

Staff Support



Circle Agenda

Agendas created in partnership with



MILWAUKEE
PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Project AWARE

Circle Topic		CR Session 1A: Setting the Scene for the Support Circle Process
Planning:		
Purpose of circle/ Learning objectives	Identify participant values and develop circle shared agreements to guide the staff support circle process throughout the CR experience.	
Materials/preparation/time	Time: 45-50 min Materials: Circle kit (includes a variety of talking pieces, mat or fabric to place in the middle of the circle and a center piece), blank paper for shared agreements, note cards, markers/pens Set-up: Up to 15 chairs arranged in a circle without furniture in the middle	
Welcome/opening	<p>“A deep sense of love and belonging is an irreducible need of all people. We are biologically, cognitively, physically, and spiritually wired to love, to be loved, and to belong. When those needs are not met, we don’t function as we were meant to. We break. We fall apart. We numb. We ache. We hurt others. We get sick.” — Brene Brown</p> <p>Share an introduction of yourself, why you have decided to facilitate these circles and what this topic means to you.</p>	
Check-in or community- building activity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. (Talking piece) Share your name, position, how long you have worked at your school and how you are doing on a scale of 1-5 (right here, right now). 2. (Talking piece) In a sentence or two, share one reason you decided to join the field of education. 	

Circle Topic

CR Session 1A: Setting the Scene for the Support Circle Process

Lesson and guiding questions

Explain: For anyone new to the restorative circle process, there are a few key structural elements that make a circle restorative:

- **Sitting in circle** – Circles are a structured way of bringing people together and are one of the most common forms of restorative practices in schools. Circles allow for everyone to be seen, represent equality as everyone (including circle keeper) sits in the circle, and represent community as the circle shape is continuous and unbroken.
- **Circle keeper's role** – Responsible for emphasizing equality, setting the tone for a safe and respectful community, keeping the flow moving, and introducing prompts/instructions.
- **Talking piece** – An object used to let people know whose turn it is to talk and whose turn it is to listen. It often represents something of importance to the circle, and the person who has the talking piece is the only one who should be talking. This increases respectful listening and teaches that every voice is important. It is always an option for a participant to pass if they do not wish to share but the talking piece should touch each participants hand. The facilitator may go back to participants that passed at the end of a round if more processing time was needed.
- **Centerpiece** – Represents the center of the community, reminds us of our collective nature, and should be comprised of object(s) that are important to circle participants. It also provides a place for participants to rest their eyes.
- **Shared agreements** – Used instead of rules. In the circle process control is shared and rules are often forced upon an individual/group from a place of authority. Shared agreements are derived from participant's collective values and needs around safety and participants agree to uphold the shared agreements created by the group. Therefore, all participants in the circle are accountable to one another.

Explain: When a group is using the restorative circle process to meet on a continuous basis it is important to start by sharing our core values. Core values are foundational to developing a restorative community. It is from our values that we can identify our needs and create shared agreements for the circle process so that everyone's needs are acknowledged, and a sense of safety is maintained.

Pass a note card and marker to each participant. Ask participants to think about a core value they hold and try to model for students and staff at school in order to work as your best self. Write this value on your note card.

1. (Talking piece) In a few sentences share your value, who taught you this value and why it is important? When you are done, place your note card in the circle in front of you.

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Lesson and guiding questions	<p>Once everyone has answered the question, as facilitator, re-read each participant's value and place the note cards so that they form a circle around the centerpiece.</p> <p>2. (Talking piece) Now that we know our group's core values, what agreements do you need from yourself and others to uphold the values expressed by the group? It is important to try to keep these agreements to a number we can all remember, usually between 4-6. As facilitator, it is important that one of our agreements be confidentiality so that people know what is said here stays here. Anyone who has another agreement to add may choose a talking piece to start the conversation and pass it to the person next to them. If you have nothing to add, please say pass and move the piece on.</p> <p>The facilitator should write each agreement requested on a piece of paper and when complete put the paper in the middle of the circle where all can see it. (After the circle, keep the recorded values and shared agreements developed by the group and display them during consecutive circles.)</p>
Check-out/check for understanding	Ask participants if they can follow the agreements created to the best of their ability while in circle together by showing a fist (0) to five fingers. If anyone shows less than three fingers, more conversation about needs and shared agreements is required.
Closing	Pass a smile.