

Circles Facilitator Guidelines

- Avoid giving a lecture. Keep your own introduction to between 15-20 minutes max!
- Involve others by asking questions, eliciting other's points of view. You can do this by:
 - Going around the room and having everyone speak. (Set a time limit). If it is an informal go around make sure that everyone who wishes to gets a chance to speak. Involve everyone. Don't let a couple of talkative people dominate.
 - Splitting into smaller groups of two, three, or four and have people address a specific question or open sentence. (An open sentence would be e.g. "When I think about . . . it makes me feel . . . *or* Some of the things I do to . . . are . . . ; ") If you use open sentences you will need to be a timekeeper.
 - Brainstorm ideas (which can be written up, if you like, on the board or on news block paper)
- If your workshop is simply a topic of discussion facilitate in such a way that everyone gets a chance to speak if they wish. Draw out those who tend to be quiet and politely ask those who tend to dominate to speak less. Do not be afraid to interrupt or set a limit if there are people who tend to dominate the discussion.
- Guide people back to the topic if they tend to digress inappropriately. Be a time keeper as appropriate. Avoid two or three talkative folks dominating the discussion. Don't wait until the end to ask those who tend to be more silent whether they have anything to add.
- Your job is not to 'fix' problems. It is okay for people to express themselves. Tears and laughter are equally okay.
- Speak from an authentic place and from personal experience, Avoid abstractions and generalizations. Avoid holding forth. Ask others to do the same.
- Agree to disagree. Respect others' point of view even if you do not agree. Risk expressing your passion.
- You do not need to be an expert. One of the most empowering things you can do is accept that you do not know.