

Getting Started



Key Roles

There are 3 key roles involved in initiating, implementing and sustaining learning circles:	
An Organizational Sponsor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provides a project leadership role (e.g. issues approvals, updates). ○ Supports/advises project evaluation. ○ Identifies and communicates project wrap up expectations.
A Site Sponsor (could also be the Organizational Sponsor)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Prioritizes resources that support the learning circle (e.g. staff time for learning circle sessions). ○ Provides initial and ongoing logistical support for the operation of learning circles (e.g. ensures room is consistently booked). ○ Organizational leadership for the learning circle; ensures alignment and interprets relevance of team level topics to site/organizational priorities. ○ Acts as ongoing point of contact and support to facilitator for organization of learning circles. ○ Establishes communication expectations and processes between facilitator and organization/site sponsor.
A Learning Circle Facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Is a clinical leader or educator (trained facilitator) selected for his/her knowledge of the workplace context. ○ Orients participants and champions cooperative learning process. ○ Guides introductions and structure of learning circle sessions. ○ Creates space for many perspectives, not allowing one person to dominate. ○ Listens to participants; lets silence be a tool when necessary. ○ Asks necessary questions that contribute to dialogue, not debate. ○ Summarizes ideas emergent from the group; uncovers areas of agreement and common concern. ○ Is impartial but contributes to the discussion. ○ Is not an expert or teacher in the traditional sense.

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Implementation Activities

Learning Circle Activity	Organizational Sponsor	Site Sponsor	Facilitator	Participant
Determine General Topic Area: Program or practice priority identified by or confirmed with site/organization leaders.	X	X	X	
Create Goal and Objectives: After deciding on general topic area, facilitator creates specific goal and objectives in conversation with participants.			X	X
Length of Sessions: Decide how much time you have to conduct the Learning Circle. A length of 1.5 hours is recommended understanding that scheduling challenges may prove difficult to address. Sessions should not be less than 1 hour.		X	X	
Arrange for a Meeting Space: Choose a physical space that limits interruptions and supports small group discussion. Ideally, meetings should be held outside of patient/resident care space.		X		
Invite Participants: Invite staff members to participate. Attendance is voluntary so participants will choose to attend. In selecting the group, consider factors such as the number (6-8 people is ideal) and composition of the group. Learning circles can be effective for either interdisciplinary or single discipline groups.		X	X	
Arrange for Staff Time: Ensure learning circle participants are able to attend by coordinating pay for those attending on their time off, and backfill for those attending during work hours.		X		