

Pollinator Workbook

Fall 2025 Cycle

Dear participants from Pollinator's network of Sending Institutions,

32° East, A Blade of Grass, ACRE, AFIELD, AICAD, Ajaibghar, Antenna, Art + Critique, Art in Odd Places, Art Omi, Artadia, Artists Thrive, Assets for Artists, at Louis Place, ATNSC: Center for Healing and Creative Leadership, BAXTER ST, Blockbusters, BOCTOK, BRUJAS, CEC Arts, Charlotte Street, Concordia University, Contemporary Art League, Continuous Project, Core Residency Program, CREA, Culture Push, DisC, EAT: Economics. Art. Transformation., EGD Collective, Essex Flowers, FIELD, Flux Factory, For Freedoms, Foundation for Contemporary Arts, Fractured Atlas, Franklin Furnace, Grand Central Art Center, Gudskul, Guest Artists Space (G.A.S.) Foundation, Hayama Artist Residency, IndieSpace, Interdisciplinary Art and Theory Program, Interlude Artist Residency, Jerome Foundation, Kansas City Art Institute, Kyndred Collective, Latitude Chicago, Laundromat Project, Level Ground, LIFT Economy, Link, Lydian Stater, MacDowell, Making & Being, Malmo Art Academy, Map Fund, Mason Gross School of the Arts, Rutgers University, MdW Coalition, Media Economies Design Lab, MengCheng 梦城团 Collective, Minneapolis College of Art and Design, Miriam Gallery, More Art, National Performance Network, NEW INC, Nongki NYC, OEA, Ox-Bow School of Art & Artists' Residency, Penn Fine Arts, Photography + Media & Society MFA @ MICA, Pioneer Works, Processing Foundation, Queer Metalsmiths, Queer.Archive.Work., Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, RISD, School of Commons, Set Margins' publications, Skowhegan, Small School, Soft Network, SpOnAcT!, Studios at MASS MoCA, Tenthau Art Collective, The Art Students League of New York, The Bronx Museum, The Cooper Union, The Oxbow School, The Rebellious Root Collective, The Strange Foundation, Travelling University, Tributary Projects, UCLA - Design | Media Arts, University of Applied Arts Vienna, University of North Carolina, Void Art Centre, Vox Populi, Wave Farm, Wave Pool, and Younger than Beyoncé.

Welcome to our pilot program, a residency of mutual support.

<https://pollinator.coop/login>

Pollinator 101

Here are the main things you need to know:

1. Starting in October, you will meet with your peer circle using our secure video-chat platform for two hours each week, for five weeks in a row. Please save the meeting times in your calendar and show up.
2. We created Pollinator to help peers meet, listen to, and support one another. A large part of the program is learning our peer-coaching protocol.
3. Each week you will rotate who is facilitating, and who is keeping time for the session. You will take turns sharing and listening, using peer-coaching prompts to guide the conversation.
4. This workbook outlines the program structure and weekly work. We made it for those of you who enjoy preparing for things in advance. Note that the workbook's contents will also be delivered each week when you log in to Pollinator.
5. Save this link: <https://pollinator.coop/login> (and save your password!). Each part of the Pollinator program will be accessible via the platform — including video-chat meetings with your peer circle.
6. Add our email addresses to your contacts: admin@pollinator.coop and info@pollinator.coop. We will email you important updates during the program.
7. Head to <https://pollinator.coop/support> to view our FAQs. We are a small team of people who believe in the power of mutual support, and we offer this pilot program for free. While you can always ask a question by emailing us at admin@pollinator.coop, please search for the answer first.
8. If you love this program and believe in the power of mutual support, please donate to us here: <https://www.every.org/outlast-foundation/f/pollinator>

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Welcome

Welcome to Pollinator, a virtual residency of mutual support. We are so glad that this program has found you. We are collaborators (artists, writers, designers, technologists, cooperative entrepreneurs, parents, and educators) whose **lives have been shaped by peer circles**: groups of people helping each other on a voluntary basis. We have found that the challenges of being in a group outweigh the risks of isolation.

Peer circles have led each of us to greater self-awareness and transformation, and to opportunities, collaborations, jobs, friendships, and a wider appreciation of the world.

We created this workbook to help you prepare for Pollinator. All of the included prompts will be sent again via email and through the Pollinator platform (: <https://pollinator.coop/login>).

Before You Begin

- ☐ Thank yourself for dedicating time to your practice.
- ☐ Thank yourself for expanding and deepening your network.
- ☐ Thank yourself for being open to learning a peer-coaching protocol.
- ☐ Make sure to check your email using the address that you used to sign up for Pollinator, as this is the way we will contact you each week of the program.
- ☐ Log in to the Pollinator platform, edit your profile, and explore:
<https://pollinator.coop/login>

WE ARE BUILDING ARTIST-LED TECHNOLOGY TO WEAVE RELATIONSHIPS OF MUTUAL SUPPORT.

Why This? Why Now?

We believe that interdisciplinary practitioners across art, design, technology, and social impact have the desire and capacity to create opportunities for one another. Pollinator exists to build communities of solidarity across sectors, to make us all more resilient amidst crisis.

As you get started with the Pollinator program, we want to remind you that:

- You are already enough, and you've already been accepted. Now you can be present — with yourself, your practice, your materials, and your ideas. You can also listen to yourself — your vision, your intuition, and your practice. Practicing, rather than planning or perfecting, is the promise you can make to yourself.
- Relationships drive access to opportunity. While cohort programs like residencies and art schools elevate careers temporarily, aligned peer groups *sustain* us. Great people want to meet and support other great people, and by joining forces, we can go farther together.
- It *is* possible to resist the endless scroll, and to instead create digital spaces of generative conflict and belonging. While the nature of content engagement has changed, our desire to form bonds in real time has not. The power of human-to-human intelligence is great, and our minds come alive in group settings.
- Lastly, we believe that you, our participants, will guide and support us as we continue to build Pollinator. We are here to create infrastructure that is made by, for, and *with* artists, in service of mutual support, and we value your contributions to this project.

If you love the container we are creating, please consider making a tax-deductible donation to support our work: <http://pollinator.coop/#donate>

What to Expect

Duration and Timing

You will meet with your circle (six aligned peers) via video chat for two hours each week, for five consecutive weeks. Your circle will be self-facilitated, meaning that you and your fellow participants will share responsibility for creating a supportive learning environment together. We offer guides for this in the workbook scripts below and when you log into the platform.

About Your Circle

Your circle was curated by Pollinator staff based upon the organization that invited you, and by your creative discipline, career phase, program goals, identified affinity groups and, importantly, your schedule and availability. You will meet participants from vetted sending institutions, including residencies, fellowships, conferences, and cohort programs that are dedicated to art, technology, ecology, and social impact.

Five-Week Overview

Over five weeks, you'll learn and practice peer-coaching skills that will help you generate creative momentum. This will start with agreeing to community guidelines, and then practicing a listening and reflection method that we have designed to generate peer-to-peer insight. Each week builds on the last, giving you tools to navigate challenges, celebrate progress, and carry your momentum forward beyond the program.

Method

In this program, we invite you to bring the curiosity that you experience in your creative practice to a peer circle. This means we invite you to bring:

- An openness to not knowing, and the ability to ask, "Why not?"
- An excitement to see what happens when you're present to what's happening now, rather than focusing on the future, or offering advice, judgement, or critique.

In Pollinator this October, the focus is on witnessing the power of mutual presence. Your feedback on this approach will shape what we offer in the spring cycle.

Is the Pollinator program for me?

Take a moment to agree to the following statements, which are core to ensuring your readiness for the program. If anything feels misaligned with where you are right now, please reach out to admin@pollinator.coop to talk about enrolling in a future cycle when you are ready.

Investment & Commitment

- ☐ I value listening to, and sharing stories with, my peers.
- ☐ I will do my best to consistently show up on time for the peer-circle video calls (two hours per week), for the full five-week program.
- ☐ I can take a turn as facilitator and/or timekeeper for my group; I will take responsibility for co-creating a supportive learning environment together with my peer circle.

Mindset & Openness

- ☐ I am willing to share honestly and vulnerably and will hold the space for my peers to do the same.
- ☐ I value having someone hold a vision of my greatest potential.
- ☐ I'm ready to take action toward my dreams by dedicating time to my practice.
- ☐ I trust that my answers live within me; I believe in my own wisdom and I know that with the right guidance, I can discover the solutions I seek.

Growth & Discovery






- ☐ I'm open to new perspectives, and am willing to consider viewpoints that might challenge my current way of thinking or being.
- ☐ I am open to self-discovery and growth; I am genuinely interested in better understanding myself.

Communication & Repair

- ☐ I'll speak up about my needs. If something isn't working, I am committed to sharing that feedback quickly and making clear requests to get what I need from my peer circle, and from the program more broadly.
- ☐ I'll follow the community guidelines: (1) No bullying, (2) no hate speech, (3) respect your peers' confidentiality, (4) be open to repair, and (5) show up for each other. I know that I can reach out to the professional repair team at Pollinator if needed.

Reflection: Which statements spark excitement or resistance in you?

Program Outline

| | (Optional) Pre-Work | Live Video Session |
|--|---|--|
| Week 1  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text: Peer-Coaching/Welcome Community Agreements Sharer Prompt Listener Prompt | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check-in Read Aloud Peer-Coaching Protocol (~3-6 rounds) Optional: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resource Sharing Reflection Closing |
| Week 2  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text: Deep listening Sharer Prompt Listener Prompt Survey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check-in Read Aloud Peer-Coaching Protocol (~3-6 rounds) Optional: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resource Sharing Reflection Closing |
| Week 3  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text: Curious Questions Sharer Prompt Listener Prompt Survey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check-in Read Aloud Peer-Coaching Protocol (~3-6 rounds) Optional: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resource Sharing Reflection Closing |
| Week 4  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text: Powerful Questions Sharer Prompt Listener Prompt Survey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check-in Read Aloud Peer-Coaching Protocol (~3-6 rounds) Optional: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resource Sharing Reflection Closing |
| Week 5  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Text: Acknowledgment Sharer Prompt Listener Prompt Survey | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Check-in Read Aloud Peer-Coaching Protocol (~3-6 rounds) Optional: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resource Sharing Reflection Closing |

**Your presence —
being caring,
curious, and open
— is more
transformative than
your expertise.**

Skills + Outcomes

Pollinator's pilot program aims to help you meet a goal while learning the basic skills of peer coaching. The micro-skills of peer-coaching include: Levels of Listening, Curious and Powerful Questions, and Acknowledgements.

SKILLS

Pollinator participants practice:

- **A Peer-Coaching Protocol.** You will gain experience using a protocol for dialogue that enables you to guide your peers toward their goals without offering advice.
- **Levels of Listening.** You will practice noticing what happens when you listen in order to reply (level 1), to deeply hear what is said (level 2), and listening to understand context (level 3).
- **Curious Questions.** You will practice a fundamental component of peer-coaching: asking “curious” or “pacing” questions that clarify, deepen understanding, and build rapport. We will provide examples for you to try each week.
- **Powerful Questions.** You will learn and practice a fundamental component of peer-coaching: asking “powerful” questions that aim to support your peers in taking responsibility for their own journey. The prompts for weeks 2-5 are examples of powerful questions.
- **Acknowledgement.** You will learn to acknowledge, affirm, and champion your peers on their own terms.

