There is a yearning in the heart for peace. Because of the wounds and rejections we have received in past relationships, we are frightened by the risks. In our fear, we discount the dream of authentic Community as merely visionary. But there are rules by which people can come back together, by which the old wounds can be healed. The purpose of Community Building is to teach these rules — to make hope real again — and to make the vision actually manifest in a world which has almost forgotten the glory of what it means to be human.

—M. Scott Peck, M.D

Community Building Workshop
Community Building Workshops are three-day group experiences in which 25-50 members (or more) are guided to a deeper and more authentic way to communicate with each another. The method was developed by M. Scott Peck, MD, renowned author of The Road Less Traveled and explained in his books The Different Drum and A World Waiting to be Born.

The Workshop experience is an adventure in human interaction based on a set of principles that teach communication skills in a highly personal way. Members are gently guided by specially trained facilitators that support them in looking beyond the masks of composure which we all wear and the various cultural, political and religious differences that keep us separated in order to embrace a common experience and a common purpose.

Participants gain the ability to listen more deeply, to express emotions more openly, and to be more fully present to self and others. The shared experience improves group properties which, research has shown, leads to more effectual learning and working environments with higher levels of individual participation and better outcomes.

A Couple Cautionary Notes
The way we use the term “Community Building” has nothing to do with organizing potlucks, small book clubs, festivals, or neighborhood projects. For us, Community Building is a much richer and more intense group experience. By following a set of guidelines, the method produces an atmosphere of unusual safety which leads to an experience of deeper and more authentic communication than what we ordinarily encounter in our daily routines.

Similarly, when we use the word “Workshop,” we’re not suggesting that this is an ordinary workshop. There will be no PowerPoint lectures, keynote addresses, breakout sessions or networking opportunities. Instead, Community Building is a completely experientially process in which you will learn about Community Building by actually building Community.

Some Principles of Community
A group of people does not become a genuine Community by accident or without effort. There is a structure to Community Building and a set of specific principles that must be learned and put into action. These principles include:
Inclusivity
A genuine Community is always inclusive. In fact, the greatest enemy to Community is exclusivity. Exclusivity typically takes two forms. The first is when others are excluded because of religious, ethnic, or more subtle differences. These groups are not Communities, they are cliques. The second is when individuals exclude themselves because they find the method too difficult, risky, demanding or uncomfortable.

Participation
Participation takes many forms. Speaking is not required; non-verbal participation can be as powerful as other forms. However, it is important to be attentive and involved. Please also be on time for each session and come to your seat with an open mind for the journey you have begun. It is an old rule that we get out of Community in proportion to what we put into it. The greater our participation the greater our gain.

Commitment
Community Building requires group members to make a commitment to each other and to the group as a whole. If you cannot finish the Workshop, please do not start it. When individuals leave or withdraw, they disrupt the group and can make it more difficult for those left behind to continue building Community. If things are not going to your liking — if you’re experiencing confusion, frustration, anxiety, and even despair — rather than leaving or withdrawing from the group, consider expressing your dissatisfaction to it. Although it may not feel like it, this is very often a great gift to the Community.

Confidentiality
Confidentiality is an essential measure of respect for yourself and other members of the group. There will be no videos, photographs or other recordings of the group. If you keep a journal, you’re only to write about your personal experience and not about anyone in the group or anything they said. When discussing your experience with others, keep your comments to your experience and leave out the other members of your group. As the saying goes, what you heard there, who you saw there, when you leave there, let it stay there.

Preparing for the Workshop
Because Community Building is a highly experiential process, please plan to leave all your work — and your assistive technology — at home. You will be learning about building Community by building Community. There’s no need to switch on, sign in, or chat up. In fact these and other outside distractions can create significant barriers and substantially hinder the process. In as much as possible, therefore, please do your best to free yourself from any unnecessary outside responsibilities during the Workshop — and come prepared to be fully present and fully involved.

For most of the Workshop, you’ll be sitting in a circle. This alone is a challenging physical event. Therefore, it’s a good idea to be well rested and to take extra care of your body during the three days. Under sleeping, over eating, extra caffeinat, barely moving or the like can sap you of energy.

Keep in mind:
• Reading about Community Building will not help you prepare for the Workshop.
• Dress comfortably but respectfully.
• Bring cushions, supports, blankets or other sitting aids if you like.
• Plan to arrive on the first day at least 30 minutes early to complete the registration process.
• Leave your phone, tablet and other assistive technologies outside the Workshop or with Workshop staff.
• Allow time for rest, reflection, and integration of the experience during breaks.
• Lunch will be provided all three days. Plan to share all meals with the other members of your group.
• Journaling during breaks and in the evenings is helpful.
• Although personal issues may be addressed, the Workshop is not intended to result in their resolution.
• Feel free to bring your own snacks; however, there is no eating during sessions.
• Let us know if you have any dietary or health needs.
Journaling

Journaling is one of the oldest methods of self-exploration. Many people find it a useful process for clarifying relationships, negotiating new situations, overcoming obstacles, resolving past hurts, gaining insights. It can also be a powerful tool for processing and understanding the Community Building experience as it unfolds. Therefore, we encourage you to consider keeping a journal at breaks and in the evenings during the Workshop. If you plan to continue journaling during the Workshop and you’ve never kept a journal before (or it’s been a long time) here are a few things to keep in mind:

• There is no writing while the Workshop is in session.
• Keep it simple!
• It’s about you — your ideas, emotions, wants, and plans.
• Don’t get caught up in whether or not you’re doing it right.
• Keep it private and write accordingly.
• Write from the first person perspective.
• Stick to the present tense.
• Don’t try to impress yourself.
• Forget about grammar and spelling.
• Write for quantity, not quality.

Pre Workshop Exercise

Whether or not you intend to journal, we recommend that you spend 20-30 minutes before the Workshop preparing yourself by completing the following exercise on paper:

Please reflect for a moment on some experiences and events in your life that continue to stir up strong emotions for you. They could be recent or long ago. Consider in particular experiences that left you feeling especially connected or supported and others that left you feeling isolated or abandoned. Examples include the beginning or breakdown of an important relationship, acquisition or loss of a job or responsibility, birth or death of a loved one, falling in or out of love, backing or betrayal of a friend.

 Spend about 5-10 minutes just listing life events. Then take as much time as you like reflecting on a few that seem to stir up the strongest emotions for you, jotting down whatever thoughts come to your mind.

These are entirely personal reflections. We will not be going over them during the Workshop.

Community Building Milwaukee

Recognizing the beneficial effect of Community Building both on individuals receiving social services and on the social services they are receiving, Wisconsin Community Services has championed local efforts to introduce this powerful method to service providers in Milwaukee. With financial support from the Wisconsin Department of Children and Families and local funders and with the technical expertise of Community Building pioneers at the Knoxville based Community Building Institute, WCS established Community Building Milwaukee in the Summer of 2013. The goal is to increase the capacity and to enhance the outcomes of existing programs and services with a shared purpose of reducing crime and violence in Milwaukee.

For more information about CBM, please contact:

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Community Building Institute

Headquartered in Knoxville, Tennessee, CBI offers Community Building Workshops, Community Building events, consultation and facilitator training worldwide. CBI provides introductory talks and workshops to qualified community, government, and nonprofit organizations. For more information, please contact us at:

865-224-7130
www.CommunityBuilding.com