

Family Circles

There are no maximum or minimum number of Family Circles per referral.

Family Circles can involve multiple family members.

Each session lasts 1.5 to 2 hours.

Peacemaking Circles draw on the traditional Indigenous wisdom. Circles are described as “Peacemaking” because the process builds a foundation of understanding and trust as well as a commitment to share values that people need in order to work things out in a peaceful way. The ultimate question of justice is “how can we live together in a good way.” In that regard, Circles are also about justice. The justice of being heard, valued, and respected. Circles are a force of transformation that is greater than the sum of the individual that make it up.

Circles have been around for thousands of years as a way to be in community with one another. What sets Circles apart lies in the process – the real force comes from the values the Circle embodies. Most of the spaces we experience daily are about power and values of control. Circles affirm a social order based on inclusiveness, equality, and respect for all members. Circles work to create a space to discuss, share, improve and strengthen relationships, remove barriers to effective communication, and respect differences.

There are as many types of Peacemaking Circles as there are aspects of life (Celebration, Honoring, Talking, Listening, Conflict and Repair, Family, etc.) Circles provide a process for bringing people together as equals to talk about difficult issues in an atmosphere of respect. ***Family Circles are a specific type of circle that focus on family dynamics.***

Family Circles are a facilitated dialogue process between two or more people that are facilitated by a Circle Keeper. Indigenous peoples have used the practice of Circles throughout time as a way of creating wholeness, community, and respect and addressing harm, violence, and misunderstandings. Family Circles may address longstanding harm and/or conflict or may focus more on teaching and practicing tools for assertive communication and effective listening. Each family Circle is custom-designed to meet your family’s needs.

Family Circles focus on creating a safe, authentic, and honest space to discuss difficult or painful issues in order to improve relationships and resolve or simply to better understand differences.

The intent of a Family Circle is to speak honestly about how each person is being impacted by one another, to seek mutual understanding, and to create agreements that serve every member. The process is based on an assumption of equal worth and dignity for all participants and therefore provides equal voice to all.

Circles enable families or groups to ask: How can we move towards healing and new, effective ways of being together? What can be done to repair harm, open and maintain lines of communication, and prevent further harm? Whose responsibility is it to do so? What wounds and circumstances – past and present – prevent us from having healthy relationships, both with ourselves and others? What steps can we take to understand these and to aid healing?

The Family Circle is a container strong enough to hold:

- *Anger, frustration, joy, pain, truth, conflict, diverse world views, intense feelings, silence, and paradox.*
- *Circles follow a process that allows for the opportunity for freedom to speak one's truth, drop masks and protections, reveal our deepest longings, acknowledge mistakes and fears, and to act in accordance with our core values.*
- *The physical format symbolizes shared leadership and power, equality, justice, connection, and inclusion.*
- *A Circle has 360° - each degree can symbolize the multitude of opinions, perspectives and solutions to a given situation or challenge.*