OUTCOMES

Pollinator aims to help participants:

- Engage with their creative practice and/or accomplish a goal.
- Have greater clarity about their practice and feel connected to it.
- Experience peer-coaching.
- Meet at least one new person that they want to keep in touch with.
- Learn about new organizations, opportunities, and networks.
- Imagine tech platforms that are made by and for artists.

<https://pollinator.coop/login>

Weekly Session

Each week you will check in with one another, read a text aloud, engage in the Peer-Coaching Protocol, share resources, reflect upon the experience, and do a closing activity.

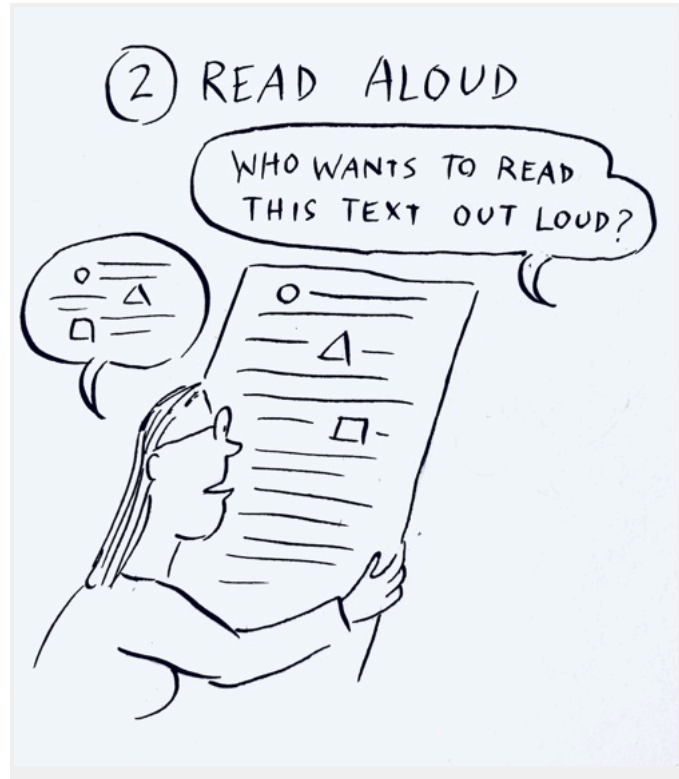
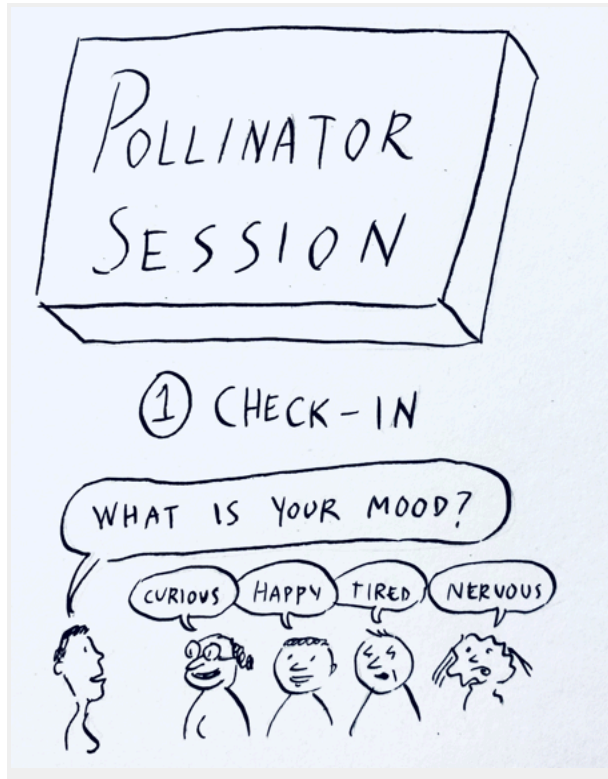




Illustration by Pablo Helguera, artist, educator, and member of Pollinator's advisory council

Peer-Coaching Protocol

The Peer-Coaching Protocol creates a structured peer-coaching experience to practice deep listening and supportive reflection. It features several rounds of sharing and listening, guided by weekly prompts. There are three sharing prompts for each session, listed in the workbook and sent in a reminder email each week. You can choose which prompt you'd like to respond to in advance.

Note: this protocol asks you to resist the temptation to add value by giving advice. This is hard because many of us have been trained to give critical feedback in art school critiques, in writing groups, and in other feedback methods. However, in peer coaching you add value by being fully present, listening deeply, and reflecting back what is said.

Each session will have a facilitator, who will guide the agenda and ensure the session stays on track. Each session will also have a timekeeper, who will keep an eye on the clock to make sure everyone is heard.

Peer-coaching rounds last ~20 minutes each. How many rounds you complete depends on how many participants want to share, and on how strictly your peer circle chooses to keep time. We created a script for the facilitator which you can see on page TKTK.

PEER CIRCLE: ~6 participants

SESSION TIME: 2 hours

COMMITMENT: 5 weeks

ROLES:

- 1 FACILITATOR: Use the script to guide your peers through the agenda.
- 1 TIMEKEEPER: Gently help your peers share time and end on time.
- 3-4 ADDITIONAL PARTICIPANTS: Take turns reading aloud, sharing, and listening.
- *(Roles rotate each week, starting with the most experienced facilitator)*

AGENDA:

1. Check-in (~15 minutes)
2. Read aloud (~5 minutes)
3. Peer-Coaching Protocol (~60-90 minutes, ~20 minutes per person)
4. Optional: resource-sharing
5. Optional: reflection on the protocol
6. Closing (~5 minutes)

Step 1: Initial Share (~5 minutes)

- The sharer tells a story based on their chosen prompt.
- Everyone else practices listening (using the provided listening prompts), without interrupting.
- Timekeeper gives a 1-minute warning, and notes when the sharer's time is up.

Step 2: Clarifying Questions (~2 minutes for all)

- Listeners paraphrase some of what they heard, to ask if they heard it correctly. For example, "I heard that you are interested in X. Did I get that right?"
- Listeners ask questions to better understand what the Sharer said, for example: "Can you clarify what you meant by 'X'? Can you say more about 'X' so we understand the context?"

Step 3: Clarifying Answers (~3 minutes)

- Sharer clarifies what they shared so that the Listeners have more context and understanding.

Step 4: Listener Responses (~2 minutes each)

- Listeners take turns offering responses (if helpful, go in alphabetical order by first name).
- Listeners use a listening prompt to respond.
- In general, listeners should focus on what resonated, patterns noticed, or key themes; **please avoid advice-giving or problem-solving.**
- If necessary, the session's facilitator can help keep everyone on track.
- Timekeeper notes when each listener's response time is up.

Step 5: Closing Reflection (~3 minutes total)

- Sharer reflects on what resonated, and thanks the listeners for their presence.

The script for this protocol is on page TKTK.

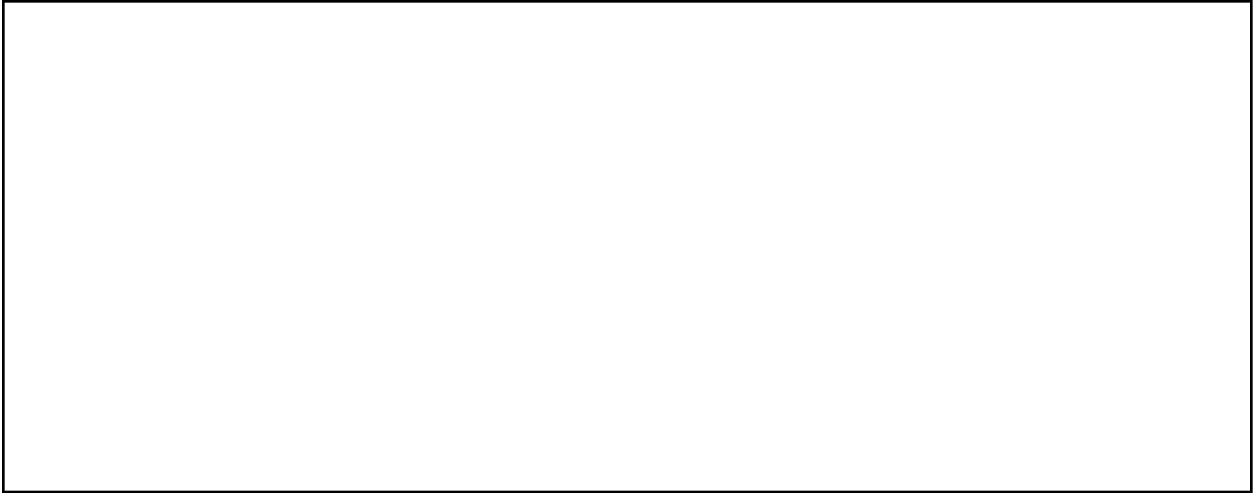
Community Guidelines

Here are a few non-negotiable community guidelines that apply to everyone participating in Pollinator. These are here to protect the integrity of the space, and to ensure that all members feel safe, seen, and supported.

- ☐ No bullying. This includes repeated criticism, dismissive behavior, or actions intended to intimidate, shame, or isolate another participant.
- ☐ No hate speech. Discrimination, slurs, or harmful language targeting race, gender, sexuality, religion, ability, or background will not be tolerated.
- ☐ Respect your peers' confidentiality. What's shared in your group stays in your group. This builds trust and safety for everyone to show up fully.
- ☐ Be open to repair, and to our conflict-resolution method (page TKTK). As a community that prioritizes repair, if conflict arises, we'll use our conflict-resolution process to address it with care and accountability.
- ☐ Show up for each other. Do your best to be on time, stay engaged, and honor the time limits and shared responsibilities in each session.
- ☐ Your circle can agree to additional guidelines, so long as everyone in your circle consents to them, and they do not interfere with the guidelines above or the autonomy of other peer circles.

We take these guidelines seriously. We have hired a professional organization to help Pollinator circles work through difficult issues, should they arise. See "Repair" on page TKTK for more about the rupture and repair protocols we use.

Reflection: Choose one of these guidelines. What does it look like to uphold this agreement in your life and community? How might you uphold it in your peer circle?



