SOMALI MENTAL HEALTH
PROFESSIONAL CIRCLE



A year-long space to reflect, connect and grow

Role-aligned cohorts • Open agenda • Responsive learning • Mentorship

JANUARY - DECEMBER 2026

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More than a session.
A professional home across the year.

PROFESSIONAL CIRCLE

SOMALI MENTAL HEALTH NETWORK

The Circle is a culturally grounded membership for Somali mental-health professionals, allied practitioners, students and early-career members.

Members reflect in small cohorts with peers who understand the professional, cultural and community contexts they carry - then access learning and mentorship shaped by what emerges.



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“It’s about time”

Somali mental health professionals are often working across two worlds at once - holding clinical responsibility while also navigating community relationships and systems that do not always understand those realities.

What we repeatedly hear from professionals is:

“I need a space where I don’t have to explain the cultural context before I can even begin reflecting.”

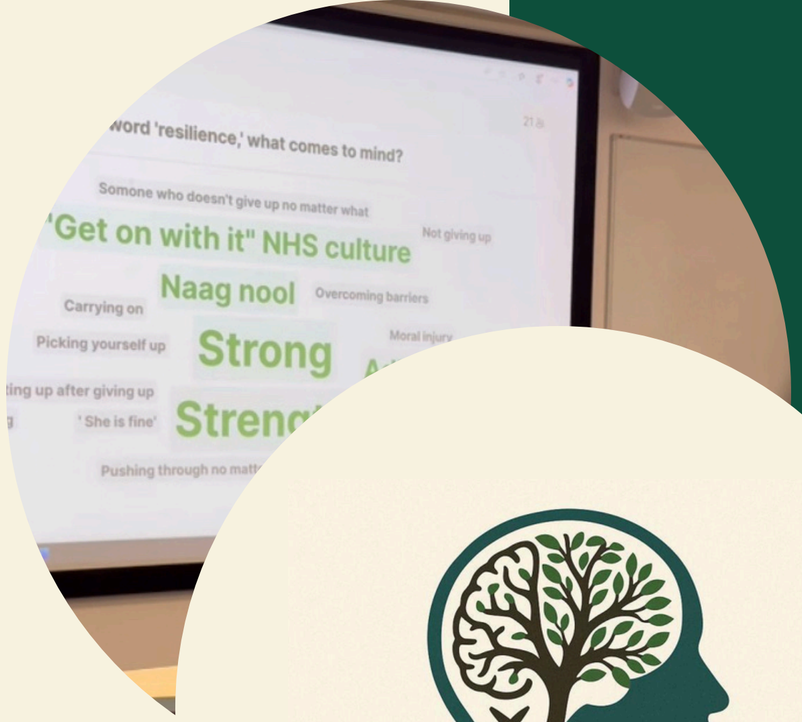
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Reflective Practice

That matters because when there is no culturally understood space to process the work, practitioners can be left carrying:

- Burnout and emotional exhaustion from continuously holding other people’s distress
- Code-switching and cultural translation in spaces where their experiences need additional explanation
- Dual-role pressure - being both a professional and a visible member of the community they serve
- Boundary fatigue, particularly when professional, family and community worlds overlap
- Complex conversations around faith, stigma, migration, racism, family systems and collective responsibility that may not fit neatly into mainstream reflective spaces
- Professional isolation - even when surrounded by colleagues

So why a Somali-specific Circle?



It is not about separating Somali professionals from the wider mental health workforce.

It is about creating one additional space where shared cultural understanding is already in the room.

No starting with the cultural explanation.
No translating the nuance.
No deciding which part of yourself belongs in the conversation.

The Circle creates space to get to the reflection itself.

Peer-led. Professionally facilitated. Somali-led.
Piloted and evaluated throughout 2026.

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What You Others have said?

Zainab (Registered Mental Health Nurse)

"I'm often navigating intense clinical environments while holding cultural expectations that aren't always recognised. I'm looking forward to a space where I can reflect openly with people who understand both the system and the community, without having to explain or soften my experiences. This Circle feels like a much-needed space for reflection, connection, and professional care."

Khadra (Educational Psychologist)

"So much of my work sits at the intersection of culture, systems, and children's emotional worlds. I'm looking forward to a Somali-led space where those complexities are understood without translation. I believe this Circle will support deeper reflection, professional confidence, and a stronger sense of belonging as a Somali practitioner."

