USING CIRCLES EFFECTIVELY

This curriculum was developed by the IIRP Graduate School. For more information, please visit www.iirp.edu.
LEARNING OUTCOMES

By the end of the day, participants will be able to:

• Describe the key concepts of restorative practices.

• Reflect on how restorative practices may impact participants’ professional and personal lives.

• Apply the restorative practices continuum.
“There can be no vulnerability without risk; there can be no community without vulnerability; there can be no peace, and ultimately no life, without community.”
(M. Scott Peck, Psychiatrist and Best-Selling Author)

“Circles create soothing space, where even reticent people can realize that their voice is welcome.”
(Margaret J. Wheatley)

“If people stand in a circle long enough, they’ll eventually begin to dance.”
(George Carlin, Comedian)
• The Universe is circles within circles, and everything is one circle, and all the circles are connected to each other. Each family is a circle, and those family circles connect together and make a community, and the community makes its circle where it lives on the Earth. [The community] cares for that part [of the Earth] but cares for it as a circle – which is to say in a cooperative and egalitarian way, where everybody is cared for, and everybody is respected.

(Black Elk)
SOCIAL DISCIPLINE WINDOW

Adapted by Paul McCold and Ted Wachtel from Glaser, 1969

Page 8 in *Restorative Circles in Schools* book

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RESTORATIVE PRACTICES CONTINUUM

80% Proactive

20% Responsive

informal

affective
statements

affective
questions

small impromptu
conversations

formal

circle

formal
conference

Page 12 in Restorative Circles in Schools book
WHY CIRCLES?

• Equality
• Equity
• Safety and trust
• Responsibility
• Reminds you to facilitate
• Builds connections
• Ownership

Pages 22-23 in Restorative Circles in Schools book
TYPES OF CIRCLES

• Proactive
• Responsive
• Sequential
• Non-sequential
• Fishbowl
PROACTIVE CIRCLES

• Should account for 80% of the circles that are done within a setting.

• Are intentional and can allow for participants to take risks as the community strengthens.

• Build trust and social capital.

• Proactive circles include but are not limited to: creating norms, community building, course content, and games.

Chapter 3 in *Restorative Circles in Schools* book
RESPONSIVE CIRCLES

- Should account for 20% of the circles that are done within a setting.
- Are intentional and address conflict and manage tension in a community.
- Involve all who are impacted by conflict and tension.
- Allow a safe place for people to discuss issues as they arise.
- Responsive circles include but are not limited to: patterns of behavior, interpersonal issues, grief, and loss.

Chapter 4 in *Restorative Circles in Schools* book
Pages 29-31 in *Restorative Circles in Schools* book
NON-SEQUENTIAL CIRCLES

Pages 32-33 in *Restorative Circles in Schools* book
Pages 33-36 in *Restorative Circles in Schools* book
CHECK-IN AND CHECK-OUT CIRCLES

• Done as a go-around

• Tool to foster accountability

• Related to
  - Course content
  - Interpersonal

• Agreements and acknowledgments

• Goals and achievements

Pages 37-40 in Restorative Circles in Schools book
SECRET TO SUCCESS

• Clear topic and goal
• Set a positive tone
• Keep the focus
• Get some allies
• Use silence
• Active listening
• Pay attention to body language
INTRODUCING THE CONCEPT

• Explain reasoning
• Be upbeat
• Regard resistance as fear
CIRCLE LESSON PLANNING

• Facilitator will run an opening sequential go around to connect the group.

• Facilitator will guide the group in choosing 2-3 situations.

• After the situations are chosen, the group will have a non-sequential discussion and complete the template:
  o Circle Topic
  o Type of Circle
  o Goal of Circle
  o Circle Questions

• Build the questions using the affective question format of past, present, and future.

• Facilitator guides the discussion.

This is not a role play. It is a practical experience to help you create a product (lesson plan) that can be utilized in your workplace.
TOPIC: CREATING NORMS

- Type of Circle: Proactive (sequential or non-sequential)
- Purpose/Goal of Circle: To ensure all community members have a voice in the creation of norms.

Circle Questions:
- Think about a positive working/learning environment and describe it in a few words.
- What will contribute to a healthy and productive learning/working environment?
- What norms can we agree to that will contribute to a healthy and productive learning/working environment? (List the norms.)
- How will we share these norms with others who join the group?
- Share one thing you will do to contribute to maintaining the norms.
TOPIC: RESPECT

• Type of Circle: Proactive (sequential or non-sequential)

• Purpose/Goal of Circle: To create an understanding of the word “respect” and what respect will look like in this community.

• Circle Questions:
  • Think of a time when you felt respected. Think of one or two words to describe that experience.
  • Think of a time when you felt disrespected. Think of one or two words to describe that experience.
  • How would you define respect? What does it look like and sound like? (Record answers.)
  • How would you like to be shown respect?
  • How can you show respect to your classmates and teacher in this class?
RITUALS

• Define “Ritual.”
• What is a ritual you have with family and friends?
• What is the importance of ritual?
• What does ritual provide?
• How can you create rituals in your settings using circles?
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SETTING UP A FISHBOWL

- Can be used with sequential or non-sequential circles
- **Optional** empty chair
- Feedback

Pages 33-36 in *Restorative Circles in Schools* book
RESTORATIVE PROBLEM SOLVING

Demonstrated as a fishbowl

• Volunteer to share a work-related problem.
• 3 uninterrupted minutes to describe the problem and let the group know the need.
• Group has 10 minutes to give feedback; the volunteer does not interrupt, just listens and takes notes.
• Volunteer has 2 minutes to reflect on what they heard and let the group know one or two things they are going to try.
REFERENCES