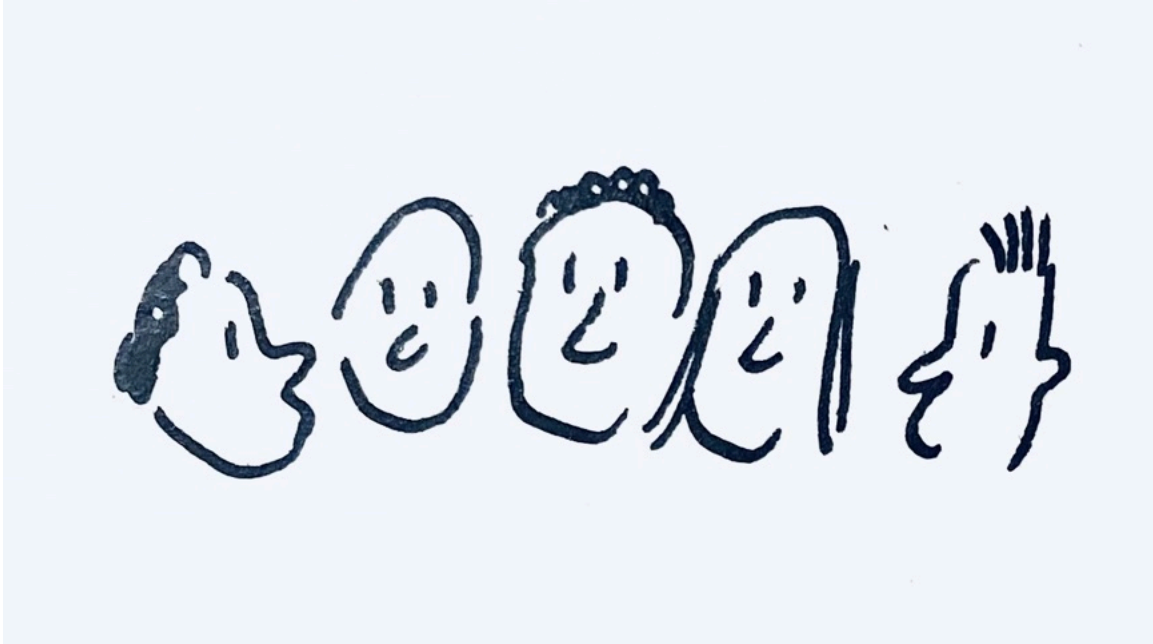
**You are already enough, and
you've already been accepted.**

Five-Week Program

As a participant in Pollinator's pilot program, you are about to join a circle of aligned peers from across our network for five weeks of creative momentum. You will set and work towards a goal while practicing your capacity to connect deeply and support each other's learning. We have found that participants who prepare for, and reflect upon, peer-coaching have a better experience than participants who do not.

Each week you will receive questions and prompts to support your learning, as well as a guide for your peer circle to use in your weekly two-hour session.

This **workbook** is a place to journal, sketch, or take notes throughout the program, and includes a suggested script to support the facilitator for each session. Both the workbook and the guide are held here. You can print this out, or work on it in this digital format.



Week 1

Introduction to Peer Coaching



Week 1

Introduction to Peer Coaching

Welcome to the first session of Pollinator's 2025 pilot program! Today you will meet with your peer circle in our custom video-chat interface, accessed via the Pollinator portal:

<https://pollinator.coop/login>

WHAT

This week you will meet your peer circle and practice the Peer-Coaching Protocol, which is central to Pollinator (be sure to fully review the Peer-Coaching Protocol section of this workbook in advance of this session). The focus for this week is: an introduction to peer coaching.

WHY

The program is oriented around your ongoing creative practice, rather than its end results. Mutual support is a slow and unfolding process. It requires witnessing and supporting each other's growth over time.

HOW

During the meeting, you will use the Peer-Coaching Protocol prompts to practice sharing and listening. We share these prompts in advance, in the workbook and in the platform when you log in, in case you want to prepare.

WHO

Facilitator: Keeps the session moving according to the agenda, and helps create a supportive learning environment for all group members.

Timekeeper: Supports the facilitator by keeping time so that everyone can share, and the meeting ends on time.

<https://pollinator.coop/login>

Preparation

While preparation is not required, it's recommended that you review the materials that will be used in live sessions with your peers ahead of time.

- Read-Aloud Welcome
- Sharer Prompt (choose one)
- Listener Prompt (choose one)
- Session Agenda + Facilitator Script
- Community Guidelines + Conflict-Engagement Policy
- Survey

Read-Aloud: Welcome

Welcome to Pollinator — a five-week virtual residency of mutual support. We're so glad you're part of our pilot program. This short reading will help set the tone for your first peer circle today.

Pollinator's program was created to help you learn peer-coaching skills, while simultaneously deepening your practice. And, because we know that relationships drive access to opportunity, we think that spending time with new people on your wavelength has the potential to be deeply transformative.

Now that you've been matched in a peer circle, you'll meet together for two hours each week, for five consecutive weeks — right here, where we are now. Your circle will be self-facilitated, meaning you and your fellow participants share the responsibility for creating a supportive learning environment. To help keep things structured, each week's session will have an assigned facilitator, back-up facilitator, and timekeeper.

When you meet, we suggest following this agenda: check in with each other, then use the **Peer-Coaching Protocol**. It works like this: one person — who we call the Sharer — shares a story for five minutes using a prompt, while everyone else listens. The Listeners then each have an opportunity to ask clarifying questions, and the Sharer responds in turn to help them better understand the story. Then Listeners reflect back what they heard for one minute each, using prompts as a guide. The Sharer closes the round by reflecting on what resonated, and thanks the Listeners for their presence. Each week, everyone who wants to will take a turn sharing a story. The whole peer circle is practicing peer coaching, which emphasizes the power of being present rather than giving advice, making judgements, or practicing critique.

What Peer Coaching Is:

- ✓ Reciprocal partnership where peers alternate roles
- ✓ Curiosity-driven questions that spark self-discovery

<https://pollinator.coop/login>

- ✓ Confidential, trust-based conversations
- ✓ Equal dialogue honoring each person's time and wisdom

What It's Not:

- ✗ Critique – analysis and critical feedback
- ✗ Mentoring – senior guiding junior
- ✗ Therapy – healing emotional wounds or trauma
- ✗ Consulting – expert diagnosing and prescribing solutions
- ✗ Performance review – judging against standards
- ✗ Direct teaching – instructing or correcting behavior

The prompts for sharing and listening have been developed in collaboration with professional coaches. While the rise of “coaching” can be seen as connected to individualism and productivity, we know that coaching can instead be collective and radical, working at the root. We decided to share the basics of peer coaching with our community of creative practitioners — you all. Now you can discern how to use these skills.

We are using a compassionate peer-coaching method, which means that you respect the agency each person has to cultivate the shifts they seek, rather than offering solutions. Compassionate coaching means tuning into someone's authentic needs, resonating with their experience, and actively fostering conditions for their practice and their ideas about success. There are many other forms of coaching — such as compliance coaching — which we are not using. *We believe that everyone has the ability to listen and support others, and that peer coaching can provide the right conditions for individual and collective momentum.* The prompts for sharing and listening that we offer aim to guide you as you practice peer coaching.

Ultimately, we created this program because our lives have been positively shaped by peer circles — groups of people supporting each other on a voluntary basis. And while helping each other can be joyous, we also like to remind ourselves that participating in groups takes practice. You may *not* feel an instant connection with everyone in your peer circle, and that's okay. The Pollinator community thrives on developing skills that enable us to remain in groups through these differences.

As you proceed with your peer circle, remember that Pollinator has five non-negotiable community guidelines: (1) No bullying, (2) no hate speech, (3) respect your peers' confidentiality, (4) be open to repair, and (5) show up for each other. We take these seriously and have professional support available if needed.

Learning requires making mistakes. Vulnerability in learning can be uncomfortable. A brave space requires that we attend to impact. We want to keep communication open between participants. If a question elicits more discomfort than you are ready to greet,

you can say “I don’t want to go there today.” If you hear that what you said hurt someone, be curious about what the person is willing to share. The goal is not to “win” or “be right” but to listen and transform, together.

Throughout the experience, we'll ask for your feedback on Pollinator’s technology, program tempo, and curriculum. If you ever have questions or feedback, check out pollinator.coop/support or write to admin@pollinator.coop. We hope you enjoy this pilot.

Sharer Prompts

Pick the prompt that feels most exciting to think and talk about, or where you sense some internal tension that you'd like to share in your peer circle. Remember that you get to choose what you want to bring to your peer circle for listening and reflection.

Choose one:

- Give your peers a glimpse into your work — an image, sound, site, reading, or video. Talk about your practice: What tools, materials, contexts, or ideas are you most excited about right now, and why do you think you’re drawn to them?
- Tell a story about a moment when you experienced “magic,” “serendipity,” “oneness,” or “flow” recently. Why do you think that moment stood out to you?
- Tell a story about learning something new. What did you learn? What made you want to learn it? What helped (or hindered) you as you learned?

Take notes or draw what comes up for you.

Listener Prompts

These prompts exist to guide your reflection to the person who shared their story. Your role is to ensure the person feels heard, and to honor *their* story, not yours. Release your desire to give feedback, advice, links, or solutions as the way you “add value.” There is time for sharing resources later.

Choose one:

- Honor the Sharer’s story by listening with care, curiosity, and presence. To let the Listener know you’re engaged, you can nod, make eye contact, and say encouraging things like “makes sense,” or “yes.”
- Listen for movement, imagery, or sounds in their story. I made this _____ (drawing/dance/song) to try to visualize what I heard you talking about.

Try listening in this way today. What did you notice?

Weekly

Facilitator + Session Script

Facilitator + Session Script

REMINDERS

- ☐ Turn off your notifications, silence your phone.
- ☐ Take three deep breaths in and out.
- ☐ Think of the strengths your fellow participants bring to the session.
- ☐ Identify a phrase to support you such as, “The participant sharing is the expert in their experience,” or “my role as a listener and peer coach is to support their journey, not direct them on it.”
- ☐ Think of a strength you bring to the session. (i.e. your ability to listen, to be present)
- ☐ Spend a minute in self-reflection to explore whether you have any biases or assumptions about the person (e.g., career status, occupational status, race, gender, or class stereotypes) that may impact your ability to listen.

PEER CIRCLE: ~6 Participants

SESSION TIME: 120 Minutes

COMMITMENT: 5 Weeks

ROLES:

- 1 FACILITATOR: Use the script to guide your peers through the agenda.
- 1 TIMEKEEPER: Gently help your peers share time and end on time.
- 3-4 ADDITIONAL PARTICIPANTS: Take turns reading aloud, sharing, and listening.
- *(Roles rotate each week, starting with the most experienced facilitator)*

AGENDA:

1. Check-in (~15 minutes)
2. Read aloud (~5 minutes)
3. Peer-Coaching Protocol (~60-90 minutes, ~20 minutes per person)
4. Optional: resource-sharing
5. Optional: reflection on the protocol
6. Closing (~5 minutes)

Note to the facilitator: if you want to move through the agenda without reading a script, go for it.



