

Circle of Friends

Impact: Trust building; when you want your group to develop a feeling of physical and emotional safety with one another; when your group is working on questions of sexual orientation, physical and mental ability, or racial identity to help them used to get used to being close to people are different than themselves.

Risk: Moderate to high

Group Size: 10 – 15 people

Time Required: 20 minutes

Directions:

- Start by telling the group to imagine themselves circled by warmth, love, safety, and concern. Tell them to all try to create that feeling.
- Ask the group to stand shoulder to shoulder in a tight circle with one person – the faller – in the center. The first time around, you might want to be the faller if no one else volunteers. The faller gets into position – arms crossed over chest, legs straight, knees locked – and begins to lean slowly in any direction to the point of losing his balance. Before the faller leans too far out, the people in the circle redirect the faller toward another point in the circle.
- Have the catchers gently keep the faller moving around the circle in any direction, always maintaining physical contact with them. This fall-catch redirect sequence continues in a gentle fashion until it becomes obvious that the faller is relaxing (but remaining rigid) and that the catchers have gained confidence in their ability to work together in handling the weight of the faller. Change people in the center until everyone who wants to has an opportunity to be the faller.

Discussion:

- What did it feel like to be the faller?
- What challenged the faller the most?
- What was it like for the catchers?
- How did you communicate with each other?
- What thoughts ran through your mind regarding your abilities and safety?

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Want More?

For more **trust building activities**, please see our book Growing Together at thefoodproject.org/books.

Want to learn more about how we create youth leadership development models in the context of farming, our social justice curriculum, and our food access initiatives? Attend one of our Institutes! More info at thefoodproject.org/institute.

