

Responsive Circles

Responsive circles allow for classroom issues, such as bullying, harassment, patterns of disruptive behavior, tardies, not doing homework, theft...etc to be addressed with the entire class. All members of the classroom community are included in the process of positive change.

Sample Script for a Circle to Repair Harm

Opening:

I would like to welcome everyone here to our circle. We are here to talk about what happened and help figure out how to move forward in positive way. This is going to be a respectful process, where everyone's voice is heard.

Guidelines:

When we use a circle, we have certain guidelines that help ensure the conversation remains positive and allows for everyone to have an opportunity to share.

(guidelines should be written out and placed on pieces of paper in the middle of the circle)

The guidelines are:

- **Respect the talking piece:** everyone listens, everyone has a turn
- **Speak from your heart:** youth truth, your perspectives, your experiences
- **Listen from your heart:** let go of stories that make it hard to hear each other
- **Trust that you will know what to say:** no need to rehearse
- **Say just enough** without feeling rushed, be concise and considerate of the time of others.

Can we all commit to follow these guidelines? Are there any additional guidelines to add?

Repairing Harm Circle Rounds:

1st Round:

To start, I'd like each of us to share your name, why you are here, and answer the following question....(think of a good ice-breaker question to help build inclusion among the group prior to the circle....ex. what is your favorite CD at this time).

**The talking piece is passed to the person that volunteers to go first, and is continued to be passed around the circle until everyone who wishes to participate has an opportunity to do so.*

2nd Round:

We are now going discuss what happened? We need to hear about why we are here, so I have asked _____, and _____ to share the facts about the situation.

(prior to the circle, ask 2 people who know most of the facts about the incident if they would be willing to offer their understanding of the specific events that occurred. It is important that they only share the facts and leave their personal feelings out.)

We will then use the talking piece to allow for anyone else interested in adding what they know about the facts.

3rd Round:

We are now going to discuss who has been affected by what happened and address any harm that occurred as a result. (including any potential harms to the school and community)

(Introduce the talking piece again and allow for circle members to share. More than one round may be required to ensure everyone has the opportunity to share their thoughts.)

4th Round:

We would now like to hear what your personal feelings are about what happened?

(Introduce the talking piece again and allow for circle members to share.)

4th Round:

Now it's important to ask, what do you think needs to happen to repair the harm and ensure that it doesn't happen again?

(Introduce the talking piece again and allow for circle members to discuss. The circle keeper will write down the suggestions offered by the participants. More than one round may be required to ensure everyone has the opportunity to share their thoughts.)

5th Round:

And as a follow-up to that, what are you personally willing to do to repair the harm and move forward from this situation?

(Introduce the talking piece again and allow for circle members to share. The circle keeper will write down the suggestions offered by the participants. More than one round may be required to ensure everyone has the opportunity to share their thoughts.)

6th Round:

I would like to summarize what I heard everyone suggest for potential solutions to repair the harm that was caused. (keeper reads the solutions).

Which of these do you want to agree to and who is responsible for following through with repairing the harm?

(Introduce the talking piece again and allow for circle members to discuss. The circle keeper will write down the final agreement.)

7th Round:

In closing, the agreement is as such...(share agreement and who will be held accountable for it's completion).

I would like to congratulate you all for successfully completing the circle process. It takes a lot of courage to own up to our actions and participate in a circle process.

Thank you for participating

Source: *Community/Peacemaking Circles.*

www.healthiersf.org/RestorativePractices/Resources/documents/.. pp. 6-7. Accessed 8/27/2015.