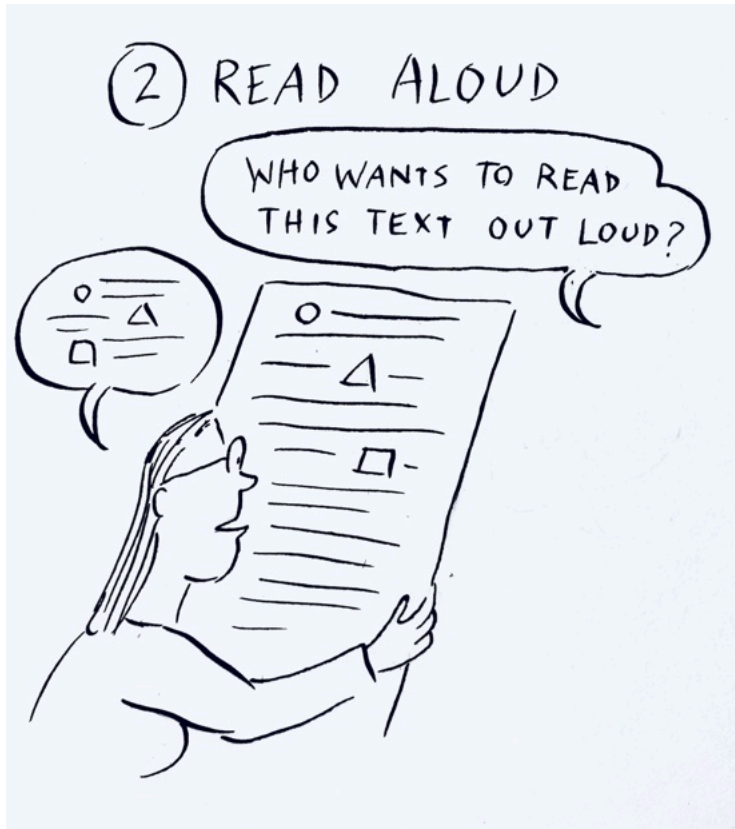
1. CHECK-IN

Facilitator (speak aloud): “Welcome everyone. We are in the Pollinator pilot program because we chose to be present for a peer circle of mutual support. Before we get started, please take three minutes to look at, smell, or listen to something around you. Sensation is one of the best ways to bring yourself into the present moment. What did you notice? What is your mood? Answer the check-in question verbally or in the chat.”

[**Participants** check-in verbally or in the chat.]

[**Facilitator** paraphrases the responses without judgement. For example, “collectively, we heard birds / the street / children are excited / tired / open to what emerges today.”]

[**Timekeeper**, notice when you are 15 minutes into the session, and consider asking the facilitator and your peers to move on so that the circle has time to for today’s agenda.]



2. READ ALOUD

Facilitator (speak aloud): “Thanks everyone. Now we are going to read a text together, out loud. The text is available at “Read Aloud” on TKTK and here. Anyone here can help me out by reading the first part of the text out loud. Read as much or as little as you like, and when you want to stop reading, you can pass the reading to the next person by saying “pass.” At that time, someone else can read. Who wants to start reading?”

[**Participants** take turns reading sections of the text out loud until it is complete. Take time to discuss any words or confusions that arise, and to clarify them, as a group.]

[**Timekeeper**, notice when 5 minutes have passed; when it is 20 minutes after the hour, consider asking the facilitator and your peers to move on so that the circle has time for today’s agenda.]

Facilitator (speak aloud): “Thanks everyone. Now we are going to try the Peer-Coaching Protocol.”



3. PEER-COACHING PROTOCOL

VISUAL OVERVIEW

| | Sharer (1 person) | Listener (up to 5 people) | Facilitator + Timekeeper |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|
| | | | "Choose a Sharer. Everyone else will be a Listener with the goal of being present for the Sharer, but <i>not</i> giving advice." |
| | Choose 1 of 3 sharing prompts. Share. | Choose a listening prompt. Listen deeply. If necessary, ask for further context or clarification. | Ensure everyone who wants to share can do so. ~5 minutes |
| | | Ask clarifying questions. | ~2 minutes |
| | Clarify and add context. | Listen. | ~3 minutes |
| | | Reflect back what you heard. | ~1 minute each |
| | Thank the Listeners. | | ~2 minutes |
| | | | "That was a round. How are you doing, Sharer? Listeners? Consider taking a short break if needed. Then let's move to the next round with a new Sharer." |

HOW IT WORKS

Facilitator: “Now we are going to experience the Peer-Coaching Protocol. Here is how it works: One person — who we call the **Sharer** — shares a story for five minutes using a sharing prompt, while everyone else listens. The **Listeners** then each have an opportunity to ask clarifying questions. The **Sharer** responds in turn to help them better understand the story. Then **Listeners** reflect back what they heard for around one minute each, using listening prompts as a guide. The **Sharer** closes the round by reflecting on what resonated, and thanks the Listeners for their presence.

Each week, everyone who wants to will take a turn sharing. The whole peer circle is practicing peer coaching, which emphasizes the power of being present, rather than giving advice, making a judgement, or practicing critique.

Is someone ready to share first? If not, let's start with the person whose first name is closest to the letter A.”

[One **Participant** shares a story for ~5 minutes using one of the sharing prompts — under at TKTK and here.]

[The others become **Listeners** and listen using one of the listening prompts — under at TKTK and here.]

[**Timekeeper**, notice when 5 minutes have passed; consider asking the facilitator and your peers to move on.]

CLARIFYING

Facilitator: “Does anyone have a clarifying question, which will help you better understand what the Sharer just said? A reminder to everyone: if a question elicits more discomfort than you are ready to greet, you can say “I don't want to go there today.” If you hear that what you said hurt someone, be curious about what the person is willing to share. The goal is not to “win” or “be right” but to listen and transform, together. Does anyone have a clarifying question?”

[Any **Listener** can ask a Clarifying Question for the **Sharer**.]

[The **Sharer** clarifies to help the group understand, keeping it short.]

[**Timekeeper**, notice when 5 minutes have passed; consider asking the facilitator and your peers to move on.]

LISTENER RESPONSES

Facilitator: *“Now we will hear from the Listeners, who will briefly reflect back what they heard from the Sharer.*

As we proceed, remember that learning and vulnerability go together. Uncomfortable moments between participants can be opportunities for growth, not failures. If something comes up, we can decide to address it together, pause, journal quietly, and/or read the conflict-engagement policy out loud together.

Pollinator has five non-negotiable community guidelines: (1) no bullying, (2) no hate speech, (3) respect your peers’ confidentiality, (4) be open to repair, and (5) show up for each other. We take these seriously and have professional support available if needed.

Listeners, get ready to reflect back briefly what you heard from the Sharer. Let’s start with the person whose name is closest to the letter A, and then continue like that.”

*[Any **Listener** reflects back what they heard without giving advice, making a judgement, or practicing critique].*

*[**Timekeeper**, notice when 5 minutes have passed; consider asking the facilitator and your peers to move on.]*

CLOSING

Facilitator: *“Now we will hear from the Sharer, who will reflect back what resonated or stays with them, and will thank the Listeners for their presence.”*

*[The **Sharer** reflects back what resonated and thanks the Listeners].*

*[**Timekeeper**, notice when 5 minutes have passed; consider asking the facilitator and your peers to move on.]*

REPEAT

Facilitator: *“Thank you. That was a round. How are you doing, Sharer? Listeners?”*

Take a short break if needed. Then let’s move to the next round with a new Sharer.”

*[One **Participant** shares a story for ~5 minutes using one of the **Sharing Prompts**].*

*[The others become **Listeners** and listen using one of the Listening Prompts].*

*[**Timekeeper**, reset your timekeeping device and notice how much the circle wants to stick to the clock versus other options, such as allowing fewer people to share, for a longer amount of time each.]*

*[**Facilitator**: Repeat this Peer-Coaching Protocol again and again until everyone who wants to share has had a turn being the Sharer, or until you have twenty minutes left in the session.]*

BREAK

Facilitator: “We have been in this session together for a while now. Let’s take a ten-minute break. Come back at [name the time in a way that works for all timezones, for example, 40 minutes after the hour].”

*[**Participants**, take a break.]*

*[**Timekeeper**, keep track of the time.]*

*[**Facilitator**, note whether or not the circle has time for resource-sharing and/or reflection, or if you only have time for a short closing.]*



4. RESOURCE-SHARING (optional)

Facilitator: “Welcome back, everyone. Now is the time to share resources with each other, verbally or in the chat. What links, events, people, or materials came to mind today that you’d like to share? We have [choose: 5, 10, 15, or 20 minutes] for this activity. Timekeeper, can you keep track of time for me? Anyone can speak when and if they are moved to do so, or can put things in the chat.”

[**Participants** share links, images, events, and resources with each other. Take turns sharing as you are moved, “popcorn style.”]

[**Timekeeper**, set a timer for 5, 10, 15, or 20 minutes and notice when the allocated time is over. Consider asking the facilitator and your peers to move on.]



5. REFLECTION (optional)

Facilitator: *"Let's take a moment to reflect upon the Peer-Coaching Protocol and our experience today. We have [choose: 5, 10, 15, 20 minutes] for this activity. Timekeeper, can you keep track of time for me?"*

Here are some questions to consider as we reflect:

- *Listeners: What did you notice about being present in the way that you were prompted to? Did you have an inclination to add value by giving advice, making a judgement, or practicing critique? What listening skills seemed helpful in the session?*
- *Sharers: What was it like to share and hear reflections about your story? Do you feel that your story was honored? What could listeners do better next week, to support you?*
- *Everyone: What did you notice about the space we created together? What was the best moment for you, during the session?*

Anyone can speak when and if they are moved to do so, or can put things in the chat."

[**Participants** share what comes up for you, in relationship to the questions above.]

[**Timekeeper**, set a timer for 5, 10, 15, or 20 minutes and notice when the time the facilitator allocated is over. Consider asking the facilitator and your peers to move on.]

[**Facilitator**, note that uncomfortable moments between participants are opportunities for growth, not failures. If something comes up, invite the circle to pause, journal quietly, and/or read the conflict-engagement policy out loud together.]



7. CLOSING

Facilitator: “In closing, I would like to say that the things shared here should stay here. Confidentiality is one of our community agreements. Take what you need and leave the rest. The things you’ve heard were spoken in confidence and should be treated as confidential.

Remember that this is the pilot program for Pollinator, and we are here to support you and to refine the curriculum and technology in relationship to your needs and desires.

Please fill out the short survey that you can find when you log in at <https://pollinator.coop/login> to help us improve this artist-run project and community technology for peer circles in 2026.

For next week: who is the Facilitator? Who is the Timekeeper?”

[**Participants** note their roles for next week, consider thanking the facilitator and timekeeper, and sign off for the week.]

<https://pollinator.coop/login>

Personal Reflection

This reflection is for you, to help with your personal growth, and for the team at Pollinator, as what you share about your experience will help us refine future program cycles.

What did you learn today about yourself, your group, your creative practice, and/or listening?

What feedback do you want to share with Pollinator? What would you keep, change, or celebrate with the technology, timing, and/or curriculum for future program cycles? Please email support@pollinator.coop and cc admin@pollinator.coop if the technology is not working for you, or if you have ideas for what we should build in 2026.

Are there any thoughts, feelings, or comments you have around the Community Agreements being upheld and practiced? *Pollinator has five non-negotiable community guidelines: (1) no bullying, (2) no hate speech, (3) respect your peers' confidentiality, (4) be open to repair, and (5)*

show up for each other. (Note that submissions made via this form may not be reviewed regularly; for any pressing concerns, please write to repair@pollinator.coop and cc admin@pollinator.coop for additional support.)



Week 2

Levels of Listening



Week 2

Levels of Listening

Welcome to the second meeting of five in this pilot Pollinator cycle! Today you will practice Levels of Listening with your peer circle in our custom video chat interface.

One person is the Facilitator, meaning that they will take responsibility for creating a supportive learning environment. If they are unable to facilitate, the Back-up Facilitator will take their post. The Timekeeper will help move the group along.

WHAT

This week, you will continue to practice the listening protocol that is the core of this Pollinator cycle. The focus for this week is: levels of listening.

