



Learning circles are lightly-facilitated groups for people who want to learn with others. This method helps youth learn with others which deepens their understanding and builds relationships through shared interests. A peer learning circle can be set up, for example, to discuss an online financial literacy course¹ that youth will go through or to introduce and debrief financial literacy topics. The following tool was adapted² to support Learning Circle implementation in C2L-PHL programming.

Setting Up a Learning Circle

Identify a staff member who will serve as the facilitator. They will be responsible for organizing the circle and setting the agenda to guide the conversation. The facilitator does not need to be an expert on the topic of conversation.

Agenda

- Check-in
 - Create a space for everyone to speak and feel heard.
 - Encourage creativity and playfulness.
 - **Sample activities:**
 - *Open-ended questions.* Ask the group a question and have each youth respond. Questions could be what is something you learned recently, what brings you here today, or what would you like to learn today?
 - *Media share-out.* Share an image of your favorite thing, search for a .gif or emoji that matches your mood, or share your favorite meme.
- Set group norms and agreements.
 - **Sample norms:**
 - *Respect the speaker.* When someone is speaking, allow them to share their complete thoughts without interruption.
 - *Speak from I and eye.* Participants share from their own experiences and perspectives. Shares should be focused on what you see, notice and feel.
 - *Lean into discomfort.* Share emotions and feelings and consider why you are feeling that way. These emotions can help enhance authentic learning together.
 - *Step up, step back.* If you speak often, step back and allow space for others to share. If you prefer to listen, push yourself to speak out and share.
 - *Keep it confidential.* What happens in the circle stays in the circle. Respect the privacy of the participants.
- Discussion based on a 'spark'

¹ <https://www.udemy.com/course/personal-finance-101/>

² www.p2pu.org



- Discussion should be based on an experience, reading an article, watching a lecture or video, or some other interactive content - the 'spark'.
- **Sample activities:**
 - *Read/watch as a group.* Instead of assigning youth to read and watch a specific section of the online or in-person lesson for financial literacy individually, it will be done as a group. Have volunteers take turns reading the text aloud. Project videos on a screen so that everyone can watch together.
 - *Think-pair-share.* At the conclusion of the discussion, have youth think about what was just learned, then have them share with a partner, and finally they will share with the entire group.
 - *Fishbowl.* Have 4 or 5 volunteers in the middle of the circle, they will respond to a question around the topic being discussed. While they are responding, the outside of the circle will simply listen.
- Reflection Time.
 - Create a space for everyone to give feedback. During the last 10 minutes, go around the circle and allow everyone 2-3 minutes to make their final remarks. Encourage participants to recognize and celebrate past learning.
 - End the meeting on a positive and hopeful note. Summarize the group feedback, highlighting any growth they have mentioned or you have seen.
 - **Sample activities:**
 - *Plus/Delta.* Share one thing that went well this session and one thing they would change for the next session.
 - *Journal.* Give participants time to reflect on the session and write in a journal. Some prompts to get them writing may include what stood out to them, what was something new they learned, or what is something they still have questions about.
 - *Give Thanks.* Ask everyone to give thanks to someone for something they did during the meeting or during the previous week. It can be directed to only those in the circle or opened up to include people outside of the circle.
 - *Goal Tracker.* Give youth a small index card or sticky note at the beginning of the lesson. Ask them to write down one goal they'd like to achieve by the end of the lesson or program. At the end of each session, youth review their goals and mark their progress with a checkmark or brief note.