

Safe Person and Seven Promises Reflection Discussion Guide

The following outlines discussion starters and activities that can be used with teen or adult groups to delve deeper into the Seven Promises to be a Safe Person.

The Seven Promises we seek to keep in order to listen and provide effective support:

1. Acknowledge that reaching out for support is a strength.

Welcome the person by recognizing the strength it takes to speak up. They may feel nervous or unsure, so reassure them that this is a positive step. Express your own gratitude for their trust in you as someone who can offer support.

Discuss as a group: What might someone be thinking or feeling about themselves when they reach out for support? Share some examples from the group of times when they might have felt uneasy about seeking help and someone helped them to feel more at ease.

2. Listen and react non-judgmentally.

Listen without bias by recognizing that the person's feelings are legitimate, even if you're struggling to understand their perspective. Give their vulnerability your full attention and care in culturally appropriate ways.

Discuss in pairs: Think of a time when someone responded to you in a way that led you to believe that they judged your feelings to be wrong? What did they do that made you think they were negatively judging you for your feelings? List things to avoid doing if you want to appear non-judgmental. Write your ideas on posted chart paper. If yours is a repeat idea of another pair, simply place a checkmark by it.

Discuss as a group: What are examples of ways someone may show full attention that may not fit into the culture of another group? (Think of various cultures such as age groups and ethnic groups.)

The linked article discusses eye contact in different ethnic cultures.

<http://www.brighthubeducation.com/social-studies-help/9626-learning-about-eye-contact-in-other-cultures/>

3. Respond in a calm and reassuring manner.

You may have an emotional reaction to what you're hearing. Remind yourself that your feelings can be addressed afterwards. Wait until the person is done speaking before you respond. When you do, offer realistic reassurance. Exhibit acceptance, empathy, and respect.

Three groups each take one of the following and prepare to report back to the group:

- *What can you do to deal with your emotional reactions in the moment and later?*
- *Think of three scenarios and identify what would be realistic reassurance in each.*
- *View Brene Brown's empathy video and either decide to share it with the group or summarize it for the group so they can learn what empathy is.*

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1Evwqu369Jw>

4. Reflect back the feelings, strengths, ideas I hear when listening.

Repeat or rephrase what you heard in order to check for understanding. Call attention to concrete examples of their resilience and strength. Listen for action they believe would be helpful and are ready to take.

*In pairs, each person share a current challenge you are facing. When sharing, the other person in the pair will practice repeating/rephrasing, stating the examples of strength/resilience they hear, and point out what next steps they heard the person thinking about taking- **without giving advice**. Take turn so both can share and listen.*

5. Ask how I can be helpful and respond as I'm able.

Ask how you can help. If the person asks for your input, make suitable suggestions. Follow through if they accept your offer. If you aren't able to help in a way they propose, let them know, and work together to find a compromise.

Role play with facilitator. The facilitator is the person you have come to for support. (Do a few times with different participants.)

6. Do what I can to connect to other supports if asked.

Ask if the person would like to hear about other supports before you offer. If they accept, connect them to outside resources that may offer further assistance.

In groups of three or four, give two examples of a time when someone in the group was given advice when they did not want it. Discuss what that was like. How did it feel to get the advice? How did the conversation go? Discuss what would have happened had the person asked permission to give advice first.

7. Maintain confidentiality and communicate if exceptions exist.

As a rule, maintain confidentiality. If you feel you're the sole source of the person's support, ask if there is someone you could engage in supporting them as a team. Inform them that, while you respect their rights, their safety is your top priority, and you will take action to ensure it if necessary. If your professional ethics require you to take such steps, inform them early in the conversation.

In a group of two- four, write a 30-60 second skit to demonstrate a conversation where you both promise to keep the content a secret and how you might discuss exceptions in language that feels natural to the group. Be prepared to share your skit. Have fun and use humor if you would like. Props are encouraged.

Optional Part Two Activity

Divide participants into six groups

Handout instructions on following page to each group.

Seven Promises in Action

Select someone from your group to work with in pairs. You will be assigned 1 promise each. You are allowed to work together with one other pair so you work on both assigned promises.

Your job is to write a script for a skit that demonstrates the content of the promise in action in a specific relationship. You will be assigned either a student-student, student-parent, student-school staff, or adult-adult relationship to ensure that we have a mix of relationship examples in the skits.

Our Promise is _____

The relationship we will portray is _____

List below what concepts from the promise must be included in the skit

Write the skit on separate paper

Practice the skit out loud

Revise the skit based on how the practice goes

Decide and obtain what props will be needed

- a. How will the viewers know who is in what role?
- b. Would the use of thought bubbles or other signs be helpful?
- c. Are there any symbols that would be helpful?
- d. Is there a prop that would help set the scene of your skit?

Offer to support the work of the other pairs once your work is complete.

Perform your skit for the group