

These guidelines were adapted from Triangle Insight's guidelines which were adapted from those of Spirit Rock and the Insight Meditation Community of Washington DC. We appreciate the expertise and the collaborative spirit of our extended group of spiritual friends.

### **Purpose of KM Groups**

Kalyana Mitta is a Pali term that means "spiritual friend." KM groups are small peer groups committed to supporting one another in the practice and journey to spiritual awakening. The groups are small (12 or fewer) and meet regularly over an extended period of time to allow trust and intimacy to develop. The intention is that members become comfortable sharing openly and deeply, enriching their practice and their lives with the dharma.

KM groups can provide support and inspiration for one's practice, but they can also at times elicit uncomfortable thoughts and feelings during meditation and group discussion. A commitment to regular meditation practice and an ability to manage one's feelings and reactions to others will help foster a positive group experience.

### **Joining a KM Group**

- Submit a [KM Questionnaire](#) to [IMCC's Operations Director](#).
- Once the questionnaire is received, you will be contacted by the Operations Director to discuss available groups or about beginning a new group.
- If you are interested in a group that has openings, you will be put in contact with the group coordinator to determine if the group will be a good fit for both parties.
- You may attend a couple of meetings for both parties to determine if it is a good fit. If you don't join the group, you can request another referral.

### **Forming a KM Group**

If a sangha member wishes to join a KM group and there is not availability or they wish for a specific type of group that is not currently offered, s/he can inquire about starting a new group. They will work with the IMCC Operations Director to develop a description for the group which will be posted on IMCC's website, in its newsletter, and can be announced in public sangha gatherings.

Once 3-4 members have been identified, the group members can refine the focus and decide together what the group's intentions are. Some groups might choose a particular topic, others might focus on how to keep practice alive and fresh.

As a group, members will determine for themselves:

- Where to meet
- Day and time of meetings
- Length of meetings and frequency of meetings
- Format of meetings

- Choose a group coordinator who will manage group logistics and communication. S/he will keep the Operations Director updated on any changes in membership, group openings, any difficulties which may arise and need to be addressed.

### **Group Expectations**

- Commitment to regularly attend meetings, unless the group is specified as a drop-in group.
- Maintain group confidentiality. Anything shared during group meetings is confidential and should not to be discussed with anyone outside the group.
- Practice mindful sharing – refer to guidelines for mindful sharing.
- Keep sharing to the context of the dharma
- Unless there is a compelling reason, groups of less than 12 will remain open to the addition of new members. An exception can be made if the group is following a curriculum or using a text wherein it would be disruptive for a new member to join after initial meetings.
- In order to stay connected to the larger sangha, KM members are encouraged to maintain some regular attendance at IMCC on Tuesday evenings to the extent it is possible.

### **Group Support**

- When a new group is being formed, they will be assigned a mentor who is either an IMCC teacher or advanced practitioner. The mentor may sit with a group during their initial meetings to advise on best practices. S/he may also be a resource should a conflict arise that the group needs assistance in resolving.
- The group coordinator should maintain contact with the Operations Director if the group membership changes.