

Sharing Circle (AKA Healing Circle or Listening Circle)

Room Set-Up

- Approximately 30 chairs in outer circle, depending on expected size of group
- Approximately 6-8 chairs in inner circle, co-leaders sitting across from each other with one person facing the clock. Table next to leader's chair.
- Christ candle in center of inner circle with lighter and talking piece.
- Daily Word
- Microphone(s)

Opening Activities

- Centering Prayer
- Light Christ Candle
- Read Daily Word

Introduce Form

- Purpose of being here is for people to share from their heart
- Two Circles: Outer Circle and Inner Circle
 - Inner Circle for those who want to share (always leave at least one chair empty, and when the last chair is filled, someone from inner circle steps out to have one free chair available again)
 - Outer Circle – Receiving others with compassion and suspension.

Requests

1. Use talking piece - quality of reverence to the process, when someone enters the circle, take a breathe before picking up the stone, or wait a few seconds after someone speaks to pick up the talking piece to allow a brief pause before we move on to next person.
2. Inner Circle: Revealing transparently and authentically
 - a. Transparency – Share honestly and with vulnerability; we reveal ourselves; we get to decide how vulnerable we want to be here.
 - b. Authenticity – Share your own experience, not someone else's experience. Also don't respond to what someone else said. "If you would like to refer to what someone said to then share your experience of it, please use the 3rd person. E.g. "When I heard Bob say that I felt..."
3. Inner and Outer Circles: Receive the speaker with compassion and suspension
 - a. Compassion: "being with" – quality of being with whatever the person is sharing a
 - b. Suspension: suspending judgment and impulse to respond to what the person is saying
4. Turning off devices

5. Refrain from recording in any form – written, audio, video, etc.
6. Confidential – refrain from repeating anyone else’s sharing. You can share of your experience here, however, please do not share anyone else’s experience. E.g. do not share any names or what someone else has shared.
7. Ask if there are any other requests.

How to open the Inner Circle

- Announce “When I ring the bell, the circle is open”
- Enter inner circle and sit for a few seconds, and then ring the bell.
- The Sharing Circle has begun.

Key Phrases for Facilitators (When needed to bring participants back to the form. Use fewer words and be as direct and clear as possible)

“Person’s name (pause) *what is your experience?*”

“ _____ *I’d really like to focus on your experience, what are you feeling right now?*”

“ _____ *would you please share your direct experience?*” “I heard you say ‘we’ and I ask you speak just directly from yourself...”

“ _____ *would you speak in the third person rather than directly at Bob.*” E.g. when I heard what Bob said that I felt ...

“ _____ *are you willing and able to come to the essence in the next minute?*”

“ _____ *I just noticed someone else come into the inner circle, are you willing to conclude your share in the next minute or two...*”

Closing

- 15 minutes before closing time, invite people to complete their sharing in the next 10 minutes because “*we would like to have 5 minutes to close the circle.*”
- 5 minutes before, ring the bell to signal end of circle. “*We honor what’s been shared, and that which remains in the silent sanctuary of our hearts.*”
- Leave inner circle.
- Acknowledge both how intense and potent it is to share vulnerably in this circle and how intense and potent it is to have something that we are still holding...
- Do embodied closing...