

Classroom Community Building Circle Guide

Sample	
Participants	Students, teachers, and support staff
Objective	Participants will have an opportunity to share their thoughts and feelings.
Time	Time can vary depending on the number of participants.
Purpose	The purpose of today’s circle is to give us an opportunity to share our thoughts and feelings about .
Materials	Core Circle Guidelines (page 3)
Other Preparation	Advise the participants that circles may be conducted differently due to the current hybrid learning environment.
Circle Activity	
Welcome	<p>Give a clear, simple, and honest explanation using your own words of why the group will be meeting in a circle.</p> <p>Example: “Over the next few minutes, we are going to take some time to discuss our thoughts and feelings about _____.”</p>
Centering Activity	<p>Guide participants through a grounding activity or quote.</p> <p>Example: Box Breathing – Breathe in for a four-count, hold for a four- count, breathe out for a four-count, rest for a four-count. REPEAT ONE ADDITIONAL TIME.</p>
Seven Core Circle Guidelines	<p>Introduce/review the seven core guidelines</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Respect the talking piece. 2. Listen with your heart. 3. Speak with your heart. 4. Listen with respect. 5. Speak with respect. 6. Remain in the circle. 7. Honor privacy

Talking Piece	<p>Introduce the talking piece, why you chose it and how to use it: “Today our talking piece is ____ I chose this talking piece because_____.”</p> <p>Additional hybrid considerations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Invite students, teachers, and support staff to bring their own talking piece, hold it, talk about it, but remind them not to physically pass it. ● Invite students, teachers, and support staff to imagine a talking piece they would like to talk about in a circle. ● Invite students, teachers, and support staff to create a visual gesture to be used as a talking piece (thumbs up, a wave, peace sign, hand over heart, clap).
Check-In Round	<p>On a scale of 1-5, how are you feeling today?</p> <p>1= not good; 2= so-so; 3= okay; 4= good; 5= great!</p> <p>OR</p> <p>How are you feeling today?</p> <p>thumbs up= good; thumbs to the side= okay; or thumbs down= not so good</p>
Values Round	<p>Invite participants to share one value they are bringing to the circle.</p>
Discussion Rounds Prompts	<p>It is recommended to complete at least two rounds. Customize the prompts based on your purpose and the audience. A list of circle prompts is provided on page 4. Remind participants to respond to the prompts using affective statements.</p> <p>Example: “I feel _____ because_____.”</p> <p>“As I reflect on the past few days, I am feeling_____ because_____.”</p>
Quote	<p>Share a quote with the participants that connects to the purpose of the circle.</p> <p>Example: “The time is always right to do what is right.” Martin Luther King Jr.</p>
Closing Round	<p>Having each participant share up to three words about their experience in a circle today.</p>

Seven Core Circle Guidelines

Speak with your heart: This means speaking for yourself, talking about what is true for you based on your own experiences. When we speak from the heart we are aiming for eloquence, for choosing words that accurately communicate what we hold to be important.

Listen with your heart: We are accustomed to judging other people, often without even knowing anything about them. These assumptions can keep us from really hearing what they have to say and what they have to say may be something important and/or helpful. Therefore, when we listen from the heart, we are trying to set aside any assumptions and/or judgments we may hold about the person. This opens up the possibility of making wonderful discoveries about each other.

Talking piece: Establish how your students will share while honoring one voice; one speaker at a time. (e.g., alphabetical order, person to your left/right/bottom/top of your screen, pick a friend, etc.).

Listen with respect: This means to listen to what is being said, without judgement. This also means to make sure that one's body reflects being respectful.

Speak with respect: This means to be mindful of the words that one uses when sharing their thoughts. Hurtful words should never be used. It is best to use affective statements ("I" statements) when speaking one's truths.

Remain in the circle: This means to be physically and mentally present when being in a circle. It is important to bring our attention back to the circle when our mind wanders.

Honor privacy: It is important to remind the participants that things shared in the circle should remain in the circle. Do however, disclose that you are a mandated reporter and will report suspicions of child abuse or neglect.

Sample Community Building Circle Prompts

Building Connections

- Share a happy memory.
- If you could be a superhero, what superpower would you choose and why?
- What do you appreciate about your school?
- How would your best friend describe you?
- If you had an unexpected free day, what would you do?
- If you were an animal, what animal would you be and why?
- Name two things or people who always make you laugh.
- Do you have a hobby? Why did that hobby interest you?
- Name a male and/or a female who is your role model. What makes them a great role model?
- If you could have a face-to-face conversation with someone alive today or someone from the past, who would it be and why?
- Describe your ideal job.
- Describe your favorite vacation.
- What is one skill or talent you have?
- If you were a reporter, what kind of stories would you like to write about?
- Who is your hero? Why are they your hero?
- What do you think other people see as your best quality? Why?
- What is the silliest thing that ever happened to you?
- What is the best thing that happened to you this week?
- What was the most difficult or challenging thing that happened to you this week?
- A time you faced one of your most difficult challenges. How did you deal with it?
- An experience when, out of a crisis or difficulty situation, you discovered something positive.
- A time when you received bad news from a friend or family member and were grateful.
- Something that scares/scared you. How do/did you deal with it?
- An embarrassing moment that you can laugh at now.
- Something that makes/made you angry. How do/did you deal with it?
- A time when you were outside your comfort zone.
- An experience when you caused harm to someone and talking through the situation made it better.
- An experience where you did not fit in.

- What is the most important lesson you've in life? What made it so important?
- What is one thing you would like to grow or improve in? Why?

Community

- What change would you like to see in your community? What can you do to promote that change?
- What change would you like to see in your classroom? What can you do to promote that change?
- What is something you value about your community (culture, school, youth group, etc.)? Why?
- What is a memory you have about the neighborhood that you grew up in?
- What is something you like about your neighborhood? Why?
- What do others expect from you at school?
- What do you expect from others at school?

Exploring Relationships

- What is the most important quality to you in a friend? Why is it important to you?
- Who is someone in your life you look up to?
- Who is someone in your life you have learned from? What did you learn from them?
- Who is someone in your life that has helped you grow? What did they help you accomplish?
- Name a teacher who has influenced you in positive ways? How did he/she influence you?
- Share a time when you felt like you really belonged. What was it that caused you to feel that way?
- Share a time when you felt left out. What was it that caused you to feel that way?
- Who knows you the best? How does that person know you so well?
- Who do you appreciate the most? What do you most appreciate about that person?

Hopes and Dreams

- If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?
- Close your eyes and imagine yourself ten years from now. Where are you? What are you doing?
- What is the one thing that gives you the most satisfaction?
- What is one skill or talent you wish you had?
- If you could do anything in the world, what would it be?
- What do you dream about? Do you feel your dream can come true?
- What are three things you would do if you could change the world?

- What is your biggest goal? How will you celebrate your accomplishment?
- What is an obstacle that can get in the way of you reaching your goals? How do you plan to overcome this obstacle?
- What does it mean to be totally free? What would it look like?

Exploring Values

- What value would you like to offer for our classroom?
- What does being a good student mean? Do you consider yourself a good student?
- What are your challