



15-45m



PLENUM

## DESCRIPTION

The Circle is a practice that allows a group to connect with focus, engage in deep listening, and think together in a manner that supports equality and intimacy. The Circle practice follows three principles: Leadership rotates among all circle members; responsibility is shared for the quality of experience; reliance is on wholeness, rather than on any personal agenda. It can be used for “check-ins” and “check-outs” or as a way of making decisions together.



## PREPARATION

Create a circular seating arrangement around an object that symbolizes the intention of the Circle (e.g., a meaningful item or a plant). All steps of the Circle Practice are taken in plenum with the whole group.



## MATERIALS

- Talking Piece: a small symbolic piece the group chooses that when someone holds it speaks and the rest listen.
- A small bell or something that can create a gentle noise, in order for the Guardian (see below roles) to make pauses when needed.



## TOOLS

None

ALL PHASES



DIALOGUE &amp; FACILITATION

## STEP 1 IN PLENUM / IN CIRCLE:

The host clarifies the purpose and intention of the circle and shares with the group the following three practices:

- Speak with intention, noting what has relevance to the conversation in the moment;
- Listen with attention, respectful of the learning process of all members of the group;
- Tend to the well-being of the Circle, remaining aware of the impact of our contributions.

**STEP 2** Assign roles: The role of the Host is to initially frame-in the intention/purpose of the circle and share its principles and practices, while throughout the process to ensure that the Circle has flow and the intention remains at the centre of the circle.

The role of the Guardian is to observe the Circle's process and safeguard group energy, calling for breaks or moments of re-focusing when needed by ringing gently the bell. When the bell rings, the group takes a few seconds of silence before they continue.

**STEP 3** Process: The Host frames-in and opens the circle with a main/ calling question that reflects the purpose (e.g. How am I feeling today? How do we arrive to this meeting? What did I learn from the day? What is my takeaway/inspiration? Etc.).

**STEP 4** A person from the group begins by taking the talking piece, which is placed initially in the middle of the circle, and starts sharing. Each person has the chance to speak. The talking piece is passed around the circle. Whoever holds the talking piece holds the right to speak and the rest listen. If someone chooses not to speak, they may pass the talking piece along and another opportunity is offered after others have spoken.

## NOTE:

Give people time to reflect in silence and collect their own thoughts before anyone starts to speak.



## FOLLOW UP

The outcomes of the Circle should be in the form of a short bullet-point report and can be used for planning future steps.

Further Reading: [www.thecircleway.net](http://www.thecircleway.net)