals and breasts (women) touched.

The leader then invites everyone to first close their eyes, place their hands over their own heart (center of chest) and go inside for a moment. Everyone is invited to take deep breaths, go into their hearts, and open up to as much love as is there. All are then directed to consciously invite the love and welcoming energy to flow from their heart out their arms and into their hands. Everyone then places their hands gently on the welcomee's body while beginning to chant/tone welcome and the person's name. The loving, welcoming energy flows from the heart through everyone's hands and voices into the one being welcomed as all gently touch or caress them. The leader may also want to invite everyone to send this beautiful being their very best wishes and empowerment to be the very best they can be.

Once this feels complete, the leader invites everyone to lift the person to a sitting position (it's important the person doesn't have to get up on their own) and everyone in the circle then surrounds them with a warm group hug. Either before or after the next person lies down, it is very important that the leader reminds everyone to go back inside of themselves, to take a few deep breaths, to find their own center/grounding, and to feel their love for themselves before focusing their energies on the next person.

This process continues until everyone has been welcomed. New circles are formed as the number of people grows. Generally it's best to not go over 10 people or so in a circle. It often helps if someone (possibly a registration person) tries to keep tabs on how many people are left to be welcomed in each circle and directs newcomers to go to the circle that is closest to finishing with welcoming everyone. It's often necessary to ask one or more people who have already been welcomed to shift from one circle to another in order to avoid having too many people in one group. If one circle finishes before the others, the leader invites circle members to stay in a non-verbal space. While waiting for others to finish, the group can do a massage circle, a puppy pile, just sit and tone together, or whatever else feels good without words.

If you are planning multi-day events, you are likely to have a longer registration period where it would be difficult to have everyone involved in the welcoming circles throughout registration. What you can do in that case is to have only one or two constantly changing welcoming circles. On arrival, each person would be welcomed as soon as they register. Once welcomed, they would be asked to stay and help welcome a few more people before slipping out of the circle to find a sleeping space. This way you would have a continually rotating group of people in the circle. It is advisable, however, to have one person leading the group. If you want to make it really special, you can do this welcoming in a warm pool or hot tub where each person is floated in the center of the circle while being welcomed. We've even been known to slip a juicy strawberry or grape into their mouths as they transition out of their welcoming. **Yummmmm!!!**

2. The Opening

The planning meeting, welcoming circles, and opening are all essential aspects of setting a sacred space or a sacred container for the entire gathering. When done in a beautiful, empowering, safe way, everyone will feel energized, open, full of love, and ready for whatever happens for the remainder of the gathering. The opening has several parts to it, listed here:

- Invite in the sacred energies
- Read the vision statement
- Introduce the planning team and volunteers
- Read of the covenant
- Personal sharing around the circle
- Welcome latecomers
- Breathe/move in preparation for next activity

Inviting in the Sacred Energies

By clearly, consciously inviting in empowering, sacred energies to support and guide us in our time together, we open to powerful guidance that can make a big difference in how everything goes. It's generally best to choose from your group one or two people who have a clear, strong connection with the spirit world and Spirit/God/Goddess to lead this piece.

Once the welcoming circles are complete, everyone is invited into a big circle. The leader then invites everyone to move into silence and slow, deep breathing for a moment. The leader first invokes a few of the most important energies:

1. Great Spirit/God/Goddess/All That Is
2. The love and heart energy of everyone present
3. The personal guiding spirits/guardian angels of everyone present
4. Any spirits/beings fully aligned with whatever is best for all
5. The spirits of all those who would like to be present, but couldn't for whatever reason

All then take a few deep breaths.

After the breaths, everyone is invited to freely call in whatever supportive energy they would like to have present. This can go on for as long as feels right before the leader invites everyone back to silence and deep breathing. To focus all of this energy, everyone then tones or makes some sort of noise to powerfully call in all of these energies together.

Reading the Vision Statement

Once again you can invite everyone to take a deep breath, this time making sound and shaking their bodies in preparation for listening to the vision statement. Our vision statement in its current incarnation is on a separate page at the end of this guide in case you want to print it and bring it with you to your gathering. We are working on making it a bit shorter and more concise and welcome your input. Eventually, depending on the direction of your group, you may want to give suggestions

for refining our vision statement, or even develop your own. For now, we suggest you use ours until you get a good feel for your group's unique nature.

