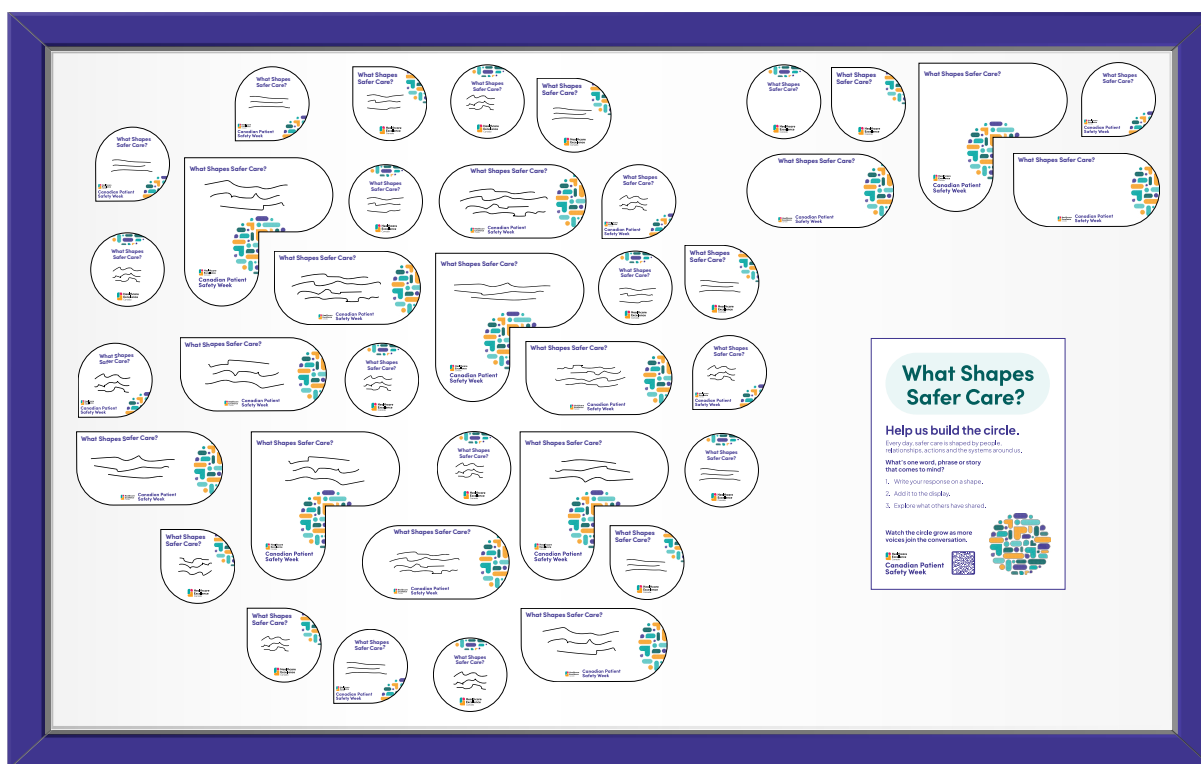


What Shapes Safer Care?

Activity Guide



Overview

This activity invites anyone interested in safer care – including people who provide, support or receive care – to reflect on a simple prompt: **What shapes safer care?**

Participants respond with one word or a brief story. Using a circle builder kit, responses are added to a shared circle that grows over time, creating a picture of what helps shape safer care across different roles, settings and experiences.

This activity can be completed individually, in small or large groups and synchronously or asynchronously. It can be hosted in healthcare, community, educational, workplace or personal settings. It is designed to be adapted based on context.

Purpose

This activity helps participants explore the many people, relationships, actions, environments and systems that shape safer care. By bringing together diverse perspectives in a shared visual display, participants can identify common themes, spark meaningful conversations and recognize that safer care is something we build together every day.

By the end of the activity, you'll have:

- a growing visual representation of what shapes safer care in your setting
- shared insights into the experiences and perspectives of participants
- ideas for conversations and actions that can strengthen safer care over time

Choose how you will participate

- Doing this activity with a group? See page 2.
- Doing this activity on your own? See page 4.
- Want to keep the conversation going over time? See page 4.

Time required

The time needed for this activity will vary. You can adapt it to fit your setting and the time available.

What you need

- HEC's circle builder kit or another way to collect responses
- pens, markers or other materials to record responses

If hosting a group, you will also need:

- a facilitator to guide the discussion
- a physical or virtual space for people to gather

Adapting the activity for different spaces

This activity is designed to work in a variety of settings, including smaller clinical environments, community health centres, offices, waiting rooms and shared community spaces. If you do not have access to a large whiteboard or display wall, the circle builder shapes and stickers can be placed on any available surface, such as a bulletin board, poster board, window, door, table display or a section of wall approved for temporary displays. You can also create a portable circle using a flip chart, foam board or other movable surface. The goal is simply to create a visible shared space where contributions can be added over time and the circle can continue to grow.

