

Single Discipline vs. Interdisciplinary Groups



The disciplinary make-up of your learning circle is an important factor to consider when organizing learning circles at your site. There are advantages and disadvantages to both single discipline and interdisciplinary groups; which works better for your organization will depend on the particular contextual aspects at your site.

	Single Discipline	Interdisciplinary
Advantages:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Tend to be familiar and comfortable with each other, therefore the conversation may flow easier. o Participants may feel they are ‘in the same boat’ and can more easily relate to each other. o Sharing within the learning circle can allow participants to see commonalities within the particulars of their day-to-day practice. o They can come to recognize similar challenges they are experiencing and share common solutions. o Participants may not have a similar space for connecting with their same discipline colleagues outside of the learning circle. o The learning circle can be seen as a uniquely safe setting within the workplace to come to common understandings together. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The learning circle can be a valuable setting for participants to communicate and actively team build across different departments. o Participants can come to better recognize the commonalities and differences in their day-to-day practice. o The learning circle can be useful for participants to approach common challenges from multiple perspectives, and seek out solutions which work across the site. o There may not be the same opportunity for interdisciplinary staff members to speak in such depth with each other outside the learning circle. o The learning circle can facilitate clarity and greater in-depth knowledge into different staff roles and issues. o This role clarity can prompt improved empathy, understanding and appreciation within the workplace.
Disadvantage:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o The topics will likely remain discipline-specific and therefore solutions discussed may not be as applicable across the site. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Interdisciplinary participants may not be familiar with each other, and therefore more initial time and effort may be needed to create the learning circle as a safe space for shared learning.