

Inner Compass Learning: Social-Emotional Work Waiver & Release for Liability

The work of Inner Compass Learning LLC (ICL) focuses on social-emotional and therapeutic strategies. These strategies (outlined below) differ from therapy. Kristen Sawyer (Founder, practitioner) is not a licensed therapist. Her background is in education, specifically experiential and outdoor-based education. At times doing work with students (“participants”), and building up trust, they will disclose information related to big and little T traumas (defined below) as well as other emotional moments. Outlined here is information about the strategies used in ICL as well as what to expect if a student shares beyond what is included with Kristen Sawyer’s scope of practice.

Scope of Practice

Education/Certification

- Master’s in Education K-8; 6 years of experience with high school and college aged students. Subjects taught include English Language Arts, Creative Writing, Math, Science, Social Studies, Academic English, English Language, Cultural Anthropology, Community Building
- BA Global Studies from UNC-Chapel Hill; Minors in English Literature and Art History
- Wilderness First Responder

Healing Arts

Shamanic Reiki

Certified Level 3 and Beyond practitioner, SWIHA 2021 (Southwest Institute of Healing Arts) Kristen has received up to her Master attunement and is certified to practice shamanic Reiki which can include:

- Touch-free Reiki session or light touch with consent (hand on face, knee, shoulder)
- Use of tools like incense, stones, feathers, crystals, music for sessions
- Guide in visioning and journeying
- Identifying “intrusions” and guiding “cord cutting”
- Use of aromas (essential oils) with student permission

She may also incorporate secondary healing strategies that she has used herself but is not certified in. She will not employ these frequently. She will recommend certified practitioners if desired/needed for students:

- Tapping
- Meditation/Mindfulness
- Movement exercises

Communication/Creativity/Identity Practices

Nonviolent Communication

Kristen is on her path to becoming a Certified NVC (nonviolent communication) coach. This is a multi-year process. She has studied NVC intensely for 1.5 years and utilized NVC practices for 5 years. Practices of NVC include:

- Identifying jackal and giraffe voices
- Identifying feelings and needs in self and others
- Guiding and participating in role plays
- Practicing making requests
- Use of feelings and needs cards
- Empathetically listening as students share

Internal Family Systems (IFS)

Kristen has worked with IFS through her own therapy work for the last 3 years. She has been part of an Authentic Communication Group that combines IFS and NVC for the last 6 months. Practices from IFS include:

- Speaking on behalf of “parts” rather than the whole: ie. Part of me wants X and part of me wants Y; they seem to be in conflict, but both are true.

Somatics

Through the *Strozzi Institute*, Kristen has completed over 60 hours of course study with Embodied Leadership 1 and 2. She is currently enrolled in a 4-month certification program through *Embody Lab* titled: Embodied Social Justice. She has practiced somatic experiencing, including the following practices, for 2 years.

- Orienting
- Visioning/Journeying
- Grounding in dignity, belonging, and safety
- Breathwork
- Encouragement of movement in natural spaces
- Identifying zones of comfort, discomfort and danger

Creative Writing/Poetry

Kristen has taught poetry and creative nonfiction for the last ten years and written it for the last twenty-five years. She has a forthcoming zine, *The Show*, and has published pieces in magazines including: *La Revista Zero*, *Cuenca Expat*, *Cuenca Highlife*, *Apeiron Review*, and *Clever Magazine*. She has kept a blog for the last 3 years: *The Wandering Roots*.

Practices with students in writing include:

- Freewriting/Journaling
- Affirmations/Gratitude practices

- Visualization and reflection prompts
- Graphic organizers
- Lessons from: *The Artist's Way*, *Writing Down the Bone*, *Neon Words*, and *Writing Down Your Soul*
- Use of various poetry books, spoken word poems, and age-appropriate TED Talks including, but not limited to, Sarah Kay, Brene Brown, Elizabeth Gilbert, etc.

