

# Restorative Dialogue Circles



## INNER FRAMEWORK

**Values:** love, respect, honesty, humility, sharing, trust, compassion, vulnerability, authenticity, openness

### Guiding Principles:

- ✓ Offer everyone equal opportunity to participate
- ✓ Circle calls us to act on our personal values
- ✓ Involvement and participation is direct and active
- ✓ Flexible, accommodating unique needs and interests
- ✓ Maintain respect for all by being fully present, mentally and physically

## OUTER FRAMEWORK

(PROCESS)

**Circle Keeping:** Facilitator who holds circle accountable

**Center Piece:** Focus point in center

**Talking Piece:** Meaningful object (ex: slinky, stone, book)

**Ground rules:** Establish a safe space

**Ceremonies:** Opening and closing inspiration/affirmation/story that applies to the topic of your audience

## GROUND RULES:

Voluntary, speak and listen with respect, speak honestly, respect the talking piece, be open to learning, confidentiality and mandated reporting

## CIRCLE FACILITATOR CHECKLIST:

1. Explain the ground rules and ask for questions. Invite participants to add other ground rules they think are necessary to **create a safe space**.
2. Set tone with opening inspiration and state the purpose of the circle.
3. Explain the talking piece and give a personal story about why you chose to use it.
4. Explain that when the talking piece is passed to the participant, he or she has three options:
  - a. Speak about the issues presented in the question;
  - b. Sit quietly and hold the talking piece to reflect upon what has been said; or
  - c. Simply pass the piece to the next participant.
5. Start with a check in round to get used to the talking piece and share something easy.
6. Pose the first content question...provide your answer to give an example and role model vulnerability
7. After the talking piece has gone around one time, ask if anyone would like to comment on what has been said. If so, pass the talking piece to that participant (only do this part if time allows).
8. Take a moment to briefly summarize points made, and then pose additional questions.
9. Pose a reflection/action question about what was learned and how they are going to move forward.
10. Close with a summary of what occurred in the circle and a closing inspiration.

## Circle Prompts

**Building Community Prompts:** Supports trust building and creating safety as a group

Check in: Share a sentence or two about how you are feeling right now?

Check in: Share a high (rose) and a low (thorn)

Check in: How has your day gone so far?

Check in: Rate your day on a scale from 1-6 (1 being the lowest and 6 being the highest) and why?

What is one value you live by? Where did you learn that value?

What is your passion?

What gives you hope?

What do you appreciate about your school?

How would your best friend describe you?

What would you not want to change about your life?

What do you do to release stress?

What agreements would you like for our circle to feel that you can speak honestly and respectfully?

**Storytelling Guiding Prompts:** Build understanding of one another and increased empathy

When is a time in your life you had to let go of control?

When was a time you were outside your comfort zone?

When is a time you made lemonade out of lemons in your life?

Share a transformative experience, where you discovered a gift out of crisis or difficulty.

Share a time when you had to hear something difficult from someone but you were grateful after.

Share a time you may have caused harm to someone but you addressed it in a way you felt good about after.

Share an experience of letting go of anger or resentment.

Share a time you acted on your core values even when others were not.

Share a time when you discovered that someone was very different from negative assumptions you first made about that person.

Share an experience of feeling like you did not fit in.

Share an embarrassing moment that you can laugh at now.

**Reflection Questions:** Learning, action or Take away from the circle

Check out: How are you feeling as we close the circle?

Check out: Weather report- How are you feeling using words to describe the weather.

Check out: What is your take away?

Is there anything you came with that you would like to leave behind?

What are you taking from the circle that supports you?

Where do you see yourself moving forward?

What have you learned?

What can you take away from this experience that is useful?

How will these insights help you in the next couple of weeks?

What action can you take after this circle based on what you learned?

\*\*This material is adopted from Kristi Cole and Paul Dedinsky's packet of Restorative Justice Practices, Milwaukee Public Schools. Safe Schools/Healthy Students.