Introduction of Planning Team and Volunteers

Invite everyone to then take a deep breath and make some sound. Having read the vision statement, you may want to make some comments about your group for any newcomers. After that, you can introduce first your planning team, and then all of the volunteers. The planning team should stand up and give their names and a quick comment. Invite everyone to come to one of these people if they have any problems or suggestions at any time during the gathering. With the volunteers, you can have them all stand up for acknowledgement, though you may or may not have time for them to give their names and a comment. You can also make a little pitch for others to become volunteers. A deep breath with some sound and movement (for you, too, as you're reading this).

Reading of the Covenant

The covenant is an important agreement that we ask all present to affirm. It helps to focus everyone's energies and to provide a feeling of safety and respect. A copy of the covenant to be read is included at the end of this guide in case you want to print it out for use at your gathering. If you are an independent group, feel free to modify this covenant or create your own.

Personal Sharing Around the Circle

We feel it's important that everyone has a chance to introduce themselves and say something about themselves at each gathering. If you have a large number of people, this can take a lot of time. What we do to keep the time down is to invite everyone to say their name and one short sentence about who they are or how they are feeling today. This generally keeps it down to about 30 seconds or so. Still, it is important after each person shares that everyone takes an integration breath to really receive what was shared. After they have finished sharing, each person can be encouraged to invite everyone to take a breath together. On the exhale, you can also invite everyone to express their love and thanks by making prayer hands, kissing their finger tips and sending love and thankful energy as they move their hands from their lips in the direction of the person who just spoke. After everyone is done sharing, you can invite the whole group to take a few deep breaths of thankfulness and love together.

Welcoming Latecomers

For those who come in late and miss the welcoming circles, it's nice to have a time during the opening for acknowledgement. All who weren't welcomed earlier are invited to move to the center and stand or sit together in a circle facing outwards. The whole group then sends them an energetic welcoming with love and toning. Take a deep breath.

Breathing/Moving in Preparation for Next Activity

You've all just spent a lot of time sitting in one position. Before moving on to another activity, it's generally a good idea to get everyone up and moving as a transition and stretch for the body. You can do this in any number of ways. Here are just a few ideas:

Turn on some music and have everyone dance to an energetic song.

Turn on some music and have everyone hop around on their toes while chanting hi, hi, hi, and making eye contact with as many people as they can (we call this the "Hi Breath").

Have everyone move into pairs or threesomes and help each other to stretch and bounce around.

Have someone who knows some good, simple yoga moves lead everybody for a couple minutes.

Have everyone pretend they are an animal and crawl around making sounds at each other.

You can come up with your own ideas, too. After getting everyone to move, you'll likely find the group energy suddenly becoming brighter, yet still very full of heart and love.

3. Activity

As mentioned earlier, we hope to soon have a collection of activity ideas available at our web site from which you can draw at any time. You can also develop your own. We'd love to add your ideas to our activities list. Below are some good, general guidelines to remember in activities based in sacred sexuality:

Optional, conscious, **touch** with clear boundaries almost always helps to create deeper intimacy. Finding opportune moments and ways to invite people to **take off** as much **clothing** as they are comfortable can help people to open up.

If it's not already a part of your activity, try to incorporate **deep breaths** or some sort of breathing.

Time in **silence** often helps to deepen whatever you are doing.

It's generally better to base your activities on **experiential** exercises rather than something which involves mostly talking.

Many experiential activities will bring things up for people. After experiential exercises, it's generally good to give people a chance to talk about their experiences. You can first invite people to break into groups of three or four to share about their experience. This gives everyone a chance to share and be heard. Then you can come back into one large circle and give time for **group shares**. There clearly is not enough time for everyone to share in a large group, but inviting those who have something that really needs to be shared (a burning share) can often prove very enlightening or energizing for the whole group.

You may or may not have time for a break after your activity. If you don't have a break, make sure everyone knows this and knows they are free to step out to use the bathroom or eat a little when they need to. Take a deep breath!