Identity Work with White Folks

For the last 4 years, Kristen has led, guided, and explored conversations of intersectionality and identity. She is currently apprenticing with The Healing Roots to lead conversations of white affinity groups. She participated in their program in 2020. She also is in the aforementioned Embodied Social Justice certificate program through Embody Lab. She also recently completed work through the Eco-Institute of North Carolina in White Supremacy and Environmentalism. She has co-lead a bi-monthly white women's affinity group for the past year. Practices with students include:

- Identity webs
- Age-appropriate readings and videos from scholars on these topics
- Guided conversations around white supremacy, sexism, patriarchy, ableism, cisgender/transgender, sexual orientation, classism, mental health and ableism, and other power structures
- Conversations around systemic, communal and personal power
- Use of books like: *This Book is Anti-Racist*, *Between the World and Me*, *THUG*, and other age-appropriate books depending on age of student

Beyond Scope of Practice

Kristen is not trained in, nor will utilize, the following practices as she believes it is unethical and beyond her scope:

- Hands-on massage therapy
- Probing questions into big and little T trauma that might retrigger a student:
 - Big T Trauma, as defined by Newport Academy, is "Big T Trauma is a reaction to a deeply disturbing, life-threatening event or situation."
 - Little t trauma, as defined by Newport Academy, is "Any event or ongoing situation that causes distress, fear, and a sense of helplessness may qualify as little t trauma."
- Offering therapeutic advice to students "You should do X"
- Giving diagnoses: "It sounds like you have X"
- Recommendation of any medicine, homeopathic or allopathic, for students dealing with various mental health issues including anxiety, depression, bipolar, etc.

In High-Emotion Situations: Referrals/Support

It has happened that students, through building up trust and/or in need support, will sometimes share more than Kristen feels comfortable handling, something that is beyond the scope of practice. In these moments, it is possible that a student becomes “retriggered” in the telling of the story, experiencing physical and emotional symptoms of the time of the incident, sometimes connected to PTSD symptoms. In these situations, Kristen will:

- Do her best to guide the student back to the present using somatic practices
- Follow up with the parents within 24 hours to let parent know what happened
- Provide possible recommendations for further support include therapy, exercise/movement, healing modalities, tapping, body work, or other practices
- Provide connections with naturopaths, herbalists, or doctors

It is up to the parent to make any decision, and yet, if Kristen feels strongly that a student needs extra therapeutic support, she will advocate as best she can for that student. She hopes to work with families to create a **Support Plan for their Child** that fits their financial, religious, spiritual and educational belief systems.

Mandated Reporter

Finally, as a certified teacher, Kristen is a mandated reporter, meaning that she is legally obligated to inform the adult and/or Child Protective Services (CPS) if there is an instance of emotional, physical or sexual abuse. If the physical, emotional, or sexual abuse occurs at home and/or involves the parents, she is legally obligated to notify CPS. She makes this clear with her students from the first day working with them, and if they ask to share sensitive information, she reminds them of this obligation.

Release and Waiver

In exchange for participation in work with Inner Compass Learning LLC (the “Activity”), organized by Kristen Sawyer [the Founder/Practitioner] located in Tucson, AZ (“Releasee”), I hereby agree as follows

1. I and anyone claiming on my behalf release and forever discharge Releasee and its affiliates, successors and assigns, officers, employees, representatives, partners, agents and anyone claiming through them (collectively, the “Released Parties”), in their individual and/or corporate capacities from causes of action of any nature and kind, known or unknown, which I may have against Releasee or any Released Parties arising out of or relating to any injury, loss or damage to person and property that may be sustained as a result of participation in the Activity (“Claims”)
2. I understand that participation in the Activity involves inherent risks, including risk of physical or psychological injury, pain, suffering, illness, disfigurement, temporary or permanent paralysis and/or death, and I assume all related risks and voluntarily participate in the Activity.

3. I agree to indemnify Releasee against any and all claims, actions, lawsuits, damages and judgments, including attorney's fees, arising out of or relating to my participation in the Activity.
4. This Release for Participation in Event or Activity ("Release") shall not be in any way construed as an admission by the Releasee that it has acted wrongfully with respect to me or any other person, that it admits liability or responsibility at any time for any purpose, or that I have any rights whatsoever against the Releasee.
5. This Release shall be binding upon the parties and their respective heirs, administrators, personal representatives, executors, successors and assigns. I have the authority to release the Claims and have not assigned or transferred any Claims to any other party. The provisions of this Release are severable. If any provision is held to be invalid or unenforceable, it shall not affect the validity or enforceability of any other provision. This Release constitutes the entire agreement between the parties and supersedes any prior oral or written agreements or understandings between the parties concerning the subject matter of this Release. This Release may not be altered, amended or modified, except by a written document signed by both parties. The terms of this Release shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of Arizona.
6. I have carefully read and fully understand all the provisions of this Release & Waiver and am freely, knowingly and voluntarily entering into this Release.

SIGNATURES

Signature of Parent/Guardian (Releasor)

_____ Date _____

Printed Name of Parent/Guardian (Releasor)

Signature of Student (Participant)

_____ Date _____

Printed Name of Student (Participant)