WHY

Listening is a skill that is learned through practice, and is a critical component of creativity. Just as you listen to ideas, visions, and materials with open curiosity and awe, we invite you to listen to your peers with your full attention.

HOW

We are sharing a prompt and a reflection exercise in advance. During the meeting, you will practice sharing and listening, using a protocol.

Preparation

Preparation is not required, but it is recommended. You can review the primary materials that will be used in the live session with your peers, in advance.

- Read Aloud
- Sharer Prompt (choose one)
- Listener Prompt (choose one)
- Session Agenda + Facilitator Script
- Community Guidelines + Conflict-Engagement Policy
- Survey

Read Aloud: Levels of Listening

This week is about Levels of listening. This text was contributed by Tracy Candido of Wavemaker Coaching and edited by Kelli Hendrickson, PhD, PCC (ICF Coach and Founder of MIT's Graduate Student Coaching Program), Marc Roudebush, PhD (Founder of the Harvard University Peer Coaching Initiative and of Convu: Where listening happens), and Belén Santillán (educator, curator, and member of Tenthous in Oslo).

Listening is a skill that is learned through practice, and is a critical component of creativity. Just as you listen to ideas, visions, and materials with open curiosity and awe in your creative practice, we invite you to listen to your peers with your full attention and curiosity. You can also apply this to your creative practice!

This reading will take less than five minutes and is here to support your peer circle today.

This week's skill is deep listening. You'll use the deep listening skill when you're supporting each other in your peer circle.

Listening is one of the most important parts of peer coaching and one of the easiest things to overlook when we're focused on responding, or trying to help. But truly being heard and understood is often what unlocks the most growth.

Let's talk about the three levels of listening.

Level 1 is when your attention is on your own thoughts. *You're not really listening, you're thinking about what you'll say next, how you relate, or how to sound helpful. This happens to all of us.*

Level 2 is when you're listening to understand the Sharer. *Your full attention is on the other person. You're tracking their words, tone and emotion. You're not planning your response, you're being with your peers.*

Level 3 is when your attention expands even further. You're tuned into what's happening beyond the words: their body language, the tone of the room, even what isn't being said.

Deep listening happens when we spend more time in levels 2 and 3. That's where connection, understanding, and trust are built.

So how do we listen more deeply?

Start by noticing what's happening in your own mind when you're listening during the share circle. Are you waiting for your turn to speak? Are you rehearsing your response? Are you comparing your experience? Just noticing that is the first step.

Then, practice softening your focus on yourself and shifting your attention on the Sharer. What words are they using? What are they really saying? What might be underneath their words? What emotion is present?

Listening deeply helps the speaker feel seen and it helps you as a listener be a valuable presence without needing to solve the problem.

While deep listening is part of participating in a supportive conversation, so is effectively sharing your thoughts. As a Sharer, focus on sharing what feels most relevant to the prompt you are addressing.

Another is staying open to learning. When you share, try to speak from a place of curiosity. Let your peer circle support you by staying open to new insights or perspectives.

So this week, remember:

- *Deep listening is a skill you can grow*
- *Notice your mind chatter*
- *Shift into deeper levels of attention: try to understand the Sharer, and then notice body language, emotions, values, and also what isn't being said.*
- *And when it's your turn to share, focus on what is most relevant to the prompt and try to stay open to what you might learn from your peers.*

We hope you enjoy the experience of using this skill today.

Sharer Prompt

Pick the prompt that feels most exciting to think and talk about, or where you sense some internal tension that you'd like to share in your peer circle. Remember that you get to choose what you want to bring to your peer circle for listening and reflection.

Choose one:

- What, if anything, defines “success” according to you, or within your field or practice? What’s at stake for you in your practice? What context makes it this way — and is it at all malleable?
- What do you want to achieve in the next four weeks? What makes this your priority?
- What do you draw upon in order to remember your power and creativity?

Take notes or draw what comes up for you.

Listener Prompt

These prompts exist to guide your reflection to the person who shared their story. As a reminder, advice, judgement, and criticism hold no power in your peer circle. Your role is to ensure the person feels heard; to honor *their* story, not yours.

Choose one:

- Listen for emotion(s) in their story. “I heard that when _____ happened, you felt _____.”
- Listen for value(s) and principle(s) in their story. “I heard these values underneath what you said: _____.”

Try listening in this way today. What did you notice?

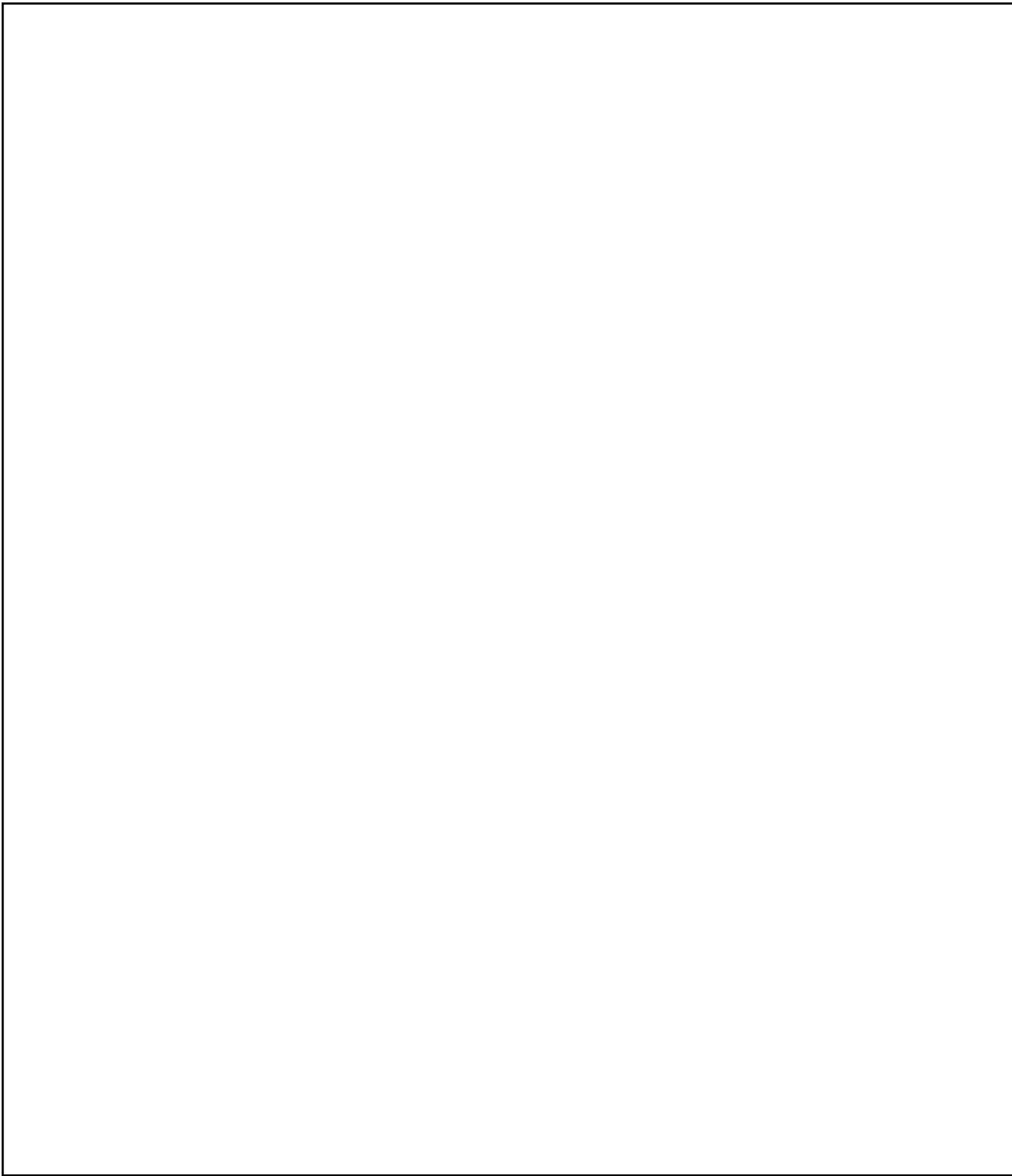
Facilitator + Session Script

REMINDERS

- ☐ Turn off your notifications, silence your phone.
- ☐ Take three deep breaths in and out.
- ☐ Think of the strengths your fellow participants bring to the session.
- ☐ Identify a phrase to support you such as, “The participant sharing is the expert in their experience,” or “my role as a listener and peer coach is to support their journey, not direct them on it.”
- ☐ Think of a strength you bring to the session. (i.e. your ability to listen, to be present)
- ☐ Spend a minute in self-reflection to explore whether you have any biases or assumptions about the person (e.g., career status, occupational status, race, gender, or class stereotypes) that may impact your ability to listen.

See Week 1 page TKTk and this link.

Take notes or draw what comes up for you in the session.



Personal Reflection

This reflection is for you, to help with your personal growth, and for the team at Pollinator, as what you share about your experience will help us refine future program cycles.

What did you learn today about yourself, your group, your creative practice, and/or listening?

What feedback do you want to share with Pollinator? What would you keep, change, or celebrate with the technology, timing, and/or curriculum for future program cycles? Please email support@pollinator.coop and cc admin@pollinator.coop if the technology is not working for you, or if you have ideas for what we should build in 2026.

Are there any thoughts, feelings, or comments you have around the Community Agreements being upheld and practiced? *Pollinator has five non-negotiable community guidelines: (1) no bullying, (2) no hate speech, (3) respect your peers' confidentiality, (4) be open to repair, and (5)*

show up for each other. (Note that submissions made via this form may not be reviewed regularly; for any pressing concerns, please write to repair@pollinator.coop and cc admin@pollinator.coop for additional support.)

**No one can take
your practice away
as it is held within
you.**

Your peer circle is here to celebrate you and your practice, and to reflect back parts of it that might otherwise go unnoticed.



Week 3

Curious Questions



Week 3

Curious Questions

Welcome to your third meeting of five! Today, you will practice Curious Questions with your peer circle in our custom video chat interface.

One person is the Facilitator, meaning that they will take responsibility for creating a supportive learning environment. If they are unable to facilitate, the Back-up Facilitator will take their post. The Timekeeper will help move the group along.

WHAT

This week, you will practice clarifying what your peers are sharing with you, rather than assuming you know. The focus for this week is: Curious Questions.

WHY

The questions we offer this week will take your conversations to another level as you ask follow up questions and listen intently. Curious Questions offer the person you are listening to space for greater reflection, clarity, and self-discovery. You might feel more connected to the person, as well.

HOW

We are sharing a prompt and a reflection exercise in advance. During the meeting, you will practice sharing and listening, using a protocol.

Preparation

Preparation is not required, but it is recommended. You can review the primary materials that will be used in the live session with your peers, in advance.

- Read Aloud
- Sharer Prompt (choose one)
- Listener Prompt (choose one)
- Session Agenda + Facilitator Script
- Community Guidelines + Conflict-Engagement Policy
- Survey

Read Aloud: Curious Questions

You can engage in a conversation with the same skill and confidence that you engage in your creative practice. Asking these questions allows for new pathways in dialog to emerge -- try it out and see. This reading will take less than five minutes and is here to support your peer circle today.

