

## COMFORT CIRCLE

The way that we create bonding.

### 1. SEEK AWARENESS

Self-reflection to understand feelings and underlying needs.

### 2. ENGAGE

"Speaker" openly acknowledges feelings and needs.

### 3. EXPLORE AND FIND OUT MORE

This involves clear "speaker" and "listener" roles where the speaker's needs, thoughts, and feelings are explored. Thoughtful questions by the "listener" further clarify the inner emotions of the speaker, and the listener validates the speaker's feelings, even if they disagree with the other's perceptions. Listener concludes with the question: "What do you need?"

### 4. RESOLUTION BRINGS RELIEF & COMFORT

The listener meets the needs of the speaker with actions and responses (whenever possible), while at the same time being clear and direct as to what you can and cannot do for the other person. Meeting needs may need to be deferred until an agreed upon time.

*Note: The wonderful result of completing the comfort circle will be increasing trust, love, and bonding. Your injured attachment style will begin to heal and you will begin to move toward a state of earned secure attachment. This will in turn allow you to "feel" again and*

*Warning: If hurtful action or non-action takes place instead of completing the comfort circle, then the relationship will continue to deteriorate toward a lower level of distrust and pain.*

## COMFORT CIRCLE: Guide for the Listener

**Goal:** To complete the comfort circle as the listener. Increase your self-awareness about another by listening to them and asking good questions. Ask the questions below pausing between each question to reflect rephrase and validate feelings. Take notes if necessary.

- PROMPTING EVENT:** Share with me **one thing** that is stressing you, concerns you or is upsetting to you.
- IDENTIFY FEELINGS:** Use the list of soul words and tell me the top three feelings you have about this circumstance and try to use more than one category on the soul words list.
- RATE FEELINGS:** Rate the intensity of each feeling from 1(low) to 10 (high).  
*Reminder to listener: "Try not to judge the feelings you are hearing as right or wrong. As a listener, you may **not** agree with or understand the feelings or behaviors. The goal is to keep listening to gain understanding rather than just reacting. The more we listen the more likely we will reach a resolution.*
- PHYSICAL REACTIONS:** How do you experience these feelings in your body? Try to describe places of pressure, tension, pain, and tightness. When experiencing these feelings is your breathing deep, shallow, fast, or slow?
- BEHAVIORS/ACTIONS:** What did you do (behaviors/reactions) because of these feelings? How did you express the emotions or what actions did you take?
- CONSEQUENCES:** Were there any consequences because of these feelings, actions, or behaviors?
- BELIEFS/ASSUMPTIONS:** When you have these feelings and reactions what are your beliefs or assumptions about God, yourself, or others?
  - When you feel (respond) this way what do you believe about God?
  - When you feel (respond) this way what do you believe about yourself?
  - When you feel (respond) this way what do you believe about others?
- CHILDHOOD FEELINGS:** Did you experience this feeling (or these feelings) as a child? What happened? How old were you? **If the answer is yes, ask question # 9 &10. If the answer is no, skip to question #11.**
- CHILDHOOD BELIEFS.** If you had these feelings as a child how did you find relief? Did you form any beliefs about yourself or family members because of these experiences?
- RELATE PAST TO PRESENT:** How much of your **current** feelings and reactions in our relationship are about the past versus the present? Try and give a percentage.
- BRING FEELINGS AND NEEDS INTO RELATIONSHIP:** Can you summarize by making a clear statement about your feelings along with a request for help? When I feel \_\_\_\_\_ I need \_\_\_\_\_.
- SUMMARIZE: To the listener:** If a request was made you cannot meet, look for a compromise or something you can do. Don't make promises you cannot keep. As the listener, thank the speaker for sharing. "Thank you for sharing. Here is a summary of what I learned from our conversation" .... (give a summary in your own words.)