

Hello Circle

Exercise Description

Description

This exercise was named the “Hello Circle” by native peoples of both Central America and the Pacific Northwest. It can be used to open and/or close an important meeting, experience or workshop. It is essentially a way of connecting to all the other people in the group.

While the whole group is standing in a circle, the leader stands in front of the person to the leader’s left and greets them by making eye contact, shaking hands, saying hello or good-bye and the person’s name. When the leader steps in front of the next person, the last person waits to follow the leader to greet the person to their left and the circle folds in upon itself.

When the leader has greeted the last person, they either sit down or leave the group (depending upon whether the experience is over). *NBA High-Five Version: Participants simply give each other a “high five” using the same folding-in pattern. This version is used at the end of a gathering after check out.*

Rationale

A group that does not know its members have difficulty establishing respect before tackling a potentially challenging situation. The circle can help as it calms the Reptilian brain (creates structure and repetition), engages the Limbic through touch and processes energy.

Purpose

- To create a warm group atmosphere that is conducive to making decisions, higher order problem solving and creativity/innovation
- To reduce potential hostilities within a group
- To reinforce messages of welcome
- To open or close a meeting with very positive feelings
- To share a positive diversity experience

Recommended for

- Teams
- Training groups
- Meetings
- Families

Features

- Rapid Change Tools:
 - ❖ All in the Circle
 - ❖ Handshakes
- Touch
- Smiles and laughter
- Words of encouragement
- Greetings to all by all

Benefits

- Each participant acknowledges and is recognized by every other member of the group
- Greater feelings of warmth toward members of the group
- Positive touch and sharing

Requirements

- Space for one large circle
- A designated person to begin the process
- Approximately 15 seconds per person (less for the NBA High-Five)

Hello/Good-bye Circle

Exercise Module

Learning Objectives

- To experience how strong interpersonal relationships can be encouraged
- To experience honoring and being honored by all others in the group
- To learn a warm way to open and close meetings
- To learn how native peoples from the Pacific Northwest greet one another
- To learn a way to calm the Reptilian and encourage the Limbic Systems of the brain

Preparation

Ensure that there is enough space for a circle and that the area is safe for walking.

Resources Needed

People: Instructor and group

Materials: None

Time Required: Approximately ten minutes for a group of 35 participants; one minute per four participants

Locale: Space large enough for one circle.

Group Size: Entire group

Instructions for Process

1. Share the history of this custom of Native Americans from the Pacific Northwest.
2. Ask the group to stand and form a circle, shoulder to shoulder. In the NBA version, all stand facing the same direction in a circle, so that all are facing the back of the person who was to their right when in a circle. All put their left (inner arms) straight out into the center, and then turned up at a right angle at the elbow, like a railroad crossing stop sign.
3. The designated leader stands in front of the person to her/his left (person 2) and they shake hands. In the NBA version, the leader walks by and gives a “high-five.”
4. The first person moves to the next person, clockwise, and repeats the gesture.
5. The second person follows the first, always moving clockwise.
6. Then the third comes in until the entire circle has folded in upon itself.
7. Once the leader reaches the end of the line, the leader either sits down or leaves, depending upon when the exercise is being used, beginning or end.
8. Add “All in the Circle” and “Handshake” tools to the Tool Box poster.

Evaluation

If the exercise is being done other than at a closing, ask the group:

- What did the exercise do for you?
- How did you feel before and after?
- What value does such an experience have?
- Why would such an exercise be used in a training/meeting?