Need more shapes?

Download and print additional circle builder kit pages as needed.



Hosting the activity with a group

Step one: Assemble

Gather participants for the activity. Consider holding it during existing meetings, safety huddles, retreats, town halls, community events or other times when people are already together.

If you're hosting a group, invite a range of people to participate as equal partners. You can consider including:

- all staff, regardless of role or position
- patients, residents, clients and care partners
- volunteers, community partners and members of the public
- leaders and board members

Step two: Introduce

Introduce the activity by sharing the prompt:

What shapes safer care?

Explain that participants are encouraged to respond with one word. If they would like, they can also add a short explanation, story or example.

Help participants feel comfortable sharing by:

- making time for introductions
- setting expectations for respectful listening and discussion
- showing curiosity and asking open-ended questions
- acknowledging all contributions and perspectives
- recognizing that patients, families, care partners, staff, volunteers and leaders may experience safety differently, and that every perspective offers valuable insight
- sharing a personal example of your own response to the prompt.

Remind participants that there are no right or wrong answers. The goal is to learn from one another and explore the many factors that influence safety.

Step three: Reflect and share

Invite participants to think about the prompt:

What shapes safer care?

Ask them to record one word, a short phrase or brief story on a circle builder shape. Participants can then share their responses with a partner, small group or the larger group.

Step four: Build the circle

Invite participants to add their shapes to a shared wall, board or display area.

As shapes are added, work together to build a collective circle. Encourage participants to notice similarities, differences and connections among the responses.

The circle can remain on display and continue to grow as more people contribute over time.

Step five: Explore what is shaping safer care

Review the responses and discuss:

- What themes are emerging?
- What patterns do we notice?
- What surprises us?
- What opportunities exist to strengthen these influences?

Step six: Summarize

Share a summary of key themes and invite participants to add final reflections.

Highlight that safer care is shaped every day through people, relationships, actions and system conditions.

Step seven: Capture, share and carry it forward

Find creative ways to document and share what participants contributed. For example:

- Take photos of the circle as it comes together.
- Create a visual display of responses and themes.
- Collect stories through an online form.
- Record short video and audio reflections.
- Share insights in newsletters, meetings or on social media.

Keep the conversation going

Invite participants to identify one idea or opportunity they would like to carry forward. This could include celebrating strengths, exploring a challenge that emerged or identifying one small action that could help strengthen safer care in their setting.

The circle can remain available for ongoing contributions, allowing staff, patients, families and community members to continue adding their perspectives over days, weeks or months.

Display the 8.5 x 11 activity poster near the circle to invite others to participate and make additional shapes available so people can continue adding their contributions.

Take it with you

Invite participants to carry their reflection beyond the activity:

- Write your word on a circle builder shape or sticker.
- Attach it to your laptop, water bottle, badge or personal item.
- This keeps the reflection visible in everyday moments — a simple reminder that safer care is shaped continuously over time.



Doing this activity individually

This activity can also be completed on your own.

Step one: Reflect

Take a few minutes to reflect on the prompt:

What shapes safer care?

Step two: Write your word or story

Write down one word or a brief story that reflects your experience.

Step three: Display your reflection

If you are using a circle builder shape, record your response and place it somewhere visible as a reminder of your reflection and a conversation starter with others. If not, you can use a sticky note, journal or card.

Step four: Reflect and connect

Consider what your word says about what helps shape safer care. Is there a story behind it? Has your perspective changed over time?

Step five: Invite another person

Give a circle builder sticker or shape to someone else and ask them the same question:

What shapes safer care?

Encourage them to continue the reflection by passing another sticker to someone else.

If appropriate, you can later add your reflections to a shared circle or group discussion to help build a broader understanding of what shapes safer care.

Spread the word

Whether you completed this activity on your own or with a group, consider sharing your reflection or your completed on social media to help spread learning and inspire others. Remember to tag HEC and use #CPSW2026:

- [LinkedIn](#)
- [Bluesky](#)
- [Instagram](#)
- [Facebook](#)

Tips for success

- Remember that anyone – patients, families, care partners, healthcare workers, volunteers, leaders and community members – can start a conversation by asking “What shapes safer care?” whether in a group or individually.
- Create a welcoming environment where everyone feels respected and able to contribute.
- Encourage one-word responses while welcoming stories and examples from those who want to share more.
- Actively seek diverse perspectives.
- Offer different ways for people to contribute, including discussion, written reflections and anonymous submissions.
- Keep the circle visible so it can continue to grow over time.



**What Shapes
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**Canadian Patient
Safety Week**

What Shapes Safer Care?



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