*“Love the questions themselves. Live in the questions now.” - Rilke*

**Some Guidelines for Reflective Practice**

These guidelines are intended for conversations in which one person is the *speaker or focus person*, and one or others are *listening and reflecting* in order to help the focus person amplify their own knowledge. The format may also include someone in an *interviewer* role who asks questions to the focus person. Formats can vary but it is important for it to be agreed upon and understood by all before beginning.

**Be as fully present as possible.** Suspend usual social norms and do not chitchat, joke, or engage in nonverbal gestures of agreement or reassurance as the person is speaking. Give your full attention with listening and care. Put electronics away.

**No fixing, no advising, no lecturing** – This is a time for the focus person to find their own clarity. We refrain from responding with “Did you ever consider?”, or “I know because a similar thing happened to me.” Sometimes our “questions” are “little speeches” in disguise, or ways of trying to change the person’s mind toward our way of seeing.

**Learn to respond with honest, open questions**. An open and honest question is one that you cannot anticipate the answer to, nor do you have an expectation for what the answer should be. For example: What was easy? What was difficult? What surprised you? What did you learn?

**Pause and ponder before speaking.** Resist the urge to formulate your own questions or responses while the focus person is speaking. You cannot truly listen while also thinking about what you want to say. Try to listen without the intent to respond.

**Stay Curious**. If something the focus person says evokes a question that you feel could use further clarity or depth, use this curiosity to help them thicken their own experience. Such as, “You said choosing to be in a helping profession was always important to you, I was curious where that came from?”

**Reflection also attends to nonverbal and body language –** Example could be, “I noticed when you were talking about your previous job you folded your arms and looked down a lot” or “You got such a big smile on your face when you were talking about…”

**Trust and learn from the silence.** Take time to pause, notice, and think about what the person is saying and how this resonates with you. It is ok to have times when no one is speaking.

Adapted from “Courage and Renewal” by Parker Palmer