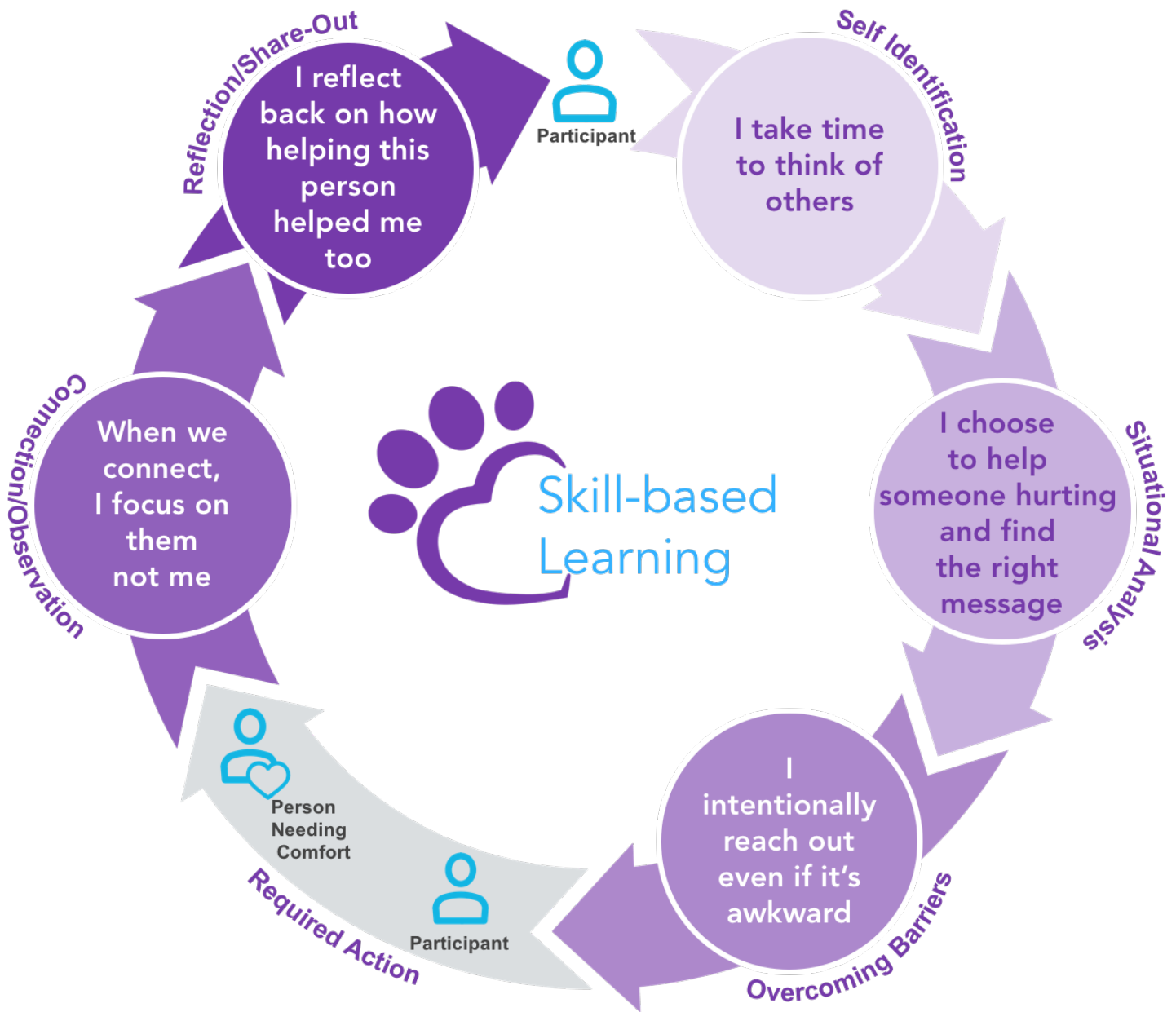




LESSON 3

The Circle of Comfort

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Teaching Points / Topics / Themes

1. Start the discussion by asking participants to state their name and their favorite hobby.
2. Try to point out at the end how sometimes our hobbies can be used as a way to bring joy to others (ie a hobby of music could be used to send favorite songs to someone who is struggling... a sports person has the energy to walk pets and run errands for someone who is bedridden, a gardener could plant some flowers at the home of someone hurting etc...).
3. Introduce the Circle of Comfort Graphic
4. Explain that comforting is a skill. When it's practiced and done, the ability to comfort begins to be more natural. Part of the development of this skill is also in knowing that comforting others comforts us. When we take the focus off of ourselves and begin to focus on someone else, comforting more naturally happens. In our circle of comfort graphic, we review the steps on how this works.

The Circle of Comfort Graphic

- **I take the time to think of others** - this takes the focus immediately off of ourselves, which is the first step of comfort. Put the phone down. Make a list of all of the people you know who are struggling. Take 5 minutes away from Snapchat/Instagram/Facebook each day.
- **I choose to help someone** - the intentional action of comforting starts with the commitment to help someone specific. Try not to put your efforts to a random event where you can't reach specific people. As we learned in the awkward zone graphic, those hurting can feel very isolated unless we reach out to them one to one. Once you've identified the person you are going to help, find the right message to say to them. Tell them how much they mean to you. Tell them that you care about them and if they are close friends or family, that you love them.
- **I intentionally reach out** even if it's awkward - This intentional action is key to comfort. Too many times we fall into the "empathy action gap" where we want to do something but fail to follow through. No one can feel your thoughts, but they can certainly feel your actions. So all of the kindest thoughts in the world mean nothing if they are not acted upon.

- When I deliver the plaque, **I connect with this person.** I choose to focus on them, not me. I ask them questions and I offer them my heart and my ears - my love and my time. And I observe their reaction. Sometimes there are tears of thankfulness, sometimes you will get a big hug. The person that you did something for, will feel encouraged that someone cared about them and made something just for them. They will feel special and loved.
- **I reflect back** and realize that I feel better after I helped someone else feel better. Just the action of doing something for someone else lifts our mood. Planning what we can do for them, and then actually doing it, can cause us to feel good about ourselves. To experience happiness, to feel useful. And it helps us to forget about our own hurt for some time. Something actually happens in our brain and we like it. If I am a person of faith, I will end the process by praying for this person.
- **Takeaway** - When we are hurting - when we have hard stuff in our life - this is the perfect medicine for giving ourselves some hope. We can reach out and connect with someone else that is going through a tough time. It's counterintuitive actually, as sometimes we look at this as extra "work" that we don't have time for. But by helping others. We will help ourselves. Every time.

That is a circle of comfort: you to someone, someone back to you.