

The Circle Method

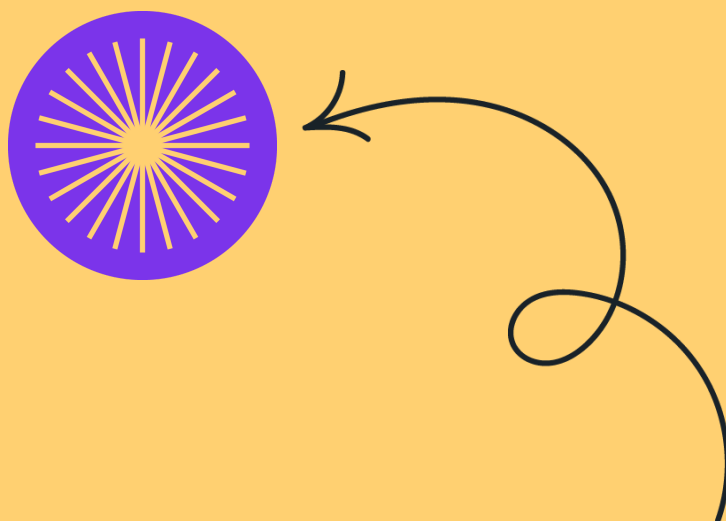


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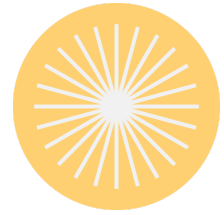
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When to Use the Circle Method

Regular events held in the circle are the key to shape the culture of communication and behavior of different groups (for example the class) successfully. Working in the circle develops empathy, mutual respect and shared responsibility and social-emotional skills important for coping in life. It can be used with both young people and adults to conduct any problem-solving meeting, team meeting, business meeting, consensus building etc.

It is advisable to use the circle method at both employee collaboration gatherings and parents' evenings to enable people to express and enrich their perspectives, and in the case of problems, to increase the number of solutions and the assumption of responsibility.

Basic Principles of the Circle



The circle method can be used with any topic/question where hearing everyone's voice is important.

IN THE CIRCLE:

- Everyone sits in a circle and it is important that everyone can see each other
- All the participants take turn to share (one person at a time is speaking) regarding a specific topic/ answering a specific question
- The speaker holds a talking stick which is passed on around the circle
- It is advised to not comment on what the speaker is sharing
- Everyone else listens attentively in silence

POSSIBLE VARIATIONS:

- Using a timer for each sharing
- Reflecting the previous person's sharing before sharing your own (*"I understood that the most important thing for you is ..."*)
- If appropriate, a person can choose not to share and say *"pass"* on their turn
- The talking stick is passed to the person next to you, OR to the next person who is ready/willing to speak (no matter their position in the circle) OR the speaker invites a chosen person to share next

Healing Circle

In principle, any case that can be resolved through mediation can also be handled through the circle method. The healing circle is intended not only for the direct parties of the conflict or problem, but also for their supporters, community and professionals who can help to understand the issues and circumstances surrounding the conflict. The circle can also be used as a prevention tool and a reflection method when responding to a conflict situation.

A HEALING CIRCLE IS APPROPRIATE WHEN:

- There are several parties involved in the incident
- The case has a wider impact on others who are not directly involved in it (class, group, friends, family, etc.)
- The persons directly involved in the incident are deeply emotionally affected by the incident
- The incident took place in a group or between groups (so-called subgroups in a class)
- For those directly involved in the case, the future of their relationship is important

Appendix 1 - Basic Diagram and Samples Questions for the Healing Circle

IN THE CIRCLE:

- everyone takes turns finishing the sentences
- the beginnings of the sentences must be clearly visible
- the speaker's speech is not commented on
- it is advisable to use a talking piece/stick

CIRCLE RULES:

- Be open, speak clearly
- Listen carefully, without judging

THE STORY

I think what happened is...

I saw...

I heard...

I noticed that...

THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS

I think that ... and I feel ... (expression of emotion)

IMPACT AND DAMAGES

It affects me because...

I think it also affects/impacts ... because...

NEEDS

In order to set things right, I need...

SOLUTIONS

In my opinion, to solve this matter...

I myself can do this...

Appendix 2 - Healing Circle: Self-Assessment Sheet

I LED A CIRCLE FOR (how many people, age) ...

THE FOCUS OF THE CIRCLE WAS (topic, question, problem): ...

QUESTIONS I chose for the circle:

- ...
- ...
- ...
- ...
- ...

PLEASE PUT A TICK IN FRONT OF THE ACTIVITIES YOU IMPLEMENTED

INTRODUCTION

- ☐ I introduced my role
- ☐ I formulated the purpose of conducting the circle and the expected result
- ☐ I used encouragement and allowed the participant to express their feelings at the outset by mirroring them
- ☐ I introduced the rules of the circle
- ☐ I used a talking piece

MAIN CONTENT

- ☐ I gave each person in the circle the space to present their point of view/tell their story
- ☐ All those who wished shared their thoughts and feelings related to the situation
- ☐ I used active listening and encouraging speaking
- ☐ I used mirroring feelings
- ☐ I helped to express the impact and/or damage of what happened
- ☐ I encouraged to propose many possible solutions to remedy the situation
- ☐ I intervened if the agreements were not fulfilled
- ☐ I thanked and acknowledged the participants

I AM SATISFIED/I DID WELL...

NEXT TIME I WANT TO...