



Insight Dialogue  
Community

# Possibilities of Engagement

## Insight Dialogue Teaching Community

“S/he/they acquire(s) unwavering confidence in the Buddha, the Dhamma, and the Sangha, thus...The Dhamma is well proclaimed... visible here and now, immediately effective, inviting inspection, onward leading, to be experienced by the wise for themselves... (They) acquire unwavering confidence in the Sangha, thus: The Sangha is practicing the good way, the straight way, practicing the true way, practicing the proper way... this Sangha is worthy of gifts, worthy of hospitality, worthy of offerings, worthy of reverential salutation, the unsurpassed field of merit for the world.”

Adapted from MN 7: 5-7 (Trans B. Bodhi)

This document presents a map of teaching/learning relationships and possibilities of engagement within the Insight Dialogue Teaching Community (IDTC). It reflects the wisdom, practices, and organizational structures that have organically emerged in the Insight Dialogue community (IDC). It is intended to support the integrity of the teachings and the teaching community and to uphold ethical standards and safety, in support of the wider practice community. This document is intended to support the sustainability of Insight Dialogue for future generations of teachers and practitioners.

What follows is a description of possible paths of maturation in offering Insight Dialogue practice. Recommended qualities, experience, and knowledge are included with each. As a community centered on relational meditation practices, we pay special heed to upholding ethical integrity. We recognize that our relationships, and thus our practice, occur within broader social systems of inequity and disproportionate harm. Humbly, we bring the inevitable blindness and biases of our individual and cultural conditioning to a relational practice dedicated to freedom and to our awakening together.

While we do not specifically offer a training program, we do support people as they ripen together in their capacity to offer Insight Dialogue practice. As we practice together, we grow in relationship with the Dhamma, with each other, and within the larger sangha of

awakening. What follows are not static rules but opportunities for ongoing individual and relational investigations within our sangha.

## Insight Dialogue Teaching Community

The IDTC includes Insight Dialogue founding teacher Gregory Kramer, recognized Retreat and Insight Dialogue teachers, facilitators, peer groups, and all those involved in the development process. It is a diverse global community honoring the wisdom of multiple Buddhist practices and cultural traditions, with both lay and monastic community members.

Our intention for articulating the IDTC structure is to provide benefit to the community and all beings by:

- Supporting the cultivation of deep spiritual friendships and mutual accountability among those sharing the teachings.
- Maintaining quality and coherence in how Insight Dialogue and relational Dharma are taught.
- Supporting opportunities for service, connection, learning, and skill development in sharing the teachings, with those who are more experienced mentoring those at earlier stages of development.
- Participating in service to the community. To find out more about opportunities, please go to <https://insightdialogue.org/giving/get-involved/>.
- Maintaining a shared community ethic of doing no harm, loving kindness, and living a culture of dana (giving freely).
- Engaging in wholesome cultures of mutual reflection and feedback at each level of offering.
- Participating in discernment and recognition processes with one's mentor, the Teachers Council, and the IDTC before publicly identifying as an Insight Dialogue Facilitator, Teacher, or Retreat Teacher.

Community members can access IDC and IDTC offerings and learning resources. Members may propose online programs and participate in IDC leadership and working teams. They are encouraged to initiate and grow opportunities by offering Insight Dialogue within and beyond the IDC. Guided by gratitude and generosity, teachers and facilitators offer the practice and teachings freely. As appropriate, communities and individuals are encouraged to engage in practices of dana to support teachers and facilitators and sustain accessibility to the teachings for all.

## Insight Dialogue Peer Groups

In general, peer groups are made up of participants, some of whom have prior experience with Insight Dialogue through participation in a retreat or practice group led by a recognized Insight Dialogue retreat teacher, teacher or facilitator. Participation in the eight-week Interpersonal Mindfulness Program is also a useful beginning.

Since many people are inspired to practice Insight Dialogue after attending their first retreat, a frequent first step is to connect with some people locally who can practice together in-person or online. The IDTC defines this as a peer group. While we do not specifically offer a development program, we provide access to learning materials to support people as they ripen together in their capacity to offer Insight Dialogue and Dharma Contemplation (DC) practice.

Peer groups are offered on a dana basis to support the continuation of teachings as freely offered.

