



Learning Circles

Learning Circles are facilitated, small group, peer-learning experiences. They involve carefully matched participants working at similar levels cross-industry or within the same organisation. Members contract to meet at regular intervals to share their leadership or management experiences and reflect on their learning as part of their career journeys.

Through deep dialogue members focus on the internal journey of leadership. Greater levels of self-awareness and mindfulness are developed through contemplation, reflection and learning from others exploring both success and failure. Skills and competence in: communication, problem solving, listening, silence, coping with complexity, ambiguity and expressing vulnerability, are refined through observation and practice.

As Facilitator	2
Key Features of Learning Circles	2
Benefits	3

As Facilitator

Please feel welcome to look at my CV for fuller information, but in short...

I draw upon my unique mix of knowledge and skills, utilising an in-depth understanding of people and organisations together with high-level interpersonal skills to create safe environments for reflective self-discovery and peer learning.

My experience as a qualified Occupational Therapist, experienced senior leader/ manager and practicing academic teacher/researcher, comes into play in facilitating learning circles.

In addition to my love of *Transforming Conversations* and walking alongside as people re-imagine themselves as a leader; as a facilitator I am known as a global leader in guiding transformational journeys for leaders at all levels. In this capacity I have facilitated forums, designed interactive workshops, and provided public lectures on leadership, managing change and transformation.

I have published on Transformational Leadership and Guiding Transformation in response to the design and development of an innovative and internationally acknowledged framework; *The Quinn Model for Guiding Transformation*. This framework is used to guide the design and development of customised individual and peer-group leadership development through private consulting work as well as the design and delivery of tertiary level, transformational leadership post-graduate courses through my work with the University of Tasmania.

Key Features of Learning Circles

There are several things required for effective Learning Circles. These being:

A highly skilled facilitator; Emotionally intelligent and confident in managing group dynamics and competent in modelling emotional fitness coaching techniques including Power Listening, Learning from Experience, Group Dialogue and Storytelling.

Peer Group Learning; Groups of 6-12 people carefully matched to ensure that they are working at similar levels of management/leadership. Members take turns in leading in-depth reflective discussion related to their own issues and experiences, including listening, and responding to feedback from other group members as well as participating in group problem solving exercises and exploration of prescribed learning material.

Regular Meeting times; Learning Circle members contract to meet regularly (usually monthly/bimonthly) at an agreed day and time. The meetings extend over several hours allowing for enough time for each member to have in-depth focus on their issues.

Safe Environments for Self-Disclosure; The facilitator ensures that confidentiality agreements are in place and that emotionally intelligent, respectful responses that value diversity are modelled and reinforced as part of Learning Circle practice.

Access to experts; Covering specific areas of leadership and management, based on identified issues of common interest, guest speakers may be invited to lead focussed discussion on specific topics as part of meetings.

Benefits

- Research findings on the nature of transformational leadership, stress the importance of the so-called soft skills of leadership (emotional intelligence, inspiration, communication, mentoring and coaching) that require self-reflection, insight and development of contemplative practice and learning. Learning Circles provide an ideal and unique environment for this learning.
- Leadership can at times be a lonely and confusing experience with few places for emerging leaders, and even fewer for experienced leaders to safely explore their leadership dilemmas, management issues, learning edges and career transition points. Learning Circles provide a safe and effective place to engage in peer-learning and growth of self-knowledge. They allow for exploration of complexity and ambiguity and enable development of the capacity to lead from the place of 'what is the right thing to do?'
- Learning Circles provide an opportunity to expand professional and business networks and develop deep and lasting relationships with fellow leader/managers. Learning Circles provide an opportunity to learn from others' experiences and expressed styles of leadership.
- Opportunities for presenting issues to a group of peers for detailed listening, analysis and feedback can be a uniquely powerful learning experience enabling members to clarify their own thinking, view issues from a new perspective, determine previously unimagined solutions or strategies and gain new insights into their own leadership style and practice.
- Learning Circles can provide a flexible and customized learning environment that can easily adapt to the emergent interests and learning needs of group members through access to focused topic discussion, and input from the facilitator and guest speakers.
- There are key transition periods in the careers of leaders/managers that can be readily assisted through the peer support of other people experiencing similar career stages. These include the aspiring manager, the new team leader, formation of a new business, managing significant workplace change, the newly appointed executive or senior manager, taking on the CEO job and managing a major career transition. Where there is interest/demand Groups can also be customized to particular industries or service-setting issues allowing for in depth exploration and learning.
- Learning Circles provide an opportunity to be exposed to leading-edge leadership and management theory and research strategies. Engagement in in-depth discussions about critical issues impacting on leadership and management within the Tasmanian and Australian context with other leaders and managers working at similar levels is facilitated.