

**TITLE:** The Fishbowl

**IMPACT:** Communication, listening

**RISK:** Medium-high, depending on the topic of discussion

**GROUP SIZE:** 10 or more

**TIME REQUIRED:** 20 minutes

**DIRECTIONS:**

- Ask for five participants from the larger group to sit on the chairs.
- Pose a scenario or question. The five sitting in the chairs should respond and discuss.
- The sixth chair is open to anyone in the larger group who wants to contribute. In order to contribute the person must leave the outer circle and sit in the chair. If someone from the larger group wants to participate he or she must wait until a chair becomes available.
- A person can chose to leave the inner circle only after contributing something to the discussion. However, no one can say something and then leave the semi-circle without waiting for reactions from the other group members.

**DISCUSSION:**

This exercise deals with many issues. By only allowing some people to actively participate, it forces the rest of the larger group to listen and reflect on statements instead of jumping in and making a point without fully considering the implications. Not allowing people to leave the semi-circle until the opportunity for feedback has occurred forces people to consider other opinions on the issue. It forces learning from each other.

**OPTION:**

- Have the group generate the discussion questions.
- Have one group (i.e. youth) generate questions for another group (i.e. adults) and vice versa. In this case all youth will be in the fish bowl and the adults would listen. Then two groups would reverse roles.