4. Healing Circle

The healing circle has become an integral and powerful part of Sacred Connections gatherings. When a large group of people filled with love brings their energy together to focus on healing each other and healing the planet, amazing things can happen. There are many ways you can lead a healing circle. Below are a few time-tested ways for you to consider.

The Healing/Love Tunnel

Have everyone form a tight double circle, inner and outer, where everyone is partnered off. Have all partners face each other standing about two feet apart. Invite everyone to go inside themselves (eyes closed, hands over heart), take a few deep breaths and tap into their loving, healing energies. Then, have everyone tap into whatever part of them is ready to be healed now by this group. Have them also envision what it is they are healing into. Invite each person to hold that intention and vision, and keep it with them as they move through the tunnel.

Then, invite everyone to open to the powerful healing energies of the whole group and to allow that energy to begin to flow and circulate throughout the group. While doing this, have everyone open their eyes and gaze into the eyes of their partner. Invite everyone to touch people around them and begin to share this empowering energy now. Inform everyone that each person in the group will have a chance to journey through this love/healing tunnel. Each person can allow themselves to be healed as much as they are ready to be healed. Take a few deep breaths and allow your body to move a little!

You can direct people to move through the tunnel either with their eyes open or closed, or you can let them choose for themselves whether they want eyes open or closed.

Then, starting anywhere in the circle, have one person begin to walk slowly one direction (either works). As this person passes by, all gently extend their hands to touch and to channel healing energy. They can also chant the name of the person walking or tone, or whisper words of love and empowerment into the journeyer's ear. Once the first person has traveled past a couple people, that person's partner can then follow them. After their partner goes, the next person in the direction of travel goes, then that person's partner, then the next person in the direction of travel, etc. Each person walking is welcomed by loving, healing hands all around.

Once several people go through the tunnel, there will be a hole in the circle made by all the people currently journeying through the tunnel. After traveling through the entire tunnel, the journeyers will come to this hole, where each person then turns and stands next to the last person in line to begin reforming the circle. Eventually, after everyone has journeyed through the healing tunnel, the circle can again be made complete. At that point you can invite everyone to take a few deep breaths and let out a big, long tone together to send this loving, healing energy out to the whole planet and universe.

The Healing Vortex

In this healing circle, everyone starts out in a big circle (standing or sitting). Everyone is invited to close their eyes and go inside themselves. Take a few deep breaths together. As we move inside, everyone is reminded that we all have parts of ourselves that are wounded. We all could use some healing. Then, everyone is invited to open to the parts of ourselves that are the healers. We are all capable of helping others to heal. We are all both healers and in need of healing.

Focusing then on the part of ourselves that is wounded, we invite everyone to open to whatever part of themselves is ready for some healing. We ask those parts of ourselves to make themselves fully known. We also envision what we are healing into. How will we be once that wound is healed?

We then ask for a small number of those most in need of healing (it can be anywhere from 3 to 10 depending on the size of the group) to step to the center of the circle to represent the part of ourselves that needs healing. This small group sits in a circle facing outward to the larger circle. We invite these volunteers to take on roles as the wounded. They are representing the parts of all of us in need of healing. Those in the outer circle are the healers providing healing energy for all in need of healing. They represent the healers in all of us, so that we are all healing each other.

Each person in the center is then given a minute or so to talk about what inside of them is ready to be healed and what they are healing into. They can also choose to pass if it is not something they wish to talk about. We take a deep integration breath after each person's sharing, even if it is a pass. Once all on the inner circle have shared, the whole group takes several deep breaths together. We remind everyone that we are all the healers and we are all the healed even as we take on different roles for this healing circle.

Then, with all standing, ask about half of the outer circle to take a full step inward forming two circles. (One circle doesn't leave enough room to walk) Everyone turns to the left (or right, doesn't matter) and begins to slowly walk in two circles, toning and directing loving, healing energy towards those in the center circle as they walk. The two moving, toning circles create a powerful healing vortex focused on the inner circle.

As the two circles slowly move around the seated inner circle, whoever feels inspired can walk out of their moving circle to the inner circle and lay their hands on one or more of the people seated there as they tone and channel love and healing energy. After this, they can then move back to the outer circle as others move in. This creates a steady flow of people moving in to share loving, healing touch with individuals in the inner circle.