This week's skill is asking curious questions. This text was contributed by Tracy Candido of Wavemaker Coaching and edited by Kelli Hendrickson, PhD, PCC (ICF Coach and Founder of MIT's Graduate Student Coaching Program), Marc Roudebush, PhD (Founder of the Harvard University Peer Coaching Initiative and of Convu: Where listening happens), and Belén Santillán (educator, curator, and member of Tenthaus in Oslo).

In peer coaching, asking a good question is more powerful than offering advice. Curious questions help the person sharing go deeper. They invite reflection, clarity, and self-discovery, allowing for new pathways to emerge. And they encourage the sharer to seek their own wisdom for answers, ultimately allowing the sharer to have ownership and agency over their challenges, work and life.

So what is a curious question?

- *Curious questions are open-ended*
- *They're non-judgmental*
- *They help the speaker get more precise about what they're experiencing*

And they are asked from a place of curiosity about another's experience, not from a place of needing to gather information, problem solve or fix anything.

Asking curious questions not only lets you hear the answer, but more importantly, lets the sharer hear their own answer, giving them greater clarity about their challenge.

Here are a few examples of curious questions:

- *“Can you say more about what that felt like?”*
- *“What part of this feels most alive for you right now?”*
- *“When did you start to notice this pattern?”*

One important tip: we avoid “why” questions.

“Why” questions can feel like you’re asking for justification.

Instead, we ask “what” or “how” questions. These are more open and supportive. “What” is a call to learn about the nature or content of what is said. “How” is a request to understand the process or method behind something.

Here’s the mindset to bring into your peer circle this week:

- *You’re not here to give the “right” response*
- *You’re here to help your peers hear themselves more clearly*
- *That happens when you ask with care, and listen with curiosity*

So as a listener, take your time. There are prompts on the game cards to help you.

And as the speaker, allow yourself to be gently challenged by those questions. Let them help you uncover something new, or see your situation from a different angle.

So this week, remember:

- *Stay curious*
- *Ask questions to clarify, not to solve*
- *And let your questions be a gift*

We hope you enjoy the experience of using this skill today.

Sharer Prompt

Pick the prompt that feels most exciting to think and talk about, or where you sense some internal tension that you'd like to share in your peer circle. Remember that you get to choose what you want to bring to your peer circle for listening and reflection.

Choose one:

- Tell a story about boldly reaching out to someone and getting support. How did you do it?
- Where do you feel resistance, drag, or challenge in your practice? What part of this falls within your zone of control? How can you respond to the parts that are not within your zone of control?

- What do you currently have access to — people, materials, places, words — that you can better leverage within your practice?

Take notes or draw what comes up for you.

Listener Prompt

These prompts exist to guide your reflection to the person who shared their story. As a reminder, advice, judgement, and criticism hold no power in your peer circle. Your role is to ensure the person feels heard; to honor *their* story, not yours.

Choose one:

- Listen for uncertainty about a choice between options in their story. Share back the options you heard without judgement or advice. “I hear your ambivalence. On the one hand I heard you say/feel _____, and on the other hand I heard you say/feel _____.”
- Listen for an action they are wanting to take in their story. “It sounds like you are thinking of trying _____. What would make that possible for you?”

Try listening in this way today. What did you notice?

Facilitator + Session Script

REMINDERS

- ☐ Turn off your notifications, silence your phone.
- ☐ Take three deep breaths in and out.
- ☐ Think of the strengths your fellow participants bring to the session.
- ☐ Identify a phrase to support you such as, “The participant sharing is the expert in their experience,” or “my role as a listener and peer coach is to support their journey, not direct them on it.”
- ☐ Think of a strength you bring to the session. (i.e. your ability to listen, to be present)
- ☐ Spend a minute in self-reflection to explore whether you have any biases or assumptions about the person (e.g., career status, occupational status, race, gender, or class stereotypes) that may impact your ability to listen.

See Week 1 page TKTK and this link.

Take notes or draw what comes up for you in the session.

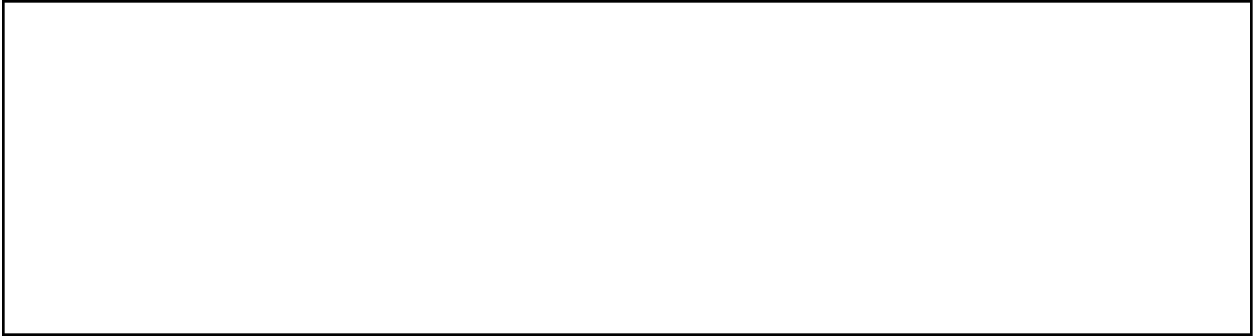
Personal Reflection

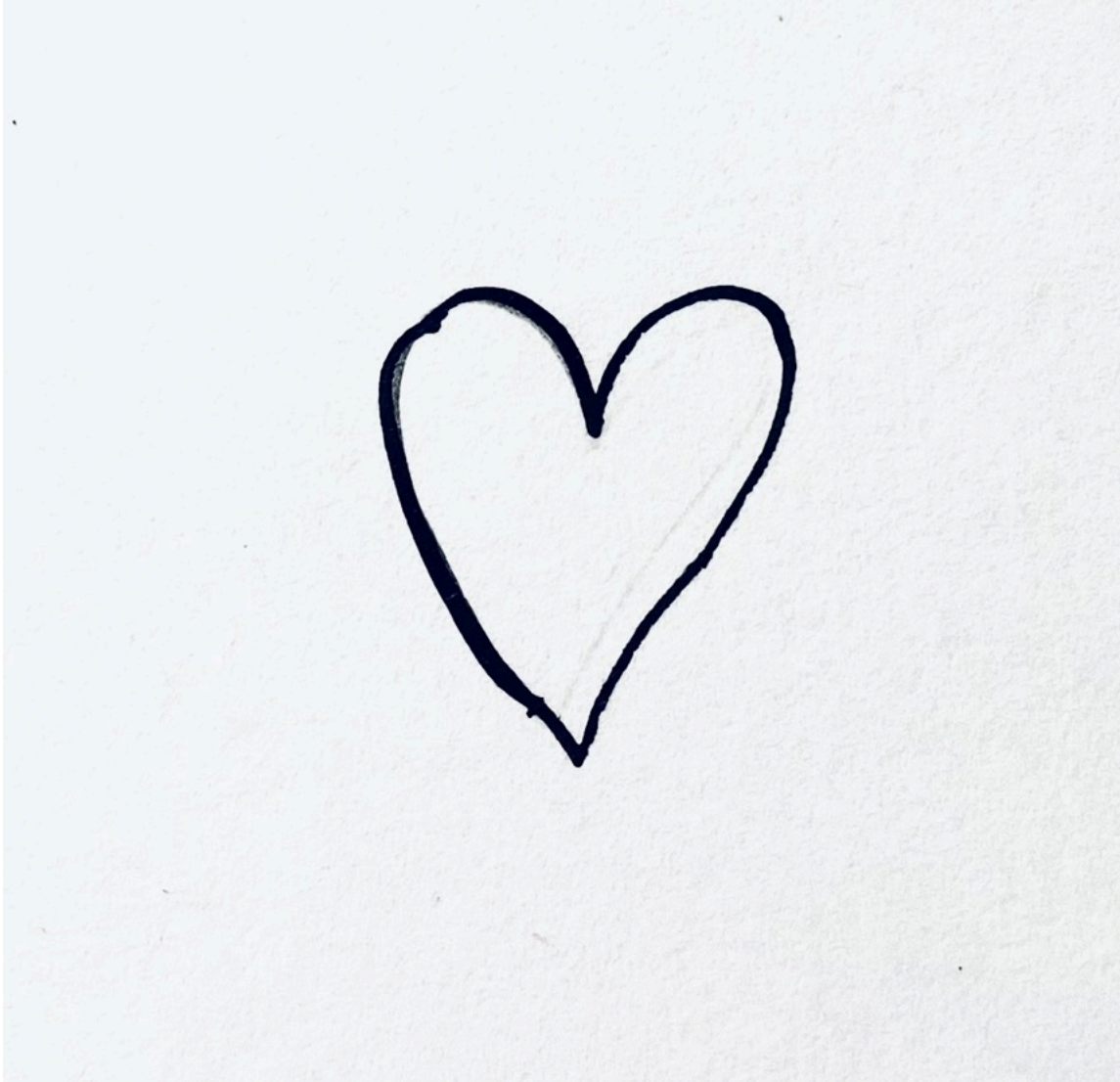
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What did you learn today about yourself, your group, your creative practice, and/or listening?

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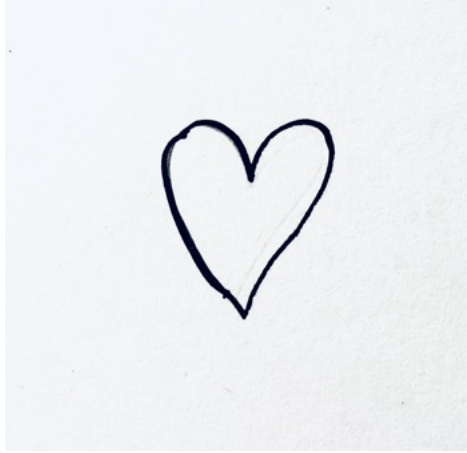
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Week 4

Powerful Questions

**Week 4****Powerful Questions**

Welcome to your fourth meeting of five! Today, you will practice Powerful Questions with your peer circle in our custom video chat interface.

One person is the Facilitator, meaning that they will take responsibility for creating a supportive learning environment. If they are unable to facilitate, the Back-up Facilitator will take their post. The Timekeeper will help move the group along.

WHAT

This week, you will learn about bold questions that ask your peers to question their assumptions about what is possible. The focus for this week is: Powerful Questions.

HOW

We are sharing a prompt and a reflection exercise in advance. During the meeting, you will practice sharing and listening, using a protocol.

WHY

When you have built a sense of support and trust with someone by deeply listening to them and asking curious questions, there will be moments where you sense you can invite them to question their stories and take responsibility for the way they want things to go.

Preparation

Preparation is not required, but it is recommended. You can review the primary materials that will be used in the live session with your peers, in advance.

- Read Aloud
- Sharer Prompt (choose one)
- Listener Prompt (choose one)
- Session Agenda + Facilitator Script
- Community Guidelines + Conflict-Engagement Policy
- Survey

Read Aloud: Powerful Questions

Last week, you learned how to ask curious questions. You may remember that curious questions are open-ended, non-judgmental, and designed to help the speaker clarify what they're feeling or experiencing. Curious questions invite reflection. They say, "Tell me more."