If you are interested in initiating or participating in a peer group, you are encouraged to meet with an IDTC member. Please contact [info@insightdialogue.org](mailto:info@insightdialogue.org) for further information and to arrange a meeting.

### **Recommended Qualities, Knowledge, and Experience for Peer Group Participants:**

**Meditation:** Engages in the cultivation of an ongoing silent and Insight Dialogue meditation practice.

**Dhamma:** Engages in the Buddhist teachings through study and personal reflection and inclines towards practices rooted in these teachings.

**Relationship:** Cultivates the relational qualities of friendliness, dana, compassion, and ethical engagement with practice group members grounded in the 5 Precepts\*.

## Insight Dialogue Facilitators

Insight Dialogue Facilitators participate in a mutually engaged assessment and recognition process with their mentor and the Teachers Council. They have read and agreed to practice in alignment with the POE and teaching agreements. When recognized, they are authorized to publicly identify as an Insight Dialogue Facilitator.

Facilitators regularly offer non-residential group practice (in-person or online) and participate in a mentor-led practice cohort or an ongoing relationship with a mentor. They

actively contribute to their cohort and/or to the larger community by learning and practicing together and by co-creating materials and practice resources. Facilitators may mentor others while maintaining active learning relationships with their cohort and/or ongoing supervision with their mentor. Facilitators seek the support and advice of their mentor as a necessary step before initiating new offerings of Insight Dialogue or Dharma Contemplation practice. Facilitators can offer practice at non-residential day-longs and non-residential weekend retreats. Facilitators can shadow or assist in offering practice for weekend residential retreats with recognized teachers and/or longer retreats with retreat teachers.

The bios and photos of recognized Facilitators can be listed on the IDC website. Facilitators may be recommended to communities seeking Insight Dialogue practice guidance and those looking for someone to partner with in offering Insight Dialogue. Practice is offered on a dana basis, and Facilitators may list methods of receiving dana with their bios. Offerings approved by their mentors may be listed on the IDC website.

### **Recommended Qualities, Knowledge, and Experience for Facilitator Engagement:**

**Meditation:** Commits to daily silent practice and regular ID practice. Regularly attends silent and Insight Dialogue retreats. Attends a minimum of three 5-day residential Insight Dialogue retreats; two 10-day in-person silent retreats or three 5-day in-person silent retreats.

**Dhamma:** Commits to the study, practice, and ethical foundations of Buddhadharma (historical and contemporary teachings) and abides by the [IDC ethics statement](#).

**Relationship:** Engages the power of relationship to foster an ethical and caring life as well as wisdom, insight, and compassion. Actively learns about human relatedness from a physiological, psychological, sociocultural, and meditative perspective. Cultivates relatedness illuminated by the seven factors of awakening\*. Attends with sensitivity and engages in ongoing education to receive and skillfully meet the suffering caused by personal and worldwide conflict, trauma, awareness of power dynamics, privilege, biases, and other sankharas, including but not limited to racial, gender, religious, and cultural biases.

**Six Areas of Development and IDC Ethics Statement:** Uses the Six Areas of Development assessment tool and IDC Ethics statement for self-reflection. Designs learning goals with the support of their mentor(s).

## Insight Dialogue Teachers

Insight Dialogue Teachers participate in a mutually engaged assessment and recognition process with their mentor and the Teachers Council. They have read and agreed to practice in alignment with the POE and teaching agreements. When recognized, they are authorized to publicly identify as an Insight Dialogue Teacher.

Insight Dialogue Teachers teach and co-teach on an ongoing basis. They lead non-residential practice opportunities, e.g., day-longs and online groups, and when authorized by a mentor, may offer up to 3-day residential retreats. They stay actively engaged in the Insight Dialogue Community through their relationships with their mentors and learning and service cohorts. They are committed to deepening their competency in the Six Areas of Development and abide by the IDC ethics statement. They regularly seek peer and mentor review. They actively offer and receive feedback from retreat participants, co-teachers, mentoring cohorts, and mentors.

Insight Dialogue Teachers offer Insight Dialogue to their local communities and beyond, both online and in-person. They are encouraged to mentor facilitators and peer groups. They contribute teaching resources such as curricula, Dharma talks, and contemplations to the IDC website and larger community, as well as reach out to new populations.

