

CONCENTRIC CIRCLES

MATERIALS |

develop a list of introductory questions, device to keep time

OBJECTIVES | The objectives of this activity are for participants to practice active listening, to meet each other in a short amount of time, and to begin building community.

FACILITATOR INSTRUCTIONS |

Ask participants to form concentric circles—one inner circle and one outer circle—with equal numbers of people in each circle. Each person in the inner circle should be facing a partner in the outer circle.

Ask participants to introduce themselves to their partners.

Tell participants that they will each have 1 minute to respond to a question read by the facilitator before rotating to a new partner to introduce themselves and answer a new question.

Read the first question and start timer for 1 minute. Depending on when this activity is done, questions can be low-stakes, like what is your favorite season, hobby, or food, or higher stakes like tell me about your family. Partners should show they are paying attention non-verbally but they should not interrupt or ask questions.

After one minute instruct the first person to stop sharing and invite the second person to begin sharing. After one minute instruct the second person to stop sharing and ask them to move one person to the right.

Repeat process with a new question. Rotate until each person in the inner circle has paired with each person in the outer circle.

DEBRIEF QUESTIONS |

- How did it feel to do this activity?
- What was it like listening without getting to respond? What were the benefits? What were the drawbacks?
- How can we make sure we are listening to each other intently in other conversations with each other?



SUPPORTING MEDIA |

<https://www.michiganlearning.org/sharing-who-we-are/>

NOTES |

ACCESSIBILITY: This activity requires movement. To accommodate participants with mobility disabilities the activity can be done seated and movement can be restricted to the circle that does not include participants with mobility disabilities.

IDENTITY: Beware of how race, class, or gender differences may make some questions inappropriate.