**COMPASSIONATE WITNESSING**

**A Compassionate Witness is: i**s one who is aware and wishes to act in relation to what he/she witnesses. The sole purpose is that of transforming, not exacerbating, violence and violation. Safety, remaining connected and being compassionate are fundamental pillars of compassionate witnessing.This requires the ability to keep one safe, create empathy, and remain curious in your awareness.

**Elements of Compassionate Witnessing:**

Re-member words that the other person uses;

Listen non-judgmentally and accept where the other person is

**When Witnessing, stay focused on:**

» Be fully present (even if the connection is brief)

» Listen deeply without preconceptions

Write words down that resonate with you personally

» When you want to give advice, change it to a question

Ask questions that serve the speaker

» Recognize what the feeling is that is not articulated or spoken

» Reflect back to the speaker what you have heard using their words

Witnesses ask open ended questions that help the person emotionally sort out in their head what they feel and are experiencing. It is a conversation that is transparent to the story teller. Remaining respectful of the person’s experience, knowledge and skills to find out what works for them.

**Questions that serve listening should avoid:**

» Making judgments or pronouncements

» Offering advice or conclusions

» Minimizing

» Denying the veracity of the speaker’s account

» Sharing one’s own problems in any detail

**What do I ask???**

Restorative Questions

Remember the 4 C’s Where were you on the 4 C’s?

**Connect:** When you said \_\_\_\_, I thought/or felt \_\_\_\_\_\_.

**Curious:**  You mentioned \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I was wondering if\_\_\_\_\_?

**Compassion:** I was so struck by your\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Community:** As you were telling your story, I thought about where you would have wanted support \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Or

Have you thought of telling someone\_\_\_\_\_?

**- Dr. Kaethe Weingarten (2003), *Common Shock***