

Tips for Creating Emotional Safe Spaces

- Be vulnerable and empathetic.
- Be curious and open to learning.
- Give others the space to talk.
- When someone is speaking, listen with the intent to understand, not respond.
- When asking questions, use open-ended ones to inspire storytelling and conversation.
- Allow space for conversations.
- Invite members of the group into conversations if they have not spoken.
- Encourage different points of view; all are valid and equally important.
- Remind the group that they have permission to ask questions at any time.
- Respect and acknowledge other people's contributions.
- Go with the flow.
- Stay open.
- Don't be afraid to make mistakes.

CREATE A SAFE SPACE FOR GROUP SINGING & STORYTELLING

It is important that the members of your group feel comfortable and safe — both physically and emotionally, and it is your job as facilitator to create a space that fosters this.

Every session should begin with a **physical warm-up** to avoid injury to one's voice.

Begin with some **gentle stretches** and **body awareness warm-ups** (see "Presence Warmups" on the PCM Hub) to help the group relax and feel more at ease. From there you can do some **breathing exercises** and **vocal warm-ups** to prepare the group for singing.

End your warm-up with a "**Listening & Sounding Game**" (refer to the PCM Hub). These games actively engage every member of the group and encourage whole-body listening and a playful sounding with the voice. They will help your members be more comfortable with themselves and each other.

To create an **emotional safe space** that supports an environment of trust and respect, it is best to have your group sit (or stand) in a **circle** whenever possible.

This seating arrangement encourages inclusiveness, conversation, an attitude of support, togetherness, and collaboration. People are more likely to feel valued and as a result, will feel more at ease and willing to share their ideas, stories, and voices.

The online video-conferencing format simulates a similar environment but be sure to remind participants to keep their video on and to use gallery view. It is useful to establish some ground rules on how to initiate speaking and conversation, and how to limit distractions in this format.