When this process feels complete, everyone moves in as close as they can to the inner circle and makes contact with those around them as the toning gradually builds. You then can invite everyone to take this powerful group energy and begin to focus it out, first to all our friends, then to our whole community, and finally to the entire world and universe. Everyone might lift their arms as the toning builds to a crescendo before finally stopping. Once the toning stops, invite everyone to stay in silence for a few moments to absorb all of this wonderful energy and allow the healing energies to continue to shift and move within the whole group. It also feels good to make contact with the floor/earth. Finally, a few deep breaths, and you can invite everyone to move back into a big circle—or you can just stay in a big puppy pile to do the final closing.

Gender Healing – Same Gender

Another form of healing circle has to do with gender. You can have people break up into groups of five to eight all of the same gender. You should choose groups of either five, six, seven, or eight. Don't say between five and eight. You need to choose one number as you will be giving a certain amount of time for each person. If one group has five and another eight, it doesn't work timewise.

Each of these small same-gender groups forms a circle. One person is chosen first to take a few minutes to lie in the center and share what it is they are ready to have healed by their brothers/sisters in this circle and what it is they are healing into. After they share verbally, everyone in the group lays their hands on the center person and channels and tones loving, healing energy into that person. Each person in the circle then takes a turn doing the same. In order to keep the groups together, you need to determine the amount of time (for instance, 3 minutes for verbal sharing, 3 minutes for channeling love and healing) and have a timekeeper who calls time for each person.

When everyone has gone, instruct the groups to take a few deep breaths together and feel their thankfulness for this sharing. You can then invite each men's circle to join a women's circle (or form one big circle). They can form a puppy pile or massage circle if they like. Then have the whole group tone and send out healing energy to our entire community and to the whole planet.

Gender Healing – Cross Gender

As a powerful variation on this one, you can have people break into same gender groups as mentioned above. You need fairly good gender balance for this one. Have each circle of women choose a circle of men who they will exchange with. Each group of women then sends one woman over to lie in the center of their male partner group, and the male group sends a man into the center of their female partner group. You then give time for sharing what the person in the center is ready to have healed and what they're healing into. This is followed by time for toning and touching as mentioned above. The two who have been healed return to their original groups and the next member is exchanged. Once everyone has had a turn, invite the partner groups to come together and thank each other with a few deep breaths and a big tone. Finally, invite everyone to send this powerful healing energy out to all beings.

Generic Healing Circle

You can also have mixed healing groups with no gender focus. In these mixed groups you invite each person to share whatever it is they are ready to have healed and what they are healing into. Then carry out the process mentioned above.

You may also create your own version of healing circles. We would love to hear about any good ideas you develop. After any of these circles, you may or may not want to have time for group shares in the large group. You can feel the group energy (and how much people's stomachs are growling) in deciding whether or not to do it.

Healing Circles Summary

The Healing/Love Tunnel

- Double circle with partners facing each other about two feet apart
- Deep breaths, going inside
- Hand over hearts, eyes closed, tapping into the healing/loving energy in ourselves
- What part in you is ready to be healed now, what will you heal into?
- Allow healing/loving energy to flow outward, open eyes and connect with partner/others
- One person begins to walk slowly through circle, eventually coming back full circle
- That person's partner goes shortly afterward, followed by the next person in the direction of travel, then their partner, etc.
- All in circle place healing/loving hands on those passing by, toning, chanting name, etc...
- After traveling through the circle, people turn and rejoin the circle where there is space
- Once everyone has been through, circle is made complete again
- Deep breaths and big group tone to send this healing/loving energy out to whole universe

The Healing Vortex

- One big circle (standing or sitting)
- Deep breaths, all go inside
- We are all both wounded and healers
- Get in touch with part of yourself ready to be healed
What do you want to heal into?
- Deep breaths
- 3 – 10 volunteers go to center of circle to represent the part of all of us in need of healing
- Volunteers sit in small circle at center facing outwards
- Each volunteer shares about one minute what they are ready to have healed and heal into
Volunteer may pass if not wanting to share
- Deep breath after each person's sharing, including those who pass
- Several deep breaths after sharing complete
- People in outer circle represent the part of all of us that is a healer, tap into healing energy
We are all both healers and the wounded
- Roughly half of outer circle take a full step in to create two circles, all face one direction
- Deep breaths
- Outer circles slowly walk in circle toning, channeling loving/healing energy to inner circle
- Any in outer circle may walk to center to lay hands on those in the inner circle, then go back
- When complete, outer circles converge inward to form puppy pile
- All then tone to send this loving/healing energy out to whole universe
- A few moments in silence for integration and completion

