

Facilitating a Restorative Circle

Introduction

As the facilitator of the Healing Spiritual Wounds circle, you are crucial in creating a safe and respectful environment. Your task is to guide participants to speak their own truth and listen receptively to the truth of others, fostering an atmosphere of trust and understanding.

When the group members are comfortably seated in a circle, begin by inviting them to participate, reminding them that all voices are considered equally important.

If everyone is at ease with speaking, have each individual introduce themselves. Ask each person to introduce themselves only. Allow for a natural flow during the introductions.

Welcome new participants upon joining. Ask existing members to introduce themselves briefly and encourage new members to do the same.

Guidelines for Asking Open Questions

The group members should always address the circle's center and ask only honest, open questions (a downloadable document). It is never appropriate to give unsolicited advice in a circle.

Please download and print the Guidelines for Asking Open Questions to ensure everyone understands how to participate appropriately. Then, review the 11 guidelines to ensure everyone is familiar with them.

If a participant deviates from the guidelines during the discussion of a prompt for a lesson, gently intervene and remind them by asking them to rephrase or restate their contribution in an honest, open question.

Circle of Hope Boundaries

Circles provide a safe and collaborative space for group members to share and build trust with each other openly. They are meant to be a restorative process for healing the spiritual trauma.

For circles to be restorative for those struggling with spiritual trauma, there must be clearly defined boundaries, the kinds of boundaries that create a safe space for the soul.

Circle Boundaries

- **Give and receive welcome:** Support each other's learning by giving and receiving hospitality.

- **Be present as fully as possible:** Be here with your doubts, fears, failings, joys, and successes.
- **What is offered in the circle is by invitation, not demand:** Do what your soul calls you to and know that you do it with full support. Your soul knows your needs better than we do.
- **Speak your truth in ways that respect other people's truth.** Views of reality differ. Speak from your center to the center of the circle, using "I" statements, trusting that others will do their sifting.
- **No fixing, saving, advising, or correcting:** This is the hardest guideline, but it is vital to welcome others' souls and make room for the Holy Spirit.
- **Learn to respond to others with honest, open questions.** You are not here to counsel or correct others. A link to download a guide to help you understand open questions is provided.
- **Quick to listen; slow to speak:** If you feel judgmental or defensive, stop and ask yourself "I wonder questions." I wonder what brought them to this belief, what they're feeling right now, and what my reaction teaches me about myself.
- **Trust and learn from the silence:** Treat silence as a group member. After someone has spoken, breathe and take time to reflect without immediately filling the space with words.
- **Observe deep confidentiality:** People feel safe only when they know whatever they say will remain with the people to whom they say it—within or outside the group.
- **Know that it is possible:** Believe that whatever you need when you arrive will be helped by the Holy Spirit to grow in the days ahead.

Circle Guiding Principles

Those of us experiencing spiritual trauma may feel isolated and struggle with our church community or our relationship with God.

Spiritual trauma can lead to significant anxiety, causing feelings of struggling alone with fear, doubts, and a flood of questions.

Each of us has our own personal motivation for participating. It is important that each of us find this group a safe place to share our struggles.

The mission of Healing Our Spiritual Wounds is to provide restoration for those dealing with spiritual trauma.

No matter where individuals are on their journey or what beliefs they hold, it is essential to prioritize this group as a safe place for healing.

Given the critical importance of restoring our relationship with God, it is essential to remember the 3 Guiding Principles amid this spiritual trauma.

1. Play the “long game” and trust God with the outcome.
2. Use love to build bridges to Jesus; don’t lose the relationship.
3. You can love well without losing your convictions of faith.

Reinforcing the Guiding Principles and Boundaries

These guiding principles and boundaries are so essential that participants in the circle should be reminded of them before discussing a lesson.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

- Play the “long game” and trust God with the outcome.
- Use love to build bridges to Jesus; don’t lose the relationship.
- You can love well without losing your convictions of faith.



