<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>If this...</th>
<th>Then try this...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| It takes too long for students to get in a circle... | • Practice getting in and out of circle before holding an actual talking circle  
• Figure out possible alternate furniture or room arrangements  
• Use a timer and build in an incentive for meeting the time expectation  
• Have students sit on top of desks in a circle  
• Consider holding the circle outside, or another location  
• Ask the students to come up with suggestions |
| The circle process takes too long... | • You can do a check in circle in a few minutes with 32 students. You could ask for a one or two word check in on how their weekend was or how they are feeling at the moment  
• Time spent up front building relationships and coming up with shared values and guidelines will save time in the long run dealing with problem behavior |
| No one is talking, or English may be a second language for my students, and they are hesitant to speak... | • Use alternative methods of expression such as drawing, freestyle poetry, journaling, movement, activities with no words, etc.  
• It is ok not to share as long as everyone participates by being present in circle  
• Use a partner-share icebreaker or concentric circles so every student can have a chance to talk without speaking to the whole class  
• Try to set a fun and community-building tone, gradually getting to more serious content over time  
• Build in incentives for participation  
• Ask students to brainstorm why they or others aren’t talking (could be written, anonymous, etc.) and some suggestions to encourage it  
• Ask questions students are more likely to want to answer like “What is it you want adults to understand about youth?” |
| There are specific misbehaviors that de-rail the circle... | • Revisit the shared guidelines and values you created together  
• Try to determine the possible function of each misbehavior and focus on that rather than the behavior itself  
• Engage the students that are misbehaving as circle keepers or ask them to think of questions for the circle |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scenario</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| One or a few students do all the talking... | - Have students make or bring their own talking pieces that are meaningful to them or their culture and ask them to speak about it in circle  
- Consider giving the “natural leaders” jobs circle such as being a circle keeper or making a centerpiece for the circle  
- In private conversations with more quiet students, ask if there is something they need in order to participate more fully |
| Students make rude or mean facial expressions... | - Clarify unacceptable non-verbal behaviors as not following the shared guidelines  
- Acknowledge kind respectful non-verbal behaviors |
| Students talk about private family issues, abuse, suicide, drugs or alcohol... | - When you start facilitating circle be very clear as to what types of issues you are mandated to report. Students will appreciate the clarity  
- Be sure to clearly explain the limit of confidentiality is anything related to danger to self or others  
- Consult with your Principal and mental health support staff about how to pre-plan for this possibility and discuss in an age-appropriate way  
- Follow-up with administration, school based mental health counselor or school nurse immediately and make a mandated report as necessary. You may even need to personally walk the student to a school mental health professional |
| The circle just doesn’t seem to go well overall... | - Consult with colleagues for ideas, suggestions or coaching  
- Observe another colleague’s circle, or ask them to observe yours  
- Have a colleague co-facilitate a class circle with you  
- Ask students what they thought about the circle, and how it could be made better |