Healing Circles Summary (continued)

Gender Healing – Same Gender

- All break into same gender groups, choose a number between 5 – 8 for groups
- Each person in group sits or lays in middle, others lay hands on them if person wants that
- Set amount of time for each person to share and to receive energy (3 – 10 minutes/person)
- Each person shares what they want healed and what they are healing into (timed)
- Without words, group channels loving/healing energy to one in center (timed)
- After all have gone, deep breaths of thankfulness together in small group
- Each men's circle joins a women's circle (or one big circle)
- Deep breaths together
- All tone together to send this loving/healing energy out to whole universe

Gender Healing – Opposite Gender (gender balance necessary)

- Break into gender groups as above
- Each group of women pairs with one group of men
- Group of women sends one woman to center of group of men and vice versa
- Set time for verbal sharing and receiving group energy as above, all get a turn
- Each pair of groups then merges
- Deep breaths of thankfulness together
- All tone together to send this loving/healing energy out to whole universe

Generic Healing Circle

- Break into mixed-gender groups
- Each person takes a turn in the center as above
- All join in one big circle or puppy pile
- Deep breaths together
- All tone together to send this loving/healing energy out to whole universe

5. Closing

The closing circle flows naturally from the healing circle. In this circle (or puppy pile), you can make any last minute announcements. You may want to announce future gatherings at this time. Don't forget to thank whoever provided their house for the event and ask the homeowner(s) if they need to tell everyone anything about using the house. You can also ask everyone to help with the cleanup in some way after dinner. Inviting a deep breath after each announcement helps to hold the sacred energy.

We feel it's best not to allow for any personal announcements unless they are very urgent. This is true throughout the event. Too many announcements tend to drain the energy and take up precious time. On the other hand, it's very important to have a table set up for written personal announcements and for people to place fliers advertising services or upcoming events.

The most important part of the closing is thanking each other and thanking the sacred energies for all that happened during this gathering. It is important to thank God/Spirit/Goddess, all the spirit guides, everyone who participated, and all the wonderful people and energies that helped to support the entire gathering. It's very powerful to then end with a few deep breaths and one last powerful tone where everyone moves into a pile in the center (standing or sitting) if they are not already there. You can also end with a big yummmmmmm instead of to a tone, or in addition to it, as a way of blessing the food for the potluck. Put on some good music as soon as you're done to help people begin to shift their energy.

6. Pot Luck

We've found it's best to have only some snacks available during breaks—chips, carrot sticks and the likes, and to save the big dishes and drinks for dinner. We try to end by 7 PM or so for dinner (we're not always successful in this) so people don't get too hungry. All that breathing, toning, playing, and healing can use up a lot of energy and leave people famished!

Another fun idea you might play around with is the love feast. At a love feast, no one is allowed to feed themselves. If you want to eat or drink something, you have to get someone else to feed it to you. It's a lot of fun, but generally better to let it last only as long as people want it to, as eventually you may find yourself or others just wanting to run over and grab a few cookies or drink without having to have a whole social interaction about it.

7. Schmoozing

During and after the potluck, everyone is free to do whatever they please. You might designate a certain space as being for those who want to connect intimately on a physical level. This helps to encourage those who really want this, yet puts no pressure on those who choose not to. You can also encourage others to call a few people together and create something spontaneous in this time—a massage circle, a puppy pile, a conversation on sexual secrets or most memorable sexual encounters. You might even be a ringleader in something like this. Nothing formal, though. People are generally ready for informal time after all the earlier activities.

Make sure you have a couple people who **take responsibility for putting the house back the way it was before the gathering started.** This way you are more likely to be invited back again. Hopefully you've already checked in with your host as to what time everyone needs to be out. Once the eating starts, people can leave whenever they like as the ritual part of the gathering is officially over after the closing circle.

