

Guiding Principals / Commitments

Excerpted from: Establishing Shared Responsibility for Child Welfare Through Peacemaking Circles by Kay Pranis and Barry Stuart in Family Group Conferences, edited by Burford and Hudson

Circles are facilitated by keepers who are responsible for setting a tone of respect and hope that supports and honors every participant. **All circles are guided by the following commitments participants make to one another:**

- What comes out in circle, stays in circle – personal information shared in circle is kept confidential except when safety would be compromised.
- Speak with respect – speak only when you have the talking piece; speak in a good way about good and difficult feelings; leave time for others to speak.
- Listen with respect – actively listen with your heart and body.
- Stay in circle – respect for circle calls upon people to stay in the circle while the circle works to find resolution to issues raised.
- Additional guidelines may be created by circle participants to meet the needs of that situation. Guidelines institute a covenant defining how people will interact and share space and time as a group.

Instructions:

- Using scissors cut the 4 stages apart, mix them randomly and place into an envelope. Each group is given an envelope and will be challenged to work collaboratively to read and discuss each commitment. Later, individuals will be called upon to share with the group which commitment(s) spoke to them more than the others.