



HOW TO TAKE PART IN A BASIC EMPATHY CIRCLE

WELCOME: In a Circle of 3 to 5 participants, welcome everyone and let them know you will facilitate today's circle. The Empathy Circle is a structured dialogue process based on mutual active listening. Values core to Empathy Circles are empathy, mutuality, openness, and care.

BENEFITS: You can **briefly** share the personal benefits you have received from Empathy Circles. Examples: "I'm excited to share this process with you because Empathy Circles have made me a better listener / I love meeting people from all over the world / it builds connection."

OVERVIEW: The four roles in the Empathy Circle are Facilitator, Speaker, Active Listener, and Silent Listeners.

FACILITATOR: I'll be the Facilitator, and I will be helping everyone through this process. I will be the first Active Listener to model reflective listening.

SPEAKER: The Speaker chooses a Listener, and speaks to the circle topic or whatever is on their mind. Speak in small chunks and pause often so the Active Listener can reflect what they heard. If the Speaker doesn't feel all or part of the reflection is accurate they can make corrections. When you are finished talking and you feel heard, you can indicate you are finished by saying, "I feel heard" or "I'm complete." If you feel complete before your time is finished, you can end your turn early.

ACTIVE LISTENER: In your own words, or using the Speaker's words, reflect the essence of what you heard until the Speaker says they feel heard. Ask the Speaker to pause if you need to reflect before you hear more. This is not a dialogue, so refrain from asking questions, advising, sympathizing, judging, agreeing or disagreeing. Your role is to simply reflect the Speaker. Once your Speaker reports being heard, it is your turn to be the Speaker.

SILENT LISTENER: Everyone else is a Silent Listener. This is an active role. The Silent Listener is listening to be fully present for the exchange between the Speaker and the Active Listener, just as if they were the Active Listener. Sometimes a Silent Listener will be engaged in something that may be distracting. Refrain from doing anything that would distract the circle. If you need a break, just turn off your camera and mute, and return to the circle as soon as you are able.

BEGIN THE EMPATHY CIRCLE: We will have 5-minute turns. Our topic today is _____, or whatever is alive in you. The best way to learn the Empathy Circle process is to experience it. Let's get started. I will be the first Active Listener. Who would like to be the first Speaker?

OPTIONAL RECAP: *This version is good for younger children and for people for whom English is not their first language.*

Active Listener: Reflect as best you can what the Speaker is saying. Avoid judging (or even agreeing) or adding your own experiences while you are the Active Listener. You will be the next Speaker.

Speaker: Speak on the topic or whatever's on your mind in the time allotted. Pause often to let the Active Listener reflect. Say, "I feel heard" when you feel complete.

Silent Listeners: Pay attention to what is being said. Please do not distract the group.