This week, we're building on that skill with a new one: powerful questions. *This text was contributed by Tracy Candido of Wavemaker Coaching and edited by Kelli Hendrickson, PhD, PCC (ICF Coach and Founder of MIT's Graduate Student Coaching Program), Marc Roudebush, PhD (Founder of the Harvard University Peer Coaching Initiative and of Convu: Where listening happens), and Belén Santillán (educator, curator, and member of Tenthaus in Oslo).*

Powerful questions are different.

Powerful questions don't just help someone clarify their thinking, they *interrupt* the way they're thinking and help them see their situation in a new light. They challenge any big assumptions that may be keeping them stuck. They spark introspection and invite deeper self-awareness.

While curious questions create space and build connection, powerful questions open up new perspectives and possibilities.

Curious questions (exploratory):

- What did you mean by...?
- Who?
- Where?
- When?
- How?

Powerful questions (transformative):

- What if?
- How might you...?
- In what way?

- To what extent?

Powerful questions are often very simple, but they can have a strong impact. We very rarely ask ourselves or others these kinds of questions, but they are so powerful that they can open a door we didn't even realize was there.

Here are a few examples of powerful questions, which will be in your powerful questions card deck:

"What's the real question underneath this challenge?"

"What's the cost of staying where you are?"

"What do you know deep down, but haven't said out loud?"

"What would change if you stopped trying to get it right?"

You don't need to ask a lot of powerful questions. One can be enough.

The goal is to offer a moment of reflection that helps the sharer to move out of their usual mental loop.

As a listener, you might feel a little nervous asking something this bold, and that's okay! Take a breath, and trust the power of the question. Check in with yourself. Are you coming from a nonjudgmental place? Notice how the sharer is doing. Do they seem open and receptive at the moment? Do they experience you as understanding and empathizing with them?

As the Sharer, you might feel surprised or even slightly uncomfortable when someone asks a powerful question. That's normal. It means the question is doing its job. Give yourself permission to sit with it. And you can always "pass" and ask for another question from the card deck.

So this week, remember:

- Curious questions help you explore
- Powerful questions help you shift
- Powerful questions are short and simple
- And they're designed to generate insight

We hope you enjoy the experience of using this skill today.

Sharer Prompt

Pick the prompt that feels most exciting to think and talk about, or where you sense some internal tension that you'd like to share in your peer circle. Remember that you get to choose what you want to bring to your peer circle for listening and reflection.

Choose one:

- What commitment are you going to make for your practice this week?
- What would change about your practice if you had everything you need?
- What can you do today that will make your vision possible?

Take notes or draw what comes up for you.

Listener Prompt

These prompts exist to guide your reflection to the person who shared their story. As a reminder, advice, judgement, and criticism hold no power in your peer circle. Your role is to ensure the person feels heard; to honor *their* story, not yours.

Choose one:

- Listen for uncertainty about a choice between options in their story. Share back the options you heard without judgement or advice. "I hear your ambivalence. On the one hand I heard you say/feel _____, and on the other hand I heard you say/feel _____."
- Listen for an action they are wanting to take in their story. "It sounds like you are thinking of trying _____. What would make that possible for you?"

Try listening in this way today. What did you notice?

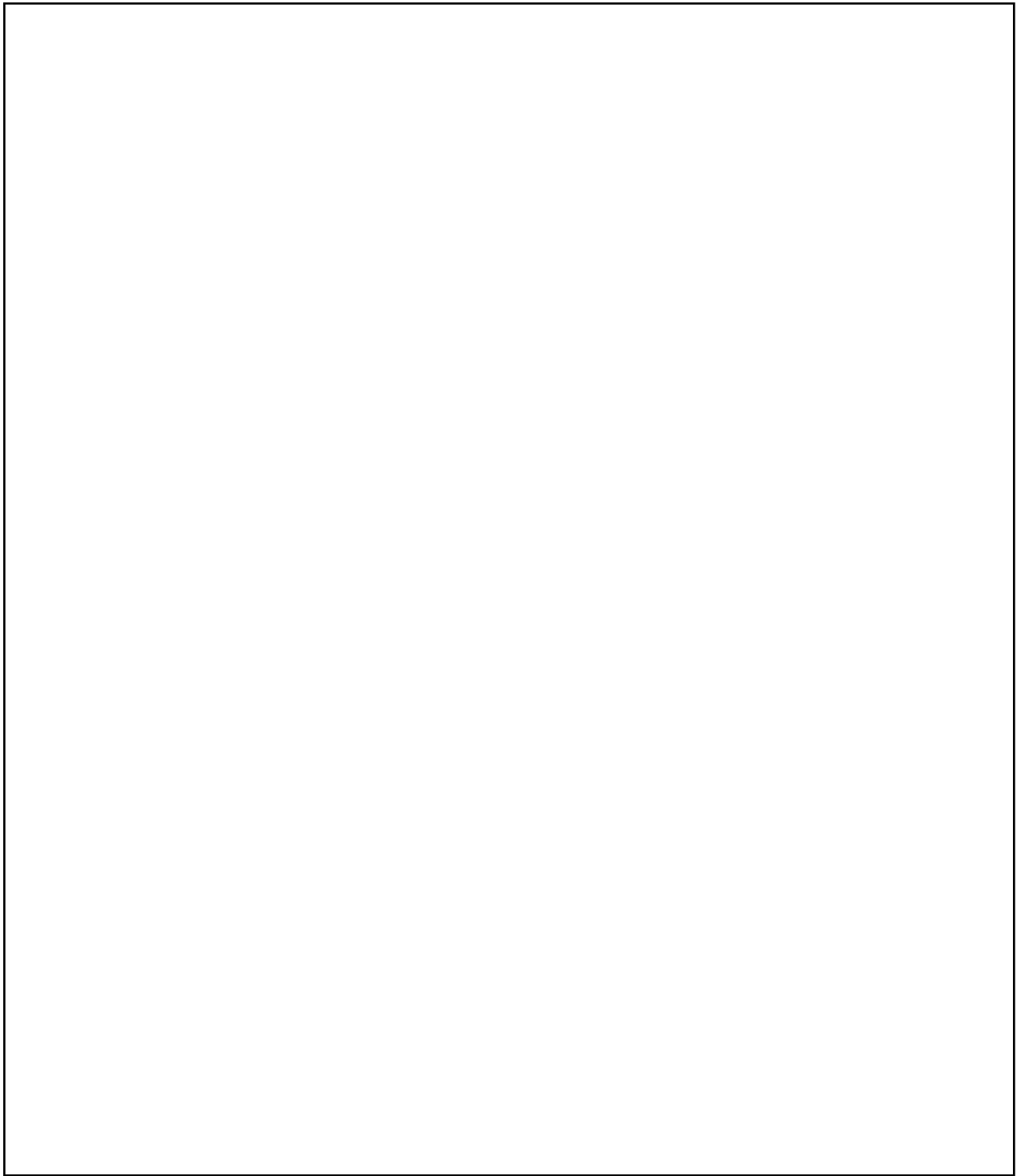
Facilitator + Session Script

REMINDERS

- ☐ Turn off your notifications, silence your phone.
- ☐ Take three deep breaths in and out.
- ☐ Think of the strengths your fellow participants bring to the session.
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- ☐ Spend a minute in self-reflection to explore whether you have any biases or assumptions about the person (e.g., career status, occupational status, race, gender, or class stereotypes) that may impact your ability to listen.

See Week 1 and page TKTK and this link.

Take notes or draw what comes up for you in the session.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, occupying the upper half of the page. It is intended for a drawing or a detailed response.

Personal Reflection

This reflection is for you, to help with your personal growth, and for the team at Pollinator, as what you share about your experience will help us refine future program cycles.

What did you learn today about yourself, your group, your creative practice, and/or listening?

What feedback do you want to share with Pollinator? What would you keep, change, or celebrate with the technology, timing, and/or curriculum for future program cycles? Please email support@pollinator.coop and cc admin@pollinator.coop if the technology is not working for you, or if you have ideas for what we should build in 2026.

Are there any thoughts, feelings, or comments you have around the Community Agreements being upheld and practiced? *Pollinator has five non-negotiable community guidelines: (1) no bullying, (2) no hate speech, (3) respect your peers' confidentiality, (4) be open to repair, and (5) show up for each other.* (Note that submissions made via this form may not be reviewed regularly; for any pressing concerns, please write to repair@pollinator.coop and cc admin@pollinator.coop for additional support.)





Week 5

Acknowledgement



Week 5

Acknowledgement

Welcome to your last meeting, five of five! Today, you will practice acknowledging your peer circle in our custom video chat interface.

One person is the Facilitator, meaning that they will take responsibility for creating a supportive learning environment. If they are unable to facilitate, the Back-up Facilitator will take their post. The Timekeeper will help move the group along.

WHAT

This week, you will practice being earnest and vulnerable by naming the strength and courage you see in yourself and in others. The focus for this week is: Acknowledgement.

HOW

We are sharing a prompt and a reflection exercise in advance. During the meeting, you will practice sharing and listening, using a protocol.

WHY

What if vulnerability and earnest affirmation was as common as critique, analysis, and cynicism? At Pollinator, we believe that acknowledgement and affirmation is central to the practice of mutual support.

Preparation

Preparation is not required, but it is recommended. You can review the primary materials that will be used in the live session with your peers, in advance.

- Read Aloud
- Sharer Prompt (choose one)
- Listener Prompt (choose one)
- Session Agenda + Facilitator Script
- Community Guidelines + Conflict-Engagement Policy
- Survey

Read Aloud: Acknowledgement

Thanks for being here for yourself and for your peers. This reading will take less than five minutes and is here to support your peer circle today.

This week's skill is acknowledgement. This text was contributed by Tracy Candido of Wavemaker Coaching and edited by Kelli Hendrickson, PhD, PCC (ICF Coach and Founder of MIT's Graduate Student Coaching Program), Marc Roudebush, PhD (Founder of the Harvard University Peer Coaching Initiative and of Convu: Where listening happens), and Belén Santillán (educator, curator, and member of Tenthau in Oslo).

Acknowledgement means naming and honoring the effort, energy, or growth someone brought to something, no matter the outcome. It's a way of saying, "I see what you put into this, and it matters."

We often skip over acknowledgement because we're used to measuring success only by results. But in peer coaching, we know that progress comes from showing up, trying, learning, and sticking with it. And those things deserve to be seen and named.

Here are some examples of acknowledgement:

"I want to acknowledge how deeply you've reflected on this."

"You've shown up for yourself consistently, even when it was hard."

"I see how much effort and care you've put into this goal."

"You've done a lot of internal work, and that takes real energy."

Acknowledgement is not about praise, it's about presence. It helps someone feel seen for the process they're in and the progress they've made.

To offer an acknowledgement, speak to what you've noticed in someone's behavior,

energy, or effort. Be specific and honest. What matters most is that it's true. You'll have the Acknowledgement card deck with prompts on hand to help you.

Acknowledgement builds safety and belonging. And it reminds us that we are valued, even in the messy middle of working towards our goal.

So this week, remember:

- *Acknowledgement is about honoring the effort*
- *It's about witnessing someone's journey, not just their results*
- *And it's one of the most generous things we can offer each other in the community.*

We hope you enjoy the experience of using this skill today.

