

BZC Council Model

Councils are small groups of experienced students who support the sangha in the following ways. They:

- generously offer the sangha their skills, time, and energy
- inspire and encourage others through their dedicated practice
- function as a resource and sounding board for other sangha members and inform the teacher about needs and concerns within the sangha
- serve in practice roles for daily zazen and intensives and train other practitioners in these roles
- offer orientation to newcomers
- set up for talks, classes, and intensives
- plan intensives, courses, and seminars in collaboration with the teacher
- shape programming at Boulder Zen Center based on their experience and connection with the sangha

How is a Council formed?

Council members are BZC practitioners who have been invited to join a Council by Zenki Roshi. Councils are formed whenever there are at least four sangha members who meet certain criteria. They:

- have established a consistent daily sitting practice
- have accurately and completely learned all key roles (ino, doan, chiden, oryoki cook, work leader) — in the start-up phase of the council model, some of these roles may still need to be trained
- are actively and regularly working with Zenki Roshi (committed to at least one dokusan/practice meeting per month)
- are a consistent participant in regular BZC activities (committed to at least two in-person zazen practices per week with a zendo role)
- have taken the Precepts Ceremony and are committed to living in accord with the precepts
- have participated in at least four intensives (Weekend Sitzings, Sesshins)
- have moved beyond solely self-centered practice toward support and care for the community
- have requested or are interested in deepening Zen practice
- are psychologically and emotionally stable and mature
- are agreed upon by the teacher, senior students, and existing council members
- are able to commit to a one-hour weekly meeting, with occasional unavoidable misses

What is the purpose of Councils?

BZC is not a monastic practice center, yet we strive to provide a context, in which dedicated practitioners can cultivate their practice and express their bodhisattva vows through caring for the community, using peer support to grow together, and closely collaborating with the teacher in dharmic and practical ways.

BZC doesn't want to recreate the formal hierarchical structures of traditional Zen temples. This council model is our way of trying to provide the structure that is needed to support the development of individuals in their practice and of the sangha as a whole.

Even though we naturally start with one Council, the model is open and expandable. We strive to create multiple Councils that form strong long-term internal practice bonds and network with each other to support the whole sangha. We will continue to develop Councils as people are ready for and aspire to this deeper training and heightened commitment.