



# swaa

SOCIAL WORKERS  
ASSOCIATION OF  
ALBERTA

## SWAA Circles of Trust

*Listening Within: A Reflection and  
Renewal Series for Social Workers*

### Overview

In a time when social workers are stretched thin, navigating the weight of systemic challenges, human suffering, and rapid social change, this professional development series offers a space to pause, reflect, and remember what called us to this work in the first place.

Rooted in the Courage & Renewal® approach founded by Parker J. Palmer, this series is designed to help social workers reconnect with their inner source of wisdom, the “inner teacher” that guides integrity, compassion, and clarity in the midst of complexity. Through this series of gatherings, participants will be invited into a trustworthy community where reflection, dialogue, and community offer an opportunity to renew and encourage their spirit.

#### About the Courage & Renewal® Approach

The Courage & Renewal approach begins with the belief that each person carries an inner teacher. When we make space for stillness and solitude, we can listen more closely to this inner teacher and discern what is most vital in our lives and work.

Yet we also know that reflection is deepened in community, and that gathering with others in spaces of trust and mutual respect allows our inner wisdom to be witnessed, strengthened, and called forth. Together, these practices of solitude and community help us live, and practice social work, with greater integrity, compassion, and courage.

Gatherings rooted in this approach are guided by principles and practices that nurture deep integrity and relational trust; conditions essential for sustaining ourselves and our communities. Together, we'll explore the connection between who we are and what we do, and how to bring greater wholeness to both.

#### Why This Program, and Why Now

There's no shortage of professional development that teaches social workers new ways to help others. We can learn new tools, new models, new ways to serve. But the most essential tool in our practice is the one we often overlook: ourselves. The social work landscape today is complex, it is full of ethical dilemmas, systemic challenges, and relentless demands on our empathy and capacity.

Yet few spaces exist to tend to the self of the social worker; the inner compass that keeps us grounded in integrity, compassion, and clarity when the work feels heavy.

This program offers that space. It's a chance to slow down, reconnect with the voice of integrity within you, and strengthen the foundation from which your practice grows. It's self-care that goes beyond the bubble-bath. This is an opportunity to develop our self-care as a professional practice skill.

This way of gathering invites us as a community of practitioners to explore how tending to our inner life fuels our outer work. Reflective practice is something deeply personal, yet it flourishes in connection — in the presence of others who remind us that we're not alone, that hope is a collective act, and that our wholeness as social workers and as humans, matters.



# SESSIONS

<div>01</div> <div>Feb 24</div>	<div><b>Orientation to the Courage and Renewal approach</b></div> <div>Introduce participants to the Circle of Trust® practices for safe spaces. Explore how shared agreements and boundaries create a container strong enough to hold vulnerability, difference, and silence, helping us build spaces where our inner lives can safely emerge.</div>
<div>02</div> <div>Mar 10</div>	<div><b>Listening to and Honoring the Inner Teacher</b></div> <div>Grounding ourselves in the practice of listening inwardly. Together, we'll explore the concept of the inner teacher, that quiet, guiding voice within each of us, and reflect on what helps or hinders our capacity to trust its wisdom.</div>
<div>03</div> <div>Mar 24</div>	<div><b>The Power of Community and Moving Toward Wholeness</b></div> <div>Reflect on the meaning of community. How does being in trustworthy community help us live closer to our own truth and contribute to healing in our larger systems? We'll explore how clarified self-knowledge within community becomes a seed for personal and societal wholeness.</div>
<div>04</div> <div>Apr 7</div>	<div><b>Embracing the Paradoxes of Renewal</b></div> <div>In this session, we'll explore the paradoxes that shape our work and our world, and how holding tension, rather than resolving it, can open us to a deeper, "hidden wholeness".</div>
<div>05</div> <div>Apr 28</div>	<div><b>Holding Change with Courage</b></div> <div>The seasons remind us that letting go is part of every cycle. This session will invite us to reflect on transition, personal, professional, and societal, and to practice holding change with courage, compassion, and grace.</div>

