

COMFORT CIRCLE: Guide for the Listener

GOAL: To complete the comfort circle as the listener. Increase self and other awareness by listening to them and asking good questions. Ask the questions below pausing between questions to reflect, rephrase and validate feelings. **TAKE NOTES!**

1. **PROMPTING EVENT:** Share with me one thing that is stressing you, concerns you, or is upsetting to you.
2. **IDENTIFY FEELINGS:** Using the *Soul Words* list tell me the top three feelings you have about this circumstance and try to use more than one category on the soul words list.
3. **RATE FEELINGS:** Rate the intensity of each feeling from 1(low) to 10 (high).
Reminder to listener: Try not to judge the feelings you are hearing as right or wrong. As a listener, you may not understand or agree with the feelings or behaviors. The goal is to listen to gain understanding rather than reacting. The more we listen the more likely we will reach a resolution.
4. **PHYSICAL REACTIONS:** How do you experience these feelings in your body? Try to describe places of pressure, tension, pain, and tightness. When experiencing these feelings is your breathing deep, shallow, fast, or slow?
5. **BEHAVIORS/ACTIONS:** What did you do (behaviors/reactions) because of these feelings? How did you express the emotions or what actions did you take?
6. **CONSEQUENCES:** Were there any consequences because of these feelings, actions, or behaviors?
7. **BELIEFS/ASSUMPTIONS:** When you have these feelings and reactions what are your beliefs or assumptions about God, yourself, or others?
 - When you feel (respond) this way what do you believe about God?
 - When you feel (respond) this way what do you believe about yourself?
 - When you feel (respond) this way what do you believe about others?
8. **CHILDHOOD FEELINGS:** Did you experience this feeling (or these feelings) as a child? What happened? How old were you? **If the answer is yes, ask questions 9 &10. If the answer is no, skip to question 11.**
9. **CHILDHOOD BELIEFS.** If you had these feelings as a child, how did you find relief? Did you form any beliefs about yourself or family members because of these experiences?
10. **RELATE PAST TO PRESENT:** How much of your **current** feelings and reactions in our relationship are about the past versus the present? Try and give a percentage.
11. **BRING FEELINGS AND NEEDS INTO RELATIONSHIP:** Can you summarize by telling me what you need when you feel this way? (See question 2). *“When I feel (see question 2) _____ I need _____”.*
12. **LISTENER SUMMARIZE:** Summarize and thank the speaker for sharing. *“Thanks for sharing. Here’s what I learned from our conversation “.* If you cannot meet the request, look for a compromise. Don't make promises you cannot keep.