



## Samoan Wisdom Circle

### Daniel P. Felix for the Chicago Trustee Collaboratory

As part of the 5<sup>th</sup> annual Rendezvous Conference of the Purposeful Planning Institute (“PPI”), we learned of a Samoan Wisdom Circle, a variant of the Quaker Wisdom Circle. The latter is a process which Hartley Goldstone introduced at an earlier Rendezvous and has been used by the Collaboratory in our meetings together and with our clients

Like the Quaker Circle, the Samoan Circle organizes a group’s discussion and communications. Both of these Circles can help the group as a whole as well as its individual members to come to a deeper understanding. In so doing, both can help with decision-making as well as with creating consensus and dispute resolution.

The two circles also share that they can be leaderless or facilitated.

What’s different in the Samoan Circle is the structure and what it allows for. It was discussed and practiced successfully in the Rendezvous session called *“Reveal or Conceal - A High Stakes Game for the Whole Family,”* presented by [Karen Laprade](#), FEA and [Kyle Harrison](#), FEA and CFA

It is physically constructed of an inner and an outer circle.

Discussion happens only in the inner circle and is not allowed in the outer circle.

A few of the motivated or passionate members start in the inner circle. Three or four. They will respectfully share. Each will continue in the inner until:

- One decides to step out, OR
- He asks an outside person to replace him, OR
- Someone from the outer circle decides to replace him. The person from the outer circle stands silently behind an inner circle person he wants to replace. If need be, eventually put a hand on the shoulder of that person.

The inner circle can define the intent and focus of the gathering and also what respectful conversation is.

One can mix advisors and family members, though a facilitator can be best used outside the circles.

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