

Circle of Support

If you are leading the circle of support, you may offer the following introduction verbally (or put in an email/text as an invitation to a circle for your team/staff/friends/etc).

Intro: During this season of repeated, persistent stress, it is easy for us to ignore or stuff how we feel. It might even seem like a requirement for survival! But in order to be our most creative and resilient selves, we need to acknowledge our emotional and physical experiences. One way we can practice this is through a circle of support.

Directions:

1. Each person picks 3 words they have experienced this _____. (*pick the appropriate time frame for your setting: day/shift/week*)
2. Each person takes a turn as SPEAKER. The speaker shares their “words” and a one sentence description of when/how they felt this emotion. (*Note: one sentence here is key. If a speaker goes into a long story, it can lead to overwhelm in the rest of the circle. Keep the sentence honest but brief.*)
3. At the end of the speaker’s turn (*after the speaker shares all three words & sentences*), circle members offer a gesture to indicate a feeling of connection during the speaker’s sharing. (*In our family, the gesture was a thumb’s up. Other options might be a hand over the heart, a peace sign, etc.*)
4. The speaker can decide to ask one circle member to describe how they connected to what the speaker shared. (*For example, as speaker one of my sentences was “I felt irritated this week when I saw people getting together while I was staying home.” My daughter gave me a thumbs up. I asked her to share her connection. She said “I’m irritated that everyone isn’t following precautions, too.”*) ***The speaker can also decide they do not want to ask anyone for a description of connection. It’s entirely up to the speaker.
5. Circle members offer the speaker a sentence of support. Choose from the following:
 - a. _____(speaker’s name), you matter to me.
 - b. _____(speaker’s name), I’m glad to be in this with you.
 - c. _____(speaker’s name), You make a difference.
 - d. _____(speaker’s name), I want to support you.
6. Repeat steps 2-5 until every circle members has had a turn as speaker.
7. End with a game of “follow the leader.” Each circle member makes a gesture/movement for 10 seconds that the other circle members copy. This is a great way to experience connection through physicality (the nervous system loves experiential connection like this)!