The IDC website can feature Teachers' bios and photos, and list events that include Insight Dialogue and Dharma Contemplation. Teachers can receive administrative support from the IDTC for their online and in-person teachings and be recommended, as available, to communities seeking Insight Dialogue practice guidance. Teachers have the opportunity to be mentored by more experienced Insight Dialogue Teachers and to consult with members of the Teachers Council. Recognized Teachers may have the opportunity to shadow Retreat Teachers or organize retreats and invite more experienced Teachers to co-teach. They may request support for developing Insight Dialogue offerings.

Insight Dialogue Teachers maintain an ongoing and active relationship within the Insight Dialogue Community. Regular participation at teacher development retreats is expected, with exceptions mutually agreed upon with a mentor and/or the Teachers Council.

In addition to the qualities, knowledge, and experience listed for Facilitators, the following is recommended for Teachers:

**Meditation:** Maintains a daily silent meditation practice and a consistent Insight Dialogue practice for 5 years or longer. Attends a minimum of five 5-10 day residential Insight Dialogue retreats; three or more 10-day in-person silent retreats or five or more

5-day in-person silent retreats; one 30-day silent retreat. Annual retreats are strongly encouraged.

**Dhamma:** In their daily lives, they commit to developing psychological maturity and embodiment of the Eightfold Path. Insight Dialogue Teachers commit to the study, practice, and ethical foundations of Buddhhadhamma (historical and contemporary teachings) and abide by the IDC ethics statement.

**Relationship:** They develop mature understanding and skillful behavior, growing from effacement, relinquishment, and service to others. Spiritual friendship, mutual accountability, and regular contact with mentors and learning cohorts supports the capacity to teach/mentor skillfully. Attends with sensitivity and engages in ongoing education to receive and skillfully meet the suffering caused by personal and worldwide conflict, trauma, awareness of power dynamics, privilege, biases, and other sankharas, including but not limited to racial, gender, religious, and cultural biases.

**Six Areas of Development:** In teaching and throughout their lives, there is a commitment to cultivate the Six Areas of Development. Uses the Six Areas of Development assessment tool for self-reflection and with their mentor(s) to map development on this path.

## Insight Dialogue Retreat Teachers

Insight Dialogue Retreat Teachers participate in a mutually engaged assessment and recognition process with their mentor and the Teachers Council. They have read and agreed to practice in alignment with the POE and teaching agreements. When recognized, they are authorized to publicly identify as an Insight Dialogue Retreat Teacher.

All Retreat Teachers are considered a part of the retreat teacher cohort. Their teaching and their lives are humbly offered in service to the well-being of all. They turn towards the teaching community as spiritual friends, co-teachers, and supports for learning, accompaniment, and mutual reflection. Attendance at IDTC retreats/gatherings is expected to support the coherence and transmission of the practice. They are also encouraged to actively support and sustain the retreat teachers/teacher retreats/gatherings by taking on teaching, mentoring, and organizational roles.

They are encouraged to offer service to the IDC by taking up leadership roles within the wider IDC teams structure, including teams like Guiding Sangha, Teachers Council, POET and AREA.

Recognized Retreat Teachers may have their bios and photos posted on the IDC website. Their Insight Dialogue and/or Dharma Contemplation practice offerings can also be listed on the IDC website. They may be recommended, as available, to communities seeking Insight Dialogue practice guidance, retreats, and mentoring.

In addition to the qualities, knowledge, and experience for Facilitators and Teachers, the following is expected for Retreat Teachers:

**Meditation:** Maintains an ongoing silent meditation practice and a consistent engagement with Insight Dialogue practice. Retreats include extensive, in-depth silent meditation retreats alongside Insight Dialogue retreats. While this document does not outline specific lengths and numbers of meditation retreats, readiness for recognition in this category is a result of consultation with one's mentor(s) and the recognition subgroup.

**Dhamma:** Their daily lives demonstrate psychological maturity and embodiment of the Eightfold Path. They have committed to the study, practice, and ethical foundations of Buddhadharma (historical and contemporary teachings) and abide by the IDC ethics statement.

