

Guidelines for Circles of Trust

1. Confidentiality: What happens in the group is sacred. It is important that you deeply respect and reverence what is said in the group. What is said here stays here.
2. Each person speaks in turn without interruption.
3. There is an agreed maximum time for each individual sharing and a non-verbal sign that will be given when nearing the maximum time.
4. Each person shares only what they want. The amount of self-disclosure is completely the speaker's choice.
5. While listening to the speaker, be an active listener. As others are speaking, do not judge or interrupt them. Feel with them. Drop their experience down into your heart and let it sit next to your experience to hear what it says to you. The convenor invites a short period of silence after a person shares.
6. Members of the group, who wish, share what they experienced as active listeners. This is not a discussion of ideas or the giving of advice, but a sharing of what was experienced by the listeners. Consequently, we generally use "I" statements.
7. Following the sharing by active listeners, the convenor invites a few moments of quiet to hold the speaker and responses in sacred trust and then invites the group to listen to the next person who wishes to share.
8. At the conclusion of sharing within the group there is no need to form consensus on feelings or points of view. People are similar and/or different. It is important to honor our own feelings and those of others regardless if they are the same or different.

