



4-1-4 Sharing Circle Script for Bystander Effects

Part One: Briefly go over the five circle norms before starting

Circle Norm #1:

“Everyone sits in a circle.”

In Circle, we all face each other, and our discussion is focused and centered in the middle of us. We can all be seen and heard equally with no empty spaces between people. Symbolic objects that remind participants of shared values can be placed in the middle.

Circle Norm #2:

“We use a talking piece in circle.”

Only the person with the talking piece has the right to speak. Everyone else listens. The talking piece is passed around the circle from left to right. No one is skipped. Everyone has an equal opportunity to speak without being interrupted. Everyone is respected.

Circle Norm #3:

“We speak and listen from the heart.”

We speak authentically and honestly. We listen patiently and carefully with all our attention instead of thinking about what we will say when it's our turn to talk.

Circle Norm #4:

“We use “I” statements.”

“I think.” “I feel.” “I believe.” We only share our own feelings and tell our own stories from our own perspective. We do not name others in our stories. We share our experiences in order to self-explore, develop empathy, take accountability and learn, not to shame, blame, debate, overpower, or put down others.

Circle Norm #5:

“What’s said in circle stays in circle.”

Privacy is what makes us feel safe. You can share what the topic of the circle was, and you can share what YOU said, but it is not okay to share what anyone else said. Circle conversations should not be gossiped about or posted on social media. If a circle member needs to talk about something that was said in circle, they can talk to the adult in charge or talk about their concerns in the next circle. The only time that confidentiality is broken is if someone’s safety is a concern and outside help is needed.

Part Two: Breathing/ mindfulness moment to calm kids

Do a moment of guided breathing. Sit with eyes closed or in an unfocused gaze. Breathe deeply in through the nose for a count of three. Hold the breath for a count of three. Breathe slowly out for a count of three.

Part Three: Share an opening quote with kids

“In the end we will remember not the words of our enemies but the silence of our friends.” – Martin Luther King, Jr. (You may also pick your own quote).

Part Four: Quick check-in round with kids

Check in: On a scale of 1 to 10, with 1 being the most unhappy and 10 being the most joyful, how are you today?

Give a number and an emotion but no need to qualify with a reason for your emotion.

For example: “I am feeling 3/ lonely.” “I am feeling 9/ overjoyed.” “I am feeling 5/neutral.”

Part Five: Main questions; do as many rounds as you choose

1. Can you describe a time when you saw someone who needed help and you watched but didn't do anything because you were experiencing one of the bystander effects? For example, have you ever seen someone drop something, but you didn't go help?
2. When was a time in one of your favorite stories or shows where someone needed help because they were being mistreated and the other characters didn't do anything at first? Did another character eventually help? What happened?
3. Imagine you could have a do-over where you could go back to a time in your life when a friend or a family member needed help, but you didn't help, and you wish that you had chosen differently. How would you redo the situation now?

Part Six: Closing the circle

Facilitator: Do a quick reflection, such as “I noticed _____ about our Circle today.”

Kids: Turn to the person next to you and say, “Thank you for listening, (name).” Then hand them the talking piece.

Facilitator: “I officially close the circle.”

You can read a closing quote, if you have one. Some facilitators like to make a closing sound, such as having everyone clap three times.