



Recommendations for Implementing Your Girls Circle® Program

I. PREPARING THE STAFF, GIRLS, AND FACILITY

- Our recommendation is to start Girls Circle (GC) with girls within two weeks after training
- Gather needed supplies and materials
- Prepare materials for groups
- Copy curriculum for each facilitator
- Identify staff person who will support facilitators
- Discuss Responsive Practices for LGBT Youth and Provide Resources:
 - Girls Circle is an inclusive program for all girls, including those who may be exploring their gender identity and/or sexual orientation and are seeking safe spaces and relationships within a supportive community. Recommend facilitators use inclusive language to respect identities of GC participants, their family members and friends. Ensure a safe opportunity for girls to explore and further develop their adolescent identities within a respectful community while promoting the mental health and resiliency of all participants.
- Have kick-off meeting in one week, modeling the Girls Circle format, making it special, and listening to staff. For example:
 - **Opening** (Inspirational poem or song)
 - **Theme**
 - ▶ How we can support one another as we begin this process
 - **Check-in** options
 - ▶ One word to describe how you feel about starting circles
 - ▶ One word that describes how you feel about your job this week
 - ▶ Hi/lo from the work week
 - ▶ One concern about your girls
 - ▶ One success about your work
 - **Activity** (Verbal Discussion)
 - ▶ Objectives
 - To identify goals for Girls Circle
 - To identify successes and challenges as we begin
 - To identify ways to support one another
 - **Sharing of Activity**
 - ▶ What is one thing you want to accomplish in your first circle?
 - **Closing**
 - ▶ I honor the (spirit, courage, energy) of our group
- Consider a token of appreciation or inspiration for staff who are kicking this off
 - Special talking piece
 - Tibetan bells could be a nice gift or a chime of some kind for using in group
 - Book of poetry for opening or closing
 - One flower or small plant to represent growth

II. IMPLEMENTING THE GIRLS CIRCLE PROGRAM

- Offer enough groups so all girls in agency or facility can participate in Girls Circle, with 6-8 girls in a group (no more than eight girls in one circle)
- Implement groups once a week to start
- Ideal meeting time for groups is 90-120 minutes (if 60 minutes is only time available, groups can still begin – may need to decrease # of participants in circles or adjust curriculum)
- Start all facilitators and circles on the same curriculum; facilitators can then share and support each other and girls can all be on same page with learning, skill building, discussing topics, etc.
- Consider offering circle on weekends or down time—think of a good time for your girls!

III. PREPARING EFFECTIVE CO-FACILITATION TEAMS

- If possible, co-facilitate groups, e.g. two facilitators per group
- Empowering staff means matching them on the basis of their strengths
- Be conscious of not pairing people with power struggles or power differences
- Co-facilitation is possible between any two people regardless of their staff roles—match on the basis of skills and qualities
- Staff Co-facilitators use planning time before the group to decide who is responsible for each step of the six step format

IV. ONGOING WEEKLY LEARNING COMMUNITIES (PEER SUPPORT CIRCLES)

- Mandatory Learning Communities for all facilitators to accomplish three things:
 - Co-facilitator and group debrief
 - Sharing successes and challenges
 - Planning for next sessions
- Model circle format, for example:
 - **Opening**
 - **Theme introduction**
 - ▶ Supporting Success in Circles
 - **Check-in options**
 - ▶ One word to describe the girls in your circle
 - ▶ Hi/lo of first circle
 - ▶ On a scale of 1-10, how was this week's group?
 - **Activity**
 - ▶ Co-facilitator debrief in GC Manual under unit on “Co-Facilitation”
 - ▶ Group debrief (share one learning)
 - ▶ Co-facilitator planning for next session
 - **Sharing of Activity**
 - ▶ What's one thing you can do better in your next group?
 - **Closing**
 - ▶ I'm thankful for girls who...
- Ideal time length for Learning Communities is one hour
- If circles are on the weekend, Learning Communities should take place Monday or Tuesday.