Responsibility Pies (Charts)

Suitable for:

* Help someone not take too much responsibility for something that has happened
* Help someone take more responsibility for their actions or contributions to a situation
* Help constructive review what we can improve even if our part of a difficulty or process is small
* Giving structure to the review of a situation

Why is it useful?

* In order to properly process something, we have to talk about one part at a time. The problem that emerges is that while talking about a part, all the attention is on that part, and that makes it seem bigger than it is. The person whose part/responsibility it is will then either take too much blame/responsibility, or will understandably object to it. When using a visual reference point that keeps everything in perspective, it is possible to talk about responsibility without losing sight of how big of deal it is in the overall picture.

How?

* The following directions can be used for an individual processing the event, or several people doing it together. If some of the people present contributed to the event being processed, then those people should assign and discuss their own part.
* Create a list of all the people with an involvement or responsibility in the event. At times it is appropriate to add other things than people to the list (e.g., insufficient funding, having the flu, born with attention difficulties, hot day, etc.). In some situations it is appropriate to add “bad luck” to the list (e.g., missed the delivery many the one minute when in the bathroom).
* Draw a big circle using a pencil – or draw it on a dry-erase board
* Decide what is the thing on the list with the biggest contribution and draw in a pie wedge of a proportion of the circle equal to how much it contributed. Don’t get bogged down into being too precise or thinking too much about it. It can be adjusted at any time in the process.
* Repeat with the next biggest contributor, and then continue this process with each successively smaller contributor. Adjust other pie slices’ sizes if need as you go.
* If a better understanding is needed of a big pie piece, that piece can be divided up further into ways that a person contributed to the event
* When the chart is done, it can be used to discuss or process the situation, but the creation process itself usually takes care of any of the needed processing.