Sharer Prompt

Pick the prompt that feels most exciting to think and talk about, or where you sense some internal tension that you'd like to share in your peer circle. Remember that you get to choose what you want to bring to your peer circle for listening and reflection.

Choose one:

- I noticed that ____ helped me practice this week. I can imagine bringing this into my everyday life by _____.
- I want to celebrate myself for ____(persistence, showing up, forgiveness, grace, curiosity, self-love, exploration)_____ over the last five weeks. I can continue drawing on this feeling by _____.
- I was surprised by _____ when listening to others in this program. I can imagine bringing this into my everyday life by _____.

Listener Prompt

These prompts exist to guide your reflection to the person who shared their story. As a reminder, advice, judgement, and criticism hold no power in your peer circle. Your role is to ensure the person feels heard; to honor *their* story, not yours.

Choose one:

- Honor their story by listening with care, curiosity, and presence. Release your desire to give feedback, advice, links, or solutions as the way you “add value.” There is time for

sharing resources later. To let the Listener know you're engaged, you can nod, make eye contact, and say encouraging things like "makes sense," or "yes."

- Listen for movement, imagery, or sounds in their story. I made this _____ (drawing/dance/song) to try to visualize what I heard you talking about.
- Listen for value(s) and principle(s) in their story. "I heard these values underneath what you said: _____."

Facilitator + Session Script

REMINDERS

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Repair

Finding a way to remain in a group across differences is a necessary skill. As such, this section is about conflict engagement and repair. Relational concerns are opportunities for growth, not failures. This text was contributed by Created by WE CARE Therapies for Pollinator; please use it with attribution.

We recognize that relational concerns and moments of tension are part of working in a community. When someone raises a relational concern, they are naming something that did not feel right to them. We don't see this as a failure; instead, we see it as an opportunity. The goal is understanding and repair, not blame or punishment.

Before we proceed, please note that this guide is for both the person who has raised a relational concern, and for the person who has been named in that concern. Our intention is to offer guidance to help everyone involved move forward with care, reflection, and dignity—whether or not a direct conversation takes place.

Concerns

For Person Raising Concern:

- Pause and ground yourself. Ask: "What do I need: clarity, space, acknowledgment, or change?"
- Reflect on your story and assumptions about intent
- You're not obligated to speak directly with the other person

For Person Receiving Concern:

- Take time to breathe and process
- Be curious about the other person's experience
- Remember: intent ≠ impact
- You're invited to grow, not judged on being "right"

Resolution Pathways

Step 1: Notice & Decide

If you experience unsafe/disrespectful behavior:

- **Option A:** Address directly or indirectly
- **Option B:** Email admin@pollinator.coop (will be sent to repair@pollinator.coop)

Step 2: Direct Peer Repair (No Mediator)

For conflicts without major power dynamics/safety concerns where both are willing

Initiator:

- Ground yourself, clarify what you want from conversation
- Ask for consent: "Would you be open to a check-in?"
- Use "I" statements: "When X happened, I felt Y. It impacted me by Z."
- Reference shared values

Receiver:

- Listen to understand, not win
- Helpful responses: "Thank you for telling me" / "I want to take that seriously"

Together: Co-create repair plan addressing what needs to shift, what support is needed, what repair looks like

Step 3: Written Submission

If direct repair doesn't work, email repair@pollinator.coop with:

- What happened (specific details, dates, people involved)
- How it impacted you
- What you're hoping for

You'll receive personalized guidance, reflection prompts, and reparative gesture examples.

Step 4: Assisted Mediation

Options:

- Voluntary exit with reflection/closure
- Facilitated trauma-informed mediation (requires mutual consent)

Step 5: Zero Tolerance

Identity-based harassment or threats result in immediate removal (bypasses Steps 1-4). Note that if a relational concern is reviewed by our team, and is found to include identity-based harassment (race, gender, sexuality, disability, immigration status, etc.), or threats or incitement of physical harm, Steps 1-4 will be bypassed, and the person will be removed from the program.

Available Support

- One-on-one coaching
- Written reflections via facilitator
- Supported dialogue
- Circle-based repair
- Time/space to pause

Key Principles

- Consent matters - no forced participation
- Move at the speed of trust
- Seek understanding, not winning
- Create safe spaces (protection from harm) AND brave spaces (courage for difficult conversations)

**WE ARE BUILDING
ARTIST-LED
TECHNOLOGY TO
WEAVE
RELATIONSHIPS OF
MUTUAL SUPPORT.**

Pollinator Staff

Program Design

Caroline Woolard + Or Zubalsky

Pollinator Co-Directors Caroline Woolard and Or Zubalsky are artists, educators, and technologists who have been collaborating for 15 years. From 2008-2018, they built and maintained TradeSchool.coop, an international peer-to-peer learning platform that was used in 30 cities internationally. Caroline Woolard is the co-founder of Art.coop, a national network of art and design cooperatives, and the co-author of *Making and Being*, a book about collaborative pedagogy. Zubalsky and Woolard have taught for over a decade at The New School, Rhode Island School of Design, Cooper Union, the School of Visual Arts, the University of New Mexico, Bennington College, George Washington University, and the University of Hartford. Learn more about Zubalsky [here](#) and Woolard [here](#).

Engineering

Minima.nyc

Zubalsky and Woolard got together to build Pollinator with a team of aligned engineers in 2024. The team at Minima has worked together since 2014 to deliver cutting-edge software-based solutions for corporate clients. Minima has built and managed widely used web, mobile, and server-side applications, including Apple's Music TV. Minima builds complex systems that scale, are maintainable, and cost effective. Minima prioritizes the end user across axes of accessibility, security, communication, and simplicity.

Creative Director

Caroline Woolard

Creative Operations

Or Zubalsky

Outreach + Operations

Isaiah Madison

<https://pollinator.coop/login>

Branding

Topos Graphics

Design

Or Zubalsky

Copywriting

Willa Köerner

Pedagogy

Caroline Woolard

Or Zubalsky

Repair

Martin Pettis

CARE (Community Access to Relational Engagement) Center for Mental Health

Advisors

Oihane Amurrio

Lead Program Developer, Mondragon Team Academy

Ted Berger

Executive Director Emeritus of the New York Foundation for the Arts

Sarah Calderon

Founding Executive Director, Creatives Rebuild New York

Pablo Helguera

Artist + Educator

Sophie Landres

Curator

Ruby Lerner

Founding Director, Creative Capital

Sofía Olascoaga

Curator + Educator

Martin Pettis

Executive Director, WE CARE Therapies

Nathan Schneider

University of Colorado

Jean Shin

Artist + Educator

Gesyada Annisa Namora Siregar

Curator

Amy Whitaker

Author, Art Thinking

Glossary

A **participant** is a person who enrolls in Pollinator.

A **peer circle** is the group of six participants working together.

The **platform** is what participants interact with.

A **sending institution** is a vetted partner organization whose alumni are invited to join Pollinator. Most are application-based residencies, fellowships, or cohort programs that focus on interdisciplinary practice across art, technology, and social impact.

Pollinator's **network** includes a renowned roster of sending institutions and participants working across art, technology, and social impact.

The **portal** is what sending institutions interact with.

A **cycle** is the 5-week experience.

A **session** is when peer circles meet up over video call.

A **facilitator** is a participant who is chosen each week to lead the session.

The **Peer-Coaching Protocol** is what gets practiced in each session.

<https://pollinator.coop/login>

Each **Peer-Coaching Protocol** features several **rounds**, when a person sharing—a **Sharer**—is listened to by everyone else—the **Listeners**. Note that we only capitalize “Sharer” and “Listener” when using the words as proper nouns.

Practice

This week -- and perhaps every week -- is about PRACTICE. This text will take less than five minutes to read aloud, and is here to support your peer circle today.

Whether or not your work has a large audience, your practice changes YOU. You are the one that will be transformed by your own imagination, curiosity, persistence, craft, and vision. Over the next five weeks, you will share your practice with a small circle of peers while also learning a peer-coaching method. The idea is that a small, caring peer circle, like a great audience, can deepen your practice. [sidebar: A peer circle might even be the most valuable audience for some people, projects, and ideas, and it is attainable, right here.]

Your personal practice and your ability to practice peer coaching are related! Imagining and making things —, a poem, a song, a dance, a website, a painting, an organization — is a practice of transformation, and requires a learning mindset that you can carry into learning peer coaching, and as you learn to be in a peer circle.

In our experience, practices have energetic seasons. Sometimes, the most important thing for your practice is to let it lay dormant, to rest. Just as a garden cannot be abundant all year, you might want to take these five weeks to cultivate a practice of rest (something worth celebrating). In other seasons, your practice might be about doing research, or engaging with existing work to find inspiration. Your practice might even happen while you are dreaming at night, while you are on a bus between things, while you are at work, stealing time from your boss, or, in the studio. Wherever your practice happens, it is part of you, like your breath, available for attention when you choose to attend to it.

No one can take your practice away as it is held within you. Your peer circle is here to celebrate you and your practice, and to reflect back parts of it that might otherwise go unnoticed.



Feedback

We hope you enjoy the inaugural pilot program. We aim to offer at least two cycles a year: in March of 2026 and in May of 2026. In addition to this, we are interested in building a directory, a mentorship economy, an opportunities digest, a school, and more. What are you interested in? What is working for you, and what is not? Write to admin@pollinator.coop

Donate

We are running this pilot program on a small budget. If you are able to help us hold this container for the community with a donation or funds from professional development at your work, please send us funds here: <https://www.every.org/pollinatorcoop/f/pollinator> or write to caroline@pollinator.coop if you have ideas about foundations that might underwrite the free participation of organizations and individuals.

<https://pollinator.coop/login>



Colophon

Author

Caroline Woolard

Peer Coaching Read Aloud Materials

Tracy Candido (Wavemaker Coaching)

Repair Pedagogy

Martin Pettis, WE CARE Therapies

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: This workbook has been created by Pollinator co-founder Caroline Woolard with peer-coaching contributions by Tracy Candido (Wavemaker Coaching) and repair protocols by Martin Pettis (WE CARE Therapies). The Peer-Coaching Protocol and Workbook were created in dialog with Susan Basterfield (Partner, GreaterThan), Tracy Candido (Wavemaker Coaching), Pablo Helguera (artist and educator), Kelli Hendrickson, PhD, PCC (ICF Coach and Founder of MIT's Graduate Student Coaching Program), Talib Jasir (Coach and Founder, Afros & Audio), Isaiah Madison (educator, therapist, and staff member at Pollinator), Marc Roudebush, PhD (Founder of the Harvard University Peer Coaching Initiative and of Convu: Where listening happens), Belén Santillán (educator, curator, and member of Tenthaus Oslo), and Or Zubalsky (educator, artist, and staff member at Pollinator).

Editor

Willa Köerner

Illustration

Pablo Helguera

Design

Or Zubalsky / Minima

Printing Date

September 2025

CITATION: "Pollinator Pilot Workbook." Pollinator.coop (September, 2025).

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Contact

admin@pollinator.coop

[Pollinator.coop](https://pollinator.coop)

<https://pollinator.coop/login>

Instagram: @pollinator_coop

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/pollinator-coop>

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Practicing, rather than planning or perfecting, is the promise you can make to yourself.

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