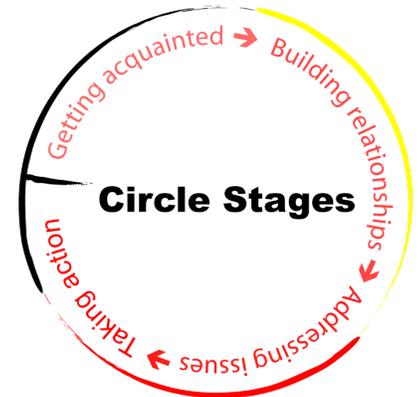


Circle

The concept of Circle originates from Native American culture. Referred to as “Talking Circle”, indigenous tribes regularly gathered into a circle to discuss important community issues. Today, Circle is still used by Native Americans. It is also used in the criminal justice system and by counselors and therapists. Importantly it is now used in America’s schools to address a variety of issues (Pranis, 2005).



When is circle used?

Circle can be used in a variety of situations. This includes (but is not limited to):

- Conflict resolution
- To address problematic behavior
- To help students find their voice
- To solve problems in the classroom
- To build trust and empathy
- To explore (and restore) harm done to others

How to Facilitate

In practice, all participants sit in chairs (or on the floor) in the shape of a circle. The facilitator (teacher or student) starts the process by presenting the topic and reviewing norms and guidelines for the participants.

Guidelines For Participants:

- Respect the talking piece
- Speak from the heart
- Speak with respect
- Listen with respect
- No cross talk
- Remain in circle
- Honor confidentiality

Guidelines for Circle Keeper:

- Determine when and how people can interrupt. (No crosstalk)
- Balance all voices (do not allow “ganging up” on an individual)
- Find common ground. Keep it solution-based.
- Develop the communication flow toward positive outcomes.
- Do reality check. Clarify the goal. “What happened before we started...” “What happened during circle?” “Are the plans feasible?”

- When addressing harm done to another student, involve the person causing the harm and the student that was harmed. (Riestenberg, 2018)
- After the one go around, keeper may summarize, raise questions, stop the circle process and have open discussion.
- Closing: Summarize, note gains, identify work to be done, highlight accomplishments such as improved understanding, trust, stronger connections, clarity of needs.

Questioning in Circle

Possible Core Questions/Outline for circle:

1. Opener—Name, How are you feeling about being here?
2. Defining a problem—What are your perceptions of the problem, what happened, these issues?
3. Impact of an issue—How have you been affected?
4. What can others do (what's working/what's not). What can you do?
5. What are the next steps? Plan for future.

Questions for "Success" Circle

1. Opener—What is your idea of success in school/work? What is your idea of success in life?
2. Defining a problem—What gets in the way?
3. Impact of an issue—What do you bring to the table to increase your likelihood of success/meeting goals?
4. What can others do (what's working/what's not). What can you do?
5. Next steps? Plan.

Questions for "Core Values" Circle

1. Opener—What are your core values? What are you passionate about?
2. Defining the problem—What is your view/philosophy of discipline and how to do it so that it promotes positive behavior?
3. Impact of an issue—What gets in the way of you doing what you believe in when it comes to dealing with conflict?
4. What can others do (what's working/what's not). What can you do?
5. Next steps? Plan.