



## Circle Agreements

Every culture has a set of agreements that form a foundation for how to interact within the group. It is important to establish these agreements when your circle first forms, and revisit them as often as needed.

### Facilitator's Instructions

Open a group dialogue, posing the question: what guidelines and agreements are important for a healthy culture? (for example, common purpose, respect for different perspectives, willingness to listen, etc). After 10 minutes (or so) of dialogue, read the following circle agreements out loud as a group, and ask participants:

- Can we all agree to these guidelines?
- Is there anything you would like to change?
- Is there anything you can't agree to? If so, ask that person to change the guideline so it works for them, and then see if the group can agree to it. If the group cannot agree, remove it.
- Is there anything you would like to add? If there is not 100% agreement to the addition, do not add it.

### Circle Agreement Examples

- Begin and end on time
- Show up and be fully present
- Only share to the level at which you are comfortable
- Be open, not attached, to outcome
- Practice non-judgmental listening. Refrain from gossiping about other group members.
- Respect the confidentiality of circle members by not sharing their personal information or stories outside of the group.
- Listen to the heart of what someone is trying to say
- Allow a diversity of opinions, and be willing to see other points of view
- Acknowledge that everyone has something to teach and everyone has something to learn
- Avoid interruption and debate
- No side talk while another is speaking
- Share from personal experience. Use "I" statements and speak from your own personal experience.
- Ask "Why am I talking?" Attempt to forward the conversation and add to the



group each time you speak.

- If you often talk a lot, practice holding back before speaking (allowing reserved people to speak) and challenge yourself to speak up if you normally don't talk a lot.
- Remember the power of silence in dialogue
- Take responsibility for your own experience. "I get out of this circle what I put into it".
- Request a time out if needed (see Handling Conflict in a Circle, in the Facilitator's Guide)
- Resist the tendency to "fix" other's problems. If you want to give advice, ask their permission first.
- Remember the common purpose of the circle.
- Support your facilitator and convenor, by participating fully in the group; showing up on time; keeping the conversation on track; and addressing complaints by coming up with solutions.
- Be positive
- Have fun
- Have an ecologically responsible circle (car-pool, bike or bus, bring your own mug, plate, napkin, etc).
- Create a buddy system for support outside the circle

Others: \_\_\_\_\_  
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