Remember that as the leader, it will help you greatly to do your best to **be flexible** and to **go with the flow of the group energy.** It can be very helpful if you try to read the group energy—if you try to notice how the whole group is feeling as you move through the day. Are people bored, restless, or in need of a shift in the energy? Does your next planned activity seem appropriate considering where the group energy is now? It's generally a good idea to have some variation from moving, experiential exercises to sitting, talking exercises and back again. You can often shift the energy in a very positive way by making last minute changes—even big ones—if the group energy is really asking to go somewhere different than you planned.

Willingness to experiment is another valuable quality in a leader. Anytime you feel uncertain about what to do, you can often take a deep breath yourself, ask for some spiritual guidance, and open to spontaneously doing whatever is best for the whole group. Spur of the moment inspirations have at times been wildly successful in our experience. It's also helpful to check in with others on the planning team, if possible, when you're feeling uncertain about where to go.

A good phrase to remember is “**as much as you are comfortable**” or “as much as you are ready.” For instance, when you invite people to take their clothes off, adding “as much as you are comfortable” empowers them to be fully at choice. In healing circles, it's very useful to ask, “What part of you is ready to be healed?” There may be parts in need of healing which really aren't ready to be healed. Adding these phrases to your instructions can help others to feel safer and go deeper.

It's a wonderful feeling to help bring a group of loving people together to support and empower each other together, especially when you're dealing with the powerful energies of sacred sexuality! We certainly hope you enjoy it. We wish you the very best in all aspects of what you are creating. Feel free to ask us for any thoughts or guidance on what you are doing. We look forward to supporting and empowering you in any way we can. And have a wonderful time while you're at it! **May we spread our love and healing energies out to all!!!**

Sacred Connections

Agreements and Informed Consent

In the course of this Celebration, there may be nudity and touch with the intent of honoring the body as sacred. I understand that I may choose not to participate in this or any other activity and that my choice will be honored.

My **responsibility** in this experience is to remain true to my personal integrity, while exploring and reaching out at my own pace. I understand that it is my responsibility to say "yes" or "no" to any experience that presents itself, whether it is a personal interaction with an individual or a part of the scheduled program. I understand that it is my responsibility to ask for help from the leadership or from others if I need it.

I affirm that if I am experiencing an active outbreak of genital herpes, genital warts or any disease that can be communicated through skin contact, I will limit my contact with others and keep affected areas covered to ensure that no disease is transmitted. If I have a communicable respiratory infection or other easily communicated disease, including a cold or the flu, I will not attend any events for the sake of others. If any such outbreak happens during my stay here, I agree to inform a member of the core team. I may not be asked to leave, but I may be asked to limit my contact with others.

Moreover, in order to help us build sacred space and to create a safer experience, I commit to tell any person about any communicable disease I have, even in a latent form, before I make contact with them in a way that might transmit the disease. I also commit to take responsibility for asking about this before I make contact with any person in a way that could expose me to a communicable disease. I recognize that it is vitally important for the safety and health of our community to be conscious about any contact that may spread a disease. This can loosely be understood as "Ask first! Act after!"

I agree to indemnify, defend, and hold Millennial Connections, its organizers and all involved people and organizations harmless of and against any claims, demands, obligations, liabilities, causes of action, expenses (including attorney's fees) and damages whatsoever occasioned by or connected in any way with my participation in this event.

I have read the above statements on the previous page (Agreements and Informed Consent).

I agree to take full responsibility for the way I choose to participate in this event, for my experience during the event, and for any results from that experience.

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Sacred Connections Vision Statement

We are a fun-loving, not-for-profit organization dedicated to the vision and possibility of paradise within ourselves and on our planet, and to honoring and empowering the divine within all beings. Sacred love and the ways of the heart, both personal and cosmic, are the source of our energy and inspiration. We honor and welcome Love's diverse expressions with compassion, in the knowledge that the greatest diversity creates the most powerful synergy.

With a strong volunteer spirit, we take great joy in creating, producing and promoting inspirational, juicy celebrations, festivals, and events. Through creating sacred space at these events, we experience a slice of the paradise we all know is possible.

