

# How-To: Basic Empathy Circle



## In a Circle of 3 to 7 Participants

1. The Facilitator volunteers to be the first active listener, and a volunteer speaks one or two ideas and then pauses.
2. They speak about whatever comes up for them for a set time (typically 3-5 minutes, pausing after one or two ideas.)
3. The active listener reflects back what they are hearing until the speaker feels heard and understood to their satisfaction.
4. Then it is the listener's turn to select who they will speak to and for that new active listener to reflect back what they are hearing.
5. Everyone helps hold the circle process by monitoring & following these guidelines.

The dialog continues around the circle for the total time allotted.

## Speaker Tips

- \* Pause often to give the listener a chance to reflect what they heard.
- \* When you are done talking and you feel heard, you can say "I'm fully heard" to indicate that you are done with your turn.

## Active Listener/Reflector

- \* In your own words reflect back the essence of what you hear the speaker saying.
- \* Refrain from asking questions, judging, analyzing, detaching, diagnosing, advising or sympathizing. When it's your turn to speak, you can say anything you want.
- \* You may ask the speaker to pause periodically so you can reflect what you heard.

## Silent Listeners

- \* Listen and be present to the exchange between the speaker and active listener/reflector. You will soon have a turn to actively listen and speak.

The group may choose to have a discussion topic or question to address in the circle.

To learn more about empathy skills visit our website at: [CultureOfEmpathy.com](http://CultureOfEmpathy.com)