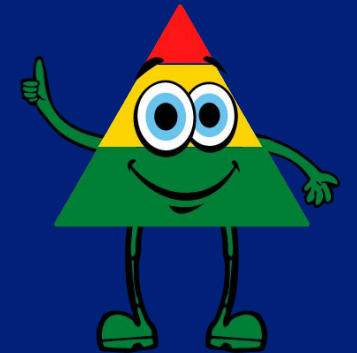


Community Building Circles 101

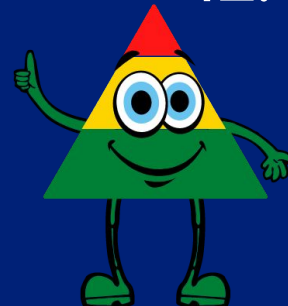


Learning Objectives


- Understand the purpose and process of planning a community building circle
- Learn the key parts of a circle and how they connect to building relationships

Parts of Community Building Circles

1. Welcome
2. Opening
3. Purpose
4. Centerpiece
5. Talking Piece
6. Circle Core Guidelines
7. Values
8. Check-in
9. Community Building Activity 1
10. Community Building Activity 2
11. Check-out
12. Closing



Community Building Circle Template




PBIS/RP | **LAUSD**
Positive Behavior Interventions &
Supports/Restorative Practices

Community Building Circle Template

Teacher: _____ Date: _____ Period: _____

1. **Welcome:** Welcome students
2. **Opening:** How will you open the circle? A poem, quote, song, breathing, story, movement exercise...?
3. **Purpose:** What are you planning on accomplishing today?
4. **Explain the Centerpiece:** It represents our community and is a place to focus your attention. You may identify any items in the center and why they are there, collectively built.
5. **Explain the Talking Piece:** What object are you using and why? When you have the talking piece, you are the only one talking, and the job of the rest of us is to listen.
6. **Core Guidelines:** Agreements that will help us stay focused during our circle. Go over the guidelines as a reminder to students.

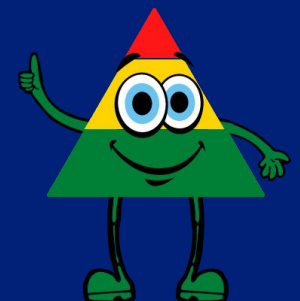


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7. **Values:** Like a compass that keeps us on track and guides us back when we've lost our way. Please say a value that is important to you that we all should hold while we sit together today.
8. **Introduction/Check-in Round:** What question will you ask for the initial check-in round? Ex. On a scale of 1-10, Today I am a...
9. **Community Activity Round I:** What needs to be addressed in the circle? What questions will you ask?
10. **Community Activity Round II:**
11. **Check-out Round:** What questions do you want to present to bring closure to the circle? Ex. How are people feeling right now? What can you take from this circle that is helpful to you?
12. **Closing:** How will you close the circle? A poem, quote, song, meditations & visualizations, story, group-building exercises, movement exercises, etc.

Thank you for participating in the Circle!

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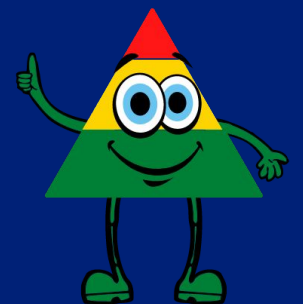


1. Welcome

Once everyone is seated in a circle, welcome everyone to the meeting.

“Welcome to our community building circle. I’m so glad to see each of you here today!”

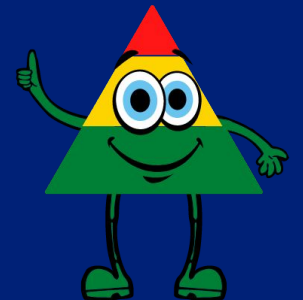
Welcome



2. Opening

Set the tone. There are many ways to do this... It can be a poem, chime, quotation, song, breathing, movement, exercise or other....

“We will begin with a quote from Helen Keller. “Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much.”

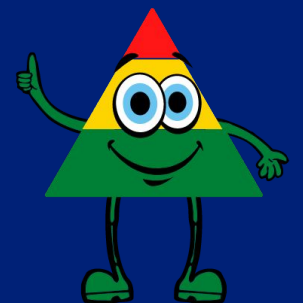


3. Purpose

Simply state the purpose of the circle.

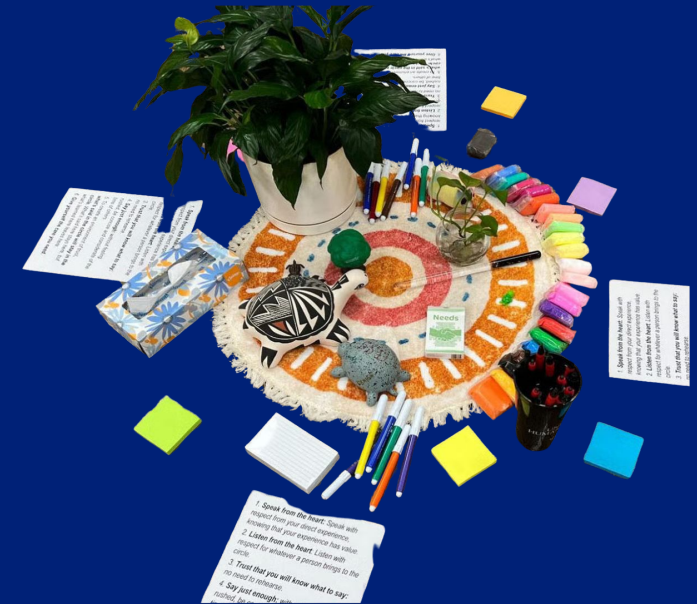


"We are meeting today to build positive relationships with each other and strengthen our community."



