



# Developing Intercultural Competencies through Story Circles

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# Our Journey Together

Our Purpose (15")

Introduction to Story Circles (15")

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# Our Purpose...

Activity - “Think of Someone....”

- You know personally or who is know to you whom you feel does a really good job of connecting with other who are different from them.
- Write a word or phrase – one per sticky note – that describes this person and what it is about that person that makes them so successful in connecting with others.
- Share your words in small groups of three, post them, group them and see what common themes emerge. Be prepared to share with the full group.

# Our purpose...

Develop the attitudes, knowledge and skills.

- Respect – Valuing other culture
- Openness – withholding judgement
- Curiosity and discovery
- Increased cultural self awareness
- Listening for understanding
- Developing empathy
- Engaging in critical reflection
- Cultural humility

To

- Be able to able to effectively engage with culturally different people.

# Introduction to Story Circles

Ancient tradition of Story Circles across many cultures.

- Used over time for support, community-building, conflict resolution, celebration.

UNESCO Commissioned -- Manual for Developing Intercultural Competencies

- Request for simple practice that could be used by anyone, anywhere
- Story circle applied to intentionally developing intercultural competencies.
- With particular attention to
  - **Every person has a personal experience to share**
  - **We all have something to learn from others**
  - **Listening for understanding can be transformational.**

# Introduction to Story Circles

## Additional guidelines – Agreements

- Maintain confidentiality
- Be yourself
- Speak from your experience only
- Be genuine and authentic
- Keep the sharing simple, clear and focused
- Uphold positive intent
- Be comfortable in your own style.
- Do not interrupt when others are talking.
- Do not comment or ask questions

Any others?

# Story Circle Instructions

- Sit in a circle with 4-6 people.
- Share your birthdates to determine who goes first.
- Agree on a nonverbal signal to indicate the end of one's time.
- There will be two rounds of sharing, a flashback and a discussion.

***Round One Prompt: In two minutes or less, briefly introduce yourself by***

- ***Telling your name and three words or phrases that describe your background and why those words/phrases are important to you.***

Please remember there are no interruptions, comments or questions. Just take turns introducing yourselves.

# Story Circle Instructions

***Round Two Prompt: In three minutes or less.***

***- What is a memorable experience you have had with a person(s) who is different from you (age, race, religion, gender, socio-economic, culture, nationality, etc) and what did you learn about yourself and/or the other person in that experience?***

Flashback: Once all stories are shared, then engage in the “flashback”. Go back to the first story and each person (other than the storyteller) shares a specific memorable part of the other’s story (in 15 seconds or less). Then go on to the second story, and so on, until flashbacks have been shared for all the stories told.



# Story Circle Instructions - Handout

Discussion: Once the “flashbacks” have been shared, together discuss some of the following questions in the remaining time:

- 1) What common themes did you hear from the stories?
- 2) What surprised you?
- 3) What challenge you in the stories you heard?
- 4) What did you learn about yourself through this experience?

Be prepared to share with the full group, without speaking specifically about any one person’s story. Honor confidentiality.

# Story Circles Prompts

***Round One Prompt: In two minutes or less, briefly introduce yourself by***

- Telling your name and three words or phrases that describe your background and why those words/phrases are important to you.***

***Round Two Prompt: In three minutes or less.***

- What is a memorable experience you have had with a person(s) who is different from you (age, race, religion, gender, socio-economic, culture, nationality, etc) and what did you learn about yourself and/or the other person in that experience?***

***Flashbacks: In 15 seconds or less.***

- Share a specific memorable part of the other's story.***

# Whole Group Debrief.

- 1) What is memorable to you about what you heard?
- 2) What surprised you?
- 3) What challenged you in the stories you heard?
- 4) What did you learn about yourself through this experience.
- 5) What common themes did you hear from the stories?
- 6) What do you want to explore further after hearing these stories? What are you curious about or want to learn more about regarding similarities and differences with others?
- 7) How has this experience helped you practice *listening for understanding*?

# Participant's Action Plan - Handout.

Take a few moments for quiet reflection, review the handout, write down a few thoughts and then be prepared to share with a partner:

- 1) I used to think .... Now I think...?
- 2) Two or three intercultural elements that you would like to focus on for yourself.
- 3) What you will do to further enhance, develop and practice these intercultural elements.
- 4) How you will continue to engage specifically in a positive manner with those who are different from you.
- 5) What else will you do to further intercultural competencies?



Thank you!

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