**Relationship:** They demonstrate mature understanding and skillful behavior growing from effacement, relinquishment, and service to others. They recognize and teach the liberative power of relational practice to touch the unconditioned. They embody the dharma in the here and now.

Spiritual friendship, mutual accountability, and regular contact with mentors and learning cohorts support their capacity to teach and mentor skillfully. They engage in ongoing education to become sensitive to and skillfully meet and reduce harm and suffering. This relates to suffering caused by personal and worldwide conflict, trauma, power dynamics, privilege, biases, and other sankharas, including but not limited to racial, gender, religious, and cultural biases.

**Six Areas of Development:** In teaching and throughout their lives, there is a commitment to the cultivation of the Six Areas of Development. Uses the Six Areas of Development assessment tool for self-reflection and with their mentor(s) to map development on this path.

**Retreat Teacher Development and Mentoring:** In collaboration with the Teachers Council, a recognized Retreat Teacher may invite a recognized Teacher or group of Teachers into a Retreat Teacher developmental process. The process would include alignment with the Six Areas of Development, IDC Ethics Statement, and POE

documents. A recognized Teacher or group of Teachers can request mentorship from the Retreat Teachers.

Dedicated mentors will accompany the retreat teacher in development throughout the long-term developmental process and if/when timely, advocate for their recognition with the Teachers Council and community.

Multiple pathways and timing of maturation may exist before Retreat Teacher recognition. Mentors will help chart and support these pathways through the mentoring relationship. Co-teaching, as well as peer and cohort level mentoring, are essential elements of Retreat Teacher development.

If a proposed mentee is not a recognized Insight Dialogue teacher, the mentor will consult with the Teachers Council prior to agreement with the mentee that they are in a process of Retreat Teacher recognition. All teaching development documents (see below) will be made available to ensure that mentor and mentee are aware of the process for recognition.

In collaboration with mentors, the Teachers Council is responsible for recognizing an Insight Dialogue Retreat Teacher. They are recognized as competent in teaching and co-teaching Insight Dialogue at all levels, including long residential retreats. They maintain an active connection with the Teachers Council and check in with a Teachers Council member yearly (or more often). They are an integral part of maintaining and sustaining the Insight Dialogue sangha. This includes mentoring and supporting development opportunities for emerging teachers. They allow themselves to be shadowed and/or assisted during retreats and contribute teaching resources, etc.

**Teaching Norms:** Even as they speak with their unique voice and style, they teach Insight Dialogue in the form developed by founding teacher Gregory Kramer, evolved by the community of recognized teachers, and supported by the Teachers Council.

As the whole life path is integrated into Insight Dialogue and teachers develop specific teaching styles, they commit to sharing their discoveries with the Teachers Council and inquiring together as to whether a given innovation aligns with the Three Bases of Insight Dialogue.

They are committed to traveling and teaching within their own communities and countries, traveling globally when wise for community connection and sensitive to the global climate emergency.

They teach Insight Dialogue regularly.

## IDTC Affiliation

Not all Insight Dialogue peer groups, facilitators, and teachers will choose to actively participate in the IDTC. Only those who uphold the standards and ethics of the community as conveyed by this document and who are actively engaged in groups or co-teaching with community members will be listed on the website. In this way, we create and sustain a community that is mutually accountable and devoted to shared standards and ethics for the well-being of all. Each person or learning cohort of persons commits to providing an annual report of activities and engagements to the IDTC and maintaining a collaborative connection and annual conversations with the TC.

Abbreviations:

- IDC: Insight Dialogue Community
- IDTC: Insight Dialogue Teaching Community
- TC: Teachers Council
- IDC website refers to [www.insightdialogue.org](http://www.insightdialogue.org)
- POE: Possibilities of Engagement

Teaching development documents:

- POE: Possibilities of Engagement
- [Ethics Statement](#)
- [Six Areas of Development](#)
- Affinity Groups
- Teaching Agreements
- Recognition process document

\*Terms

- Five Precepts: the basic code of ethics undertaken for developing mindfulness, heartfulness and character. Recognizing that we are all interconnected, we commit to abstaining from killing living beings, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying and intoxication.
- Seven Factors of Awakening: meditative qualities of the heart mind that support awakening, e.g., mindfulness, investigation, energy, joy, tranquility, concentration, and equanimity.