



## Circle of participation

### What is it and how does it work?

This is an exercise that helps people to reflect on the value of participatory work and to focus on why we are doing this work. It can be used with practitioners, researchers and young people.

### It's good because...

It is visual and stimulating and can prompt lots of discussion. It can help people to learn from each other and serve as a reminder of the importance of participatory work.

### How long does it take?

About 20 minutes or longer if there is lots of discussion.

### Steps

1. Ask everyone to draw a circle on their paper and divide it into 4.
2. Ask everyone to write the following headings, one in each quarter:
  - a. (Why) should we do participation?
  - b. What are the most important things to remember when doing participation?
  - c. What are the main challenges to this type of work?
  - d. What are some good/positive examples of participatory work?
3. Ask everyone to think about and write in their answers
4. Go round the room and ask everyone to share what they have written down under each heading

*An alternative way of doing this would be to ask people to write their answers to the four questions on post it notes and stick these up on a larger piece of paper. Then one person could read these out and the group could discuss. This could be useful if there are members of the group who are less comfortable talking in front of a group.*

**Source:** Dr Kate D'Arcy