4. Explain the Centerpiece

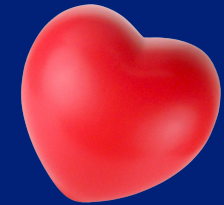
The centerpiece is a shared space in the middle of the circle. The centerpiece may include decorative materials such as clothes, plants, guidelines, values, or symbolic items.



“In the center today we have a plant that symbolizes growth. Relationships are like growing plants, they need to get watered daily by love, care, and communication.”

5. Explain the Talking Piece

Any object can be a talking piece, provided it is not too large and has a meaning that is connected to the purpose of the circle. When you have the talking piece, you are the only one talking and the others have the privilege to listen.



“Today we are going to use this heart as our talking piece in order to emphasize speaking and listening with our hearts.”

6. Circle Core Guidelines

The guidelines of the circle are the agreements that we make together to establish clear expectations and common ground. It provides a safe place to speak, connect to others in a positive way, and ensure a space that is respectful to all.

“Now let’s go over the guidelines. Can we all agree to these guidelines to ensure that our circle is orderly and we can all feel safe?”

Restorative Practices: Community Building Circle

Circle Core Guidelines

1. **Respect the talking piece**



2. **Speak from your heart**



3. **Listen with your heart**



4. **Speak with respect**



5. **Listen with respect**



6. **Remain in the circle**



7. **Honor Privacy**



7. Values

Using a paper hand and a marker, participants can write a value on each finger. In the palm, they will write the value they will bring to the circle today. Ask participants to share the importance, using the sentence starter: "Today I will bring _____ because _____."

"We are going to pass the talking piece and share the value that we are going to bring to the circle. Today I will bring the value of empathy because I feel it is important to understand how others feel."



8. Introduction/Check-in

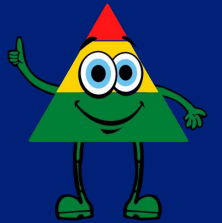
A Check-in gives all members an opportunity to share their feelings. It also gives the facilitator information regarding the initial levels of engagement of participants. The facilitator should model to start.



“First, let’s check in with each other. I’d like us all to share our names and express how we are feeling right now. Let’s use a 1–5 scale. A 5 means fantastic and a 1 means with are struggling and in need of support.”

9. Community Building Activity #1

A community building circle begins when the facilitator poses a discussion question or prompt for the participants. The facilitator shares first and then passes the talking piece clockwise or counter clockwise.

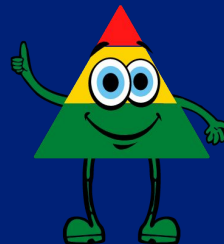


“For today’s first activity, please choose one of the core guidelines and share what it means to you. I will go first. I choose remain in the circle because it means being present physically, mentally, and emotionally. Sometimes we can be seated somewhere, but our minds are somewhere else. We want our minds here. I am now going to pass the heart to (the person to the left or right).”

10. Community Building Activity #2

A second community building activity begins when the facilitator poses a discussion question or prompt to further connect and align to the purpose of the circle. The facilitator shares first and then passes the talking piece.

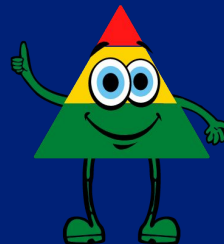
“For today’s second activity, we want to get to know more about each other. We are going to share, ‘If you really knew me, you would know...’ I will go first. ‘If you really knew me, you would know that I love going to the beach.’ I am now going to pass the heart to (the person to the left or right).”



11. Check-Out

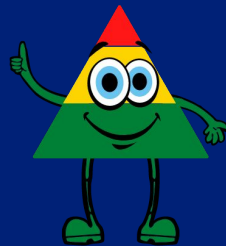
A check-out is used to gauge the participants now that they have experienced the circle. It is an opportunity to give and receive feedback in real time or tie any loose ends. It is a last opportunity to ensure participants sign off in a positive way and send a message that we care. The facilitator shares last.

"Now we want to take this opportunity to share your thoughts about the circle... In one word, tell us how you're feeling right now as the circle comes to a close."



12. Closing

The closing is designed to help us feel centered and to bring a sense of closure to the circle. It may include a poem, chile, quotation, song, breathing, movement, exercise, or other...



"I would like to close with a Mayan-inspired reflective poem. It is by Luis Valdez from "Pensamiento Serpentino." In Lak'ech (I Am You or You Are Me)

You are my other me.
If I do no harm to you,
I do no harm to myself.
If I love and respect you,
I love and respect myself."