Mohamed (Social Worker and Mentor)

"As a Somali social worker, I'm often carrying complex emotional and cultural tensions without a space to properly unpack them. I'm looking forward to a reflective circle where I don't have to explain my community, my values, or my position. A space like this feels essential for sustaining myself in the work, not just surviving it."

Join us!

There are no pre-set topics.

The agenda begins with what members are carrying now.

ARRIVE

What is present for me?

NOTICE

What needs reflection?

EXPLORE

What are we learning together?

LEAVE

What will I carry forward?

Prompts may help the conversation move, but members do not have to fit their experience into a fixed theme.

Who the Circle is for

Cohorts are formed around shared professional stage or practice context.

CLINICAL & THERAPEUTIC

Psychiatrists, psychologists, counsellors, psychotherapists, nurses and wellbeing practitioners

ALLIED & COMMUNITY

Social workers, educators, researchers, community practitioners and culturally focused roles

STUDENT & EARLY CAREER

Trainees, students and newer professionals seeking belonging, guidance and progression

Small cohorts make reflection safer and more relevant.

Members apply and share their role, stage and areas of practice.

SMHN forms limited-space cohorts with meaningful professional similarity.

Each cohort remains together across the year, supporting trust and continuity.

A facilitator holds the process; members shape the content.

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A consistent rhythm, without a rigid agenda

Each 90-minute online session follows the same holding structure.

01	**Settle and contract**	Reconnect to confidentiality, boundaries and the purpose of the space.
02	**Member-led check-in**	Surface the experiences, tensions or questions members want to bring.
03	**Collective reflection**	Explore what matters through guided dialogue, shared wisdom and careful challenge.
04	**Close and continue**	Name learning, personal commitments, resources and any follow-up support.

The year is built around six touchpoints

Bi-monthly sessions create space between meetings for practice, reflection and reconnection.



Exact dates and cohort times are confirmed during onboarding.

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If you miss a session, you do not lose the thread.

The continuity pathway is designed to reconnect you – not recreate a confidential group conversation.

Receive a short cohort update focused on shared learning and resources, never personal disclosures.

Use a guided reflection prompt to prepare for the next session.

Rejoin at the next touchpoint without needing to “catch up” on other members’ stories.

The Circle shapes the learning programme

CIRCLE

Members surface recurring questions, pressures and gaps.

SMHN SYNTHESIS

Facilitators identify collective themes without sharing personal content.

RESPONSIVE EVENTS

Training, guest sessions and resources deepen what members need next.

The membership becomes a listening system for real professional needs.

Students and early-career members

Mentorship is connected to the Circle, but it is not the same as reflective practice.

SMALL COHORTS	Shared stage, goals and professional interests
GUIDED CONTACT	Group mentoring at agreed points across the year
REAL NAVIGATION	Careers, training routes, identity, confidence and systems knowledge
CLEAR BOUNDARIES	Mentoring supports development; it is not therapy or supervision

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Clear boundaries protect the space

THE CIRCLE IS

- Peer reflective practice
- Culturally grounded and Somali-led
- Professionally facilitated
- Confidential within clear limits
- A place for shared learning and belonging

THE CIRCLE IS NOT

- Therapy or crisis support
- Clinical supervision
- Diagnosis or treatment planning
- Detailed client case review
- A substitute for safeguarding or employer processes

Safety is designed in before the first session

Every member receives clear information and agrees how the Circle will be held.

PURPOSE

What the space is for - and what sits outside it

CONFIDENTIALITY

What stays within the cohort and the limits of privacy

ENGAGEMENT

Respect, choice, participation and how disagreement is handled

SAFEGUARDING

How concerns are responded to and where support is signposted

What membership makes possible

01	**BELONGING**	A professional space where cultural context is understood.
02	**REFLECTION**	Time to think, not only respond.
03	**CONTINUITY**	Relationships and learning that develop across the year.
04	**VOICE**	Member experience shapes future learning and resources.
05	**PROGRESSION**	Mentorship and connection across career stages.

Join the Circle

Limited places. Thoughtful cohort matching. A year of professional connection.

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- Register your interest through the application form.
- Tell us about your role, career stage and what you hope to gain.
- Selected members receive cohort, contracting and onboarding information.

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