



WELCOME

TIME: 5 minutes

Thank you and we are so excited you decided to join us for a community story circle.

Our goals for the Story Circles are pretty simple and honestly, open-ended. Our primary intention is to open a space that honors the stories of moms and birth workers across Chatham County and cultivates relationships and community among our participants. We also want to learn from and lift up your collective stories about pregnancy, birth, and motherhood; to co-create a shared narrative that will unleash their power and spark lasting change in the systems and institutions in our community.

So again welcome.

Housekeeping

Before we settle in. Please help yourself to food. Bathrooms are over there. We will need to wear masks while we are inside. You may remove them to eat/drink. We have tried to space us out as much as we can in the room as well.

SETTLING IN TO THE SPACE

TIME: 20 minutes

Centering Exercise (5 minutes)

Let's start our circle with a quick centering exercise so that we can let go of the day so far and settle ourselves into this moment.

Fill in centering exercise of your choice, here.

Deep Introductions (10 minutes)

Great! How was that? We good. All right, let's get to know each other. We like to start with deep introductions, since most of us have done these together before let's do a modified version and add something new.

- **Your name,**
- **Choose a couple other introduction prompts that invite people to share a bit about who they are or what they care about**
 - Examples include:

- in 10 words or less complete the following statements, the land I come from is..., my people are..,
- I feel most myself when...

Group Norms For The Story Circle and Our Time Together (3 minutes)

- Confidentiality: The Vegas Rule – What happens in this circle, stays in the circle.
- Active Listening
- Hold Space
- Open to the process, the stories, the experience
- Permission to cry, to engage with your emotions and to take care of yourself

All right, now that we all know each other. We ready for a Story Circle?

INTRODUCTION TO THE STORY CIRCLE

TIME: 5 minutes

What is a Story Circle? (1 minute)

- The circle equalizes
- It is a democratic process everyone gets the same time

What's a Story? (1 minute)

- A personal experience, something that really happened to you. A true story from your life.
- Example: A story is not “Well, what I think about immigration is ...”
- A story is: “What happened to me the last time I crossed the border...” That’s a story.

Structure and Guidelines (3 minutes)

- We will split into groups of 3-4.
- When in your groups, you need a volunteer timekeeper and someone who is willing to share themes of the conversation with the larger group when we come back together.

- Each person will get up to 3 minutes for their story. You don't have to fill 3 minutes (silence is ok -it starts when it starts, and it's over when it's over)
- The timekeeper will indicate when you have one minute left, and will show you the clock when your 3 minutes is up; please wrap up your thought/sentence at 3 minutes.
- The first person to share will then pass the baton to the left or right. You can pass on the first go-around if you're not ready; the facilitator will come back to you after everyone else has told their story.
- No cross-talk during the Story Circle; you will have an opportunity to make connections after everyone has shared a story.
- It is ok to be in the moment, to respond to what is happening in the circle. The prompt is like a gentle cloud floating over the circle – it might rain down into your story, it might not. If what's happening in the circle seems more important in the moment, go with that.
- Don't think about it too much – If you spend all your time worrying about what you're going to say, you're not really listening. Be fully present. Trust that you will have a story when the circle comes around to you.
- You choose which story you want to tell. Check-in with yourself, decide how deep you want to go. There are some stories you may not feel ready to share, and that's ok. Choose what feels right today.
- After everyone in the circle has had their time, you will be giving 5 minutes for cross-talk and reflecting on the themes, acknowledging the feelings and emotions that emerged during the circle

THE STORY CIRCLE

TIME: 40 minutes

Today's Prompt (20 minutes)

Use the prompt chosen for the month's story circle

Reflections (20 minutes)

- What similarities did you all experience within the group?
- What differences did you all observe?
- What feelings surrounded the stories?

- Individual check-in
 - Where did you have to stretch to relate to these themes/stories?
 - Where did you see yourself in these themes/stories?

- Any other ideas/thoughts provoked by this experience that you would like to lift up and share for future reflection and action?

Building Community

TIME: 20 minutes

Coming Back to the Present (5 minutes)

Want to acknowledge that these stories can bring up heavy memories, good/bad/beautiful/ugly. We would like to take a minute to acknowledge those feelings, invite you all back to the present moment, with the hope that you are leaving this space feeling supported, connected, and strengthened.

So as we did at the beginning, we invite you to take 10 deep purposeful breaths 5 for letting go and 5 for letting in whatever it is you need to let in as you leave this space.

If you would like to share anything that has come up for you, we are here to listen.

Looking Ahead Together (15 minutes)

Who, what, how next?

Final Housekeeping (5 minutes)

Next Story Circle is...