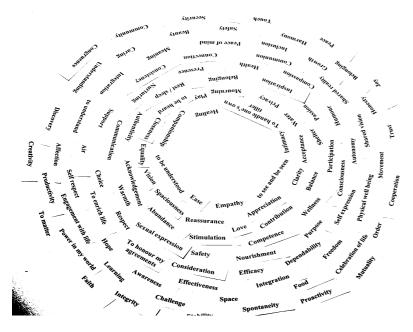
## **EMPATHY CIRCLES** ! A powerful practice of hearing each other. Great for teams, communities, families, friends ... people !

One of the greatest gifts we can give each other is our full, listening presence.



"When I have been heard, it feels damn good ..., I am able to re-perceive my world in a new way and go on. It is astonishing how elements that seem insoluble become soluble' - Carl Rogers.

Empathy is <u>not</u> about fixing, giving advice, consoling, educating or shutting down.

It is about just listening and being with the 'life' (pain or joy) being shared by each other.

## To begin:

1. You will need to print out or make your own needs cards.

They are available in 18 languages - at <u>www.worldempathy.org</u> - Thank you Jesse Wiens + Catherine Cadden zenvc.org 2. Create a **Needs Mandala** by laying the needs out in a circular format starting from the center, facing outwards ( as pictured above) on the floor or table if people are not so agile. Everyone sits around the cards in a circle.

3. The invitation is for everyone to **take a few breaths** and listen to what is 'alive' **right now**. Then naturally, someone will begin to speak and share (2-3 mins). This could be something either painful, joyful or both. It could be a small or big event that you want to share about. This is not a time to share all the details. Stay connected to how you are right NOW rather than get into story telling.

While you are talking everyone else listens silently.

After you have finished speaking, everyone else silently looks at the needs cards to **guess** what they hear is important to you.

4. They take turns and offer empathy silently by handing you one need card at a time.

As you receive the cards, take a moment with each card and receive the guess that others are making. They take a full inhalation and exhalation with each one and place it in front of you.

Once they have finished passing you cards, you can then look at the cards in front of you and notice how you feel.

## You might like to take a photo or write these needs down for further reflection later.

5. When you are done, put the cards back into centre of the circle ready for the next person to share.

6. Continue this process until everyone who wishes to has had a chance to share.

This process can be done in **total silence** or the speaker may share **in their first language** even if no one else speaks that language. We still just offer the cards to this person with **trust** that we hear even through a language we don't "speak".

This can also work as **SELF EMPATHY** - Lay the cards out for yourself and **TAKE A BREATH** with each one that resonates for you. If there is another person involved in your situation, you may like to **guess** what they are needing as well.