

“Inner Circle/Outer Circle” Supportive Listening Activity

Recommended Age: 14+

Goals

- To have youth practice good listening skills.
- To have youth practice giving supportive statements.

Instructions

- Divide the group in two.
- Have them form an inner circle and an outer circle, with youth on the inside facing out and youth on the outside facing in. Each inner circle person should be facing an outer circle person.
- Start with the outer circle people being the talkers, sharing their situation (that you read out below), and the inner circle people being the listeners.
- Read out the scenario. Instruct the inner circle people to be unsupportive (for the first two examples only), give them about a minute for the talkers to share and the listeners to be unsupportive. Then instruct the listeners to be supportive and give them another minute to redo the same scenario. From the third scenario on, only instruct the listeners to be supportive, since the main point is to practice being supportive.
- After each scenario, have the outer circle rotate so that they are facing the next person to their right. At this point, the talker and listener can switch roles and be given a new scenario.

An example of the list of scenarios:

- Your little sister embarrassed you in front of your crush.
- You are really stressed out.
- You want to stop smoking weed.
- You just found out you or your partner is pregnant.
- You think you might be 2STLGBQ+ (Two Spirit, transgender, lesbian, gay, bisexual, queer, plus).
- You are worried your friend is in an abusive relationship.

- You had sex for the first time, and you think you have an STI.
- You/your partner have been using the pill, but you want to use something else.
- Your parent/guardian has been drinking/using drugs a lot at home.
- You are feeling pressure to drink/use drugs.
- You are thinking about having sex.

Debrief

Questions to ask youth could be:

- **“How did it feel to do the activity?”**
- **“What were some of the unsupportive reactions?”**
- **“What were the supportive reactions?”** (Optional: flipchart their responses)
- **“How did it feel to speak to someone who was unsupportive?”**
- **“How did it feel to speak to someone who was supportive?”**
- **“How can this translate into our real-life role as helpers?”**