

The Learning Circle Project: *Activities for Circles*

Inclusion Activity by Janice Brant

Acknowledgement

This is an adaptation of an exercise I learned from Rod Jefferies.

The Idea

At the end of this activity participants go away having thought of others; the various needs, skills, abilities, talents and gifts that may exist within the learning circle, as well as how to address learning barriers as a collective.

The Method

This activity can involve many participants. The facilitator may wish to describe/explain various hypothetical scenarios to demonstrate inclusion. Some examples have been provided below.

1. Have people stand in a close circle, including the facilitator(s).
2. Explain the value of inclusion and how each person in the circle has unique gifts, talents, and perspective.
3. Move into the centre of the circle leaving an empty space in the circle.
4. Explain that you have difficulty reading and writing, which may exclude you for full participation in the learning circle activities.
5. Explain that you still enjoy learning and exploring new topics through dialogue, listening, and hands-on experiences.
6. Ask for a volunteer to move into the centre of the circle with you; leaving behind an empty space.
7. Explain that this person's ideas were ridiculed by the learning circle and they have stopped attending.
8. Ask for another volunteer to step into the circle.
9. Explain that this person has a language barrier and sometimes requires information to be repeated or explained differently.
10. Having heard each scenario, ask the volunteers in the centre of the circle how they feel being separated from the group. Ask what ideas they might have that would support them and allow them full participation in the circle.
11. Ask the remaining participants in the circle to reflect on their thoughts and feelings about people missing from the circle. Ask what ideas they have to maintain a learning circle that is inclusive.
12. As solutions and principles about the operation of the learning circle are offered have volunteers in the center rejoin the circle.
13. Ask the participants what they like about the completed circle.