




CIRCLE METHODOLOGY

TECHNIQUE TO STRUCTURE A MEETING OR GATHERING THAT SEEKS TO PROMOTE CONVERSATIONS AND SHARES LEADERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITY

	<p><i>What is it?</i></p>	<p>A way to run a meeting or hold a gathering, rotating the leadership among all group members.</p> <p><i>"A circle is not just a meeting with the chairs rearranged. A circle is a way of doing things differently than we have become accustomed to. The circle may serve us as a form that honours all voices and invites wisdom into our midst."</i> Christina Baldwin, author of <i>Calling the Circle: The First and Future Culture</i>.</p> <p>Participants agree to follow three core practices: speak with intention; listen with attention; and stay aware of the impact of individual participation on the group.</p>
	<p><i>Why use it?</i></p>	<p>Supports and encourages diversity of opinions. Circle methodology promotes the principles of dialogue rather than debate. Use this tool when a group wants to find areas of consensus or there is a need to find innovative and creative solutions.</p> <p>Creates safe environments for difficult conversations. It builds team commitment for decision-making and problem-solving, and increases quality of decision-making.</p> <p>Enhances skills for respectful communication. It's based on the idea that there is a greater chance for understanding and collaboration when respectful communication is experienced and expected by all team members, regardless of position or role.</p>
	<p><i>How do I do it?</i></p>	<p>Set intention/purpose. Spend time figuring out if the conversation you want to have will be best served by this method. The intention or purpose that is set, preferably by a small collaborative group, determines who will be invited to the circle, how long the circle will meet and outcomes.</p> <p>Check-in/greeting. Allows group members to express their reasons or purpose for being at the meeting/gathering. This step gives everyone in the circle a chance to share what is important at that moment. It works best if someone volunteers to start and proceeds around the circle. If someone is not yet ready or doesn't want to check in, they pass their turn and they are offered another chance after everyone else has spoken. At no time is any one obliged to participate beyond their comfort zone.</p> <p>Set circle agreements. The use of group agreements, when defined by group members: helps participants have honest and respectful conversations with each other; shares responsibility for the direction and outcomes of the group, and promotes diversity of opinions. Agreements are posted and all group members are responsible for following agreements and calling attention to the group when the agreements are not being respected.</p> <p>Check-out/farewell. This step closes the circle. In the same way that participants were asked to check in or share their intention/purpose to start the meeting, at the end they are asked to share a reflection, learning or next step. This is the opportunity for the group to decide collaboratively what the next steps are and to pull out the talents and skills of group members.</p>

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Resources at Capital Health: On Nov. 30, 2007, approximately 28 colleagues came together to learn about hosting circles. To find out whom to contact about circle methodology in your area or to link with other colleagues at Capital Health, please contact Jeanne Rokosh, Andy Dansie, Cathy Saunders, Dawn Burstall or Donna Scotten.

For more resources online, check out:
<http://peerspirit.com/htmlpages/circlebasics.html>

Recommended reading: *Calling the Circle: The First and Future Culture*
by Christina Baldwin.



Capital Health

10,000 employees & volunteers
10,000 medical staff
10 campuses
36 buildings
One shared calling.