We embrace the transformative powers of sacred sexuality, of diversity, of openness and honesty, and of recognizing and honoring the divinity within each one of us. Through encouraging deep luscious connections in each moment, we empower each other in building community and in developing phenomenal, meaningful and nurturing relationships.

As a growing network, we fully support the planetary shift towards a more authentic, joyful, loving way of being. We embrace living in wholeness with ourselves, with the world around us, with the entire cosmos. As we birth this new millennium, we are fully committed to deep joy, fulfillment, vitality and abundant love for ourselves and for everyone whose lives we touch.

Sacred Connections Covenant

I ENTER IN TO THIS COVENANT of my own free will for the purpose of my own exploration, pleasure and growth as a member and an essential part of this loving community. In committing to this covenant, I am declaring that I will do my very best to follow each of the following principles.

1. I WILL STAY PRESENT for the whole process both physically and emotionally, with the understanding that I may choose my level of participation or choose not to participate in any activity at any time. If I feel I must disappear, I will inform one of the core team.

2. I WILL INTEND GOOD WILL AND UNCONDITIONAL LOVE TOWARDS EVERYONE PRESENT.

3. I WILL KEEP CONFIDENTIALITY. I will not reveal names or contact information of people who attend our events to any one without the person's permission. I will not share any information that might reveal a person's identity without their permission. When I share with others about what happens at our events, I will do so with full consciousness about how this sharing will reflect on myself, on others, and on Sacred Connections. I will be sensitive to other people's need for privacy. I will ask myself, why am I sharing this? Is this the right time, place, and person to share this information? What do I hope to achieve?

4. I WILL HONOR THE BOUNDARIES OF EACH INDIVIDUAL without judgment, including and especially my own.

5. I WILL TAKE 100% RESPONSIBILITY for the quality of my experience here, including my personal safety and health. I will seek help and support in this from the members of this beloved community and its leaders.

6. I WILL LOVE, SUPPORT, AND EMPOWER EACH PERSON PRESENT IN BEING THE BEST THEY CAN BE AND HAVING THE BEST EXPERIENCE POSSIBLE. I will consider the welfare of every person present including myself, and I will do no harm--physical, emotional, social, or material--to anyone during this experience.

7. Knowing that beauty is in the eye of the beholder, I WILL DO MY BEST TO LOOK BEYOND OUTWARD APPEARANCE TO BEHOLD AND EVOKE THE BEAUTY, DIVINITY, AND ATTRACTIVENESS OF EVERY PERSON I ENCOUNTER IN OUR LOVING COMMUNITY. At the same time, I agree to do my best to experience my own feelings, desires and attractions and those of others with compassion. I agree seek whatever help I need to express those desires and attractions in a way that supports the best outcome for everyone concerned.

Sacred Connections Covenant

(Short Version)

1. I WILL STAY PRESENT FOR THE WHOLE PROCESS.
2. I WILL INTEND GOOD WILL AND UNCONDITIONAL LOVE TOWARDS EVERYONE PRESENT.
3. I WILL KEEP CONFIDENTIALITY.
4. I WILL HONOR THE BOUNDARIES OF EACH INDIVIDUAL.
5. I WILL TAKE 100% RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE QUALITY OF MY EXPERIENCE HERE.
6. I WILL LOVE, SUPPORT, AND EMPOWER EACH PERSON PRESENT IN BEING THE BEST THEY CAN BE AND HAVING THE BEST EXPERIENCE POSSIBLE.
7. I WILL DO MY BEST TO LOOK BEYOND OUTWARD APPEARANCE TO BEHOLD AND EVOKE THE BEAUTY, DIVINITY, AND ATTRACTIVENESS OF EVERY PERSON I ENCOUNTER IN OUR LOVING COMMUNITY.

Things to Remember

- Send out an email announcing your gathering 7 – 10 days before the event
- In your announcements make it clear that everyone is expected to stay from opening circle through closing circle in order to hold a strong, sacred container.
- Buy food before event (don't forget drinks)
- Offer contribution to house owner
- Check with house owner what time planning team can come and what time everyone needs to be out
- Set up table for announcements, advertisement