

Concentric Circles / Parallel Rows

Preparations & Instructions:

Purpose: To start to break down barriers by getting people to talk to each other. This exercise promotes getting people to know each other better or to get to know someone they don't know. It also reinforces Listen, Listen, Love, Love.

Time: Including moving time, approximately five minutes per question.

Setup: Have available the number of chairs as there are participating team members. Arrange the chairs in two circles (one inside the other) or two parallel rows. In both arrangements, have an equal number of chairs facing each other.

Instructions:

1. Have team members take a seat in any chair.
2. Explain that the pairings will take turns talking about a topic to be given by the facilitator. The one listening is ONLY listening – no comments or discussions; respect the silence when the speaker pauses to think.
3. A moment of silence is given to think about the topic. When the facilitator says “begin”, the one talking first will have two minutes to talk about the topic.
4. The facilitator states which circle or row talks first and gives the topic.
5. Wait 10-15 seconds and say “begin.”
6. Call “time” at the end of two minutes
7. Then change speakers, where the talker now is the listener; repeat the topic
8. When both partners have had a turn as speaker and listener, have one group to the right.
9. Repeat the process again for several topics.

Discussion following the exercise: Did you find it difficult to talk/listen for two minutes without changing roles? Why? How did you feel? What did you notice about your reaction when you found yourself or your partner silent?

Discussion Topics

- Someone I admire and why.
- Something good that happened to me on the way to growing up.
- A quality I admire in a leader and why.
- A quality I look for in a friend and why.
- A time I did something for which I am proud.
- A time I overcame fear.
- A positive influence that is helping me now.
- A part of me or my life I want to work on this next year.
- Some things I do to show I respect myself.
- Some ways other people can help me grow toward my goals.
- Something else.