

Guidelines for the Story Circle:

1. Sit in a circle. (The value of sitting in a circle is that it emphasizes the democracy of the group. All voice and stories are equal. In addition, whatever the group needs to accomplish will be achievable with the gifts of the group in the circle).
2. Start with a question. (For example, "Name a time you've struggled." Or "When is the first time you noticed 'race?'"")
3. Divide and share time equally, usually limiting time to 3-5 minutes. Someone tells the first story, responding to the question.
4. Listen actively and use empathetic senses, not critical senses. (We too often converse to debate, not to listen. The story circle is about listening).
5. Everyone does not have to tell a story. They may pass on their turn. The group will come back to them at the end to see if they would like to tell one. Silence is all right.
6. Do not write. This is an oral process.
7. Listen to the story that is being told, and do not think about the story you are about to tell. The circle will have brought you one when it becomes your time.
8. If it's helpful, after everyone has told their stories, each person should go around the circle with their eyes and construct an image of each other person's story.
9. Each person tells every fourth person what they picture from their story. This gives a sense of connectedness.
10. Begin discussing in crosstalk. Ask questions or make a statement. This allows the circle to create a universal language and allows community participation.
11. Listen while each person tells his or her story. Don't interrupt with questions, but save those questions for crosstalk at the end.
12. You don't have to agree with any story being told, but you do have to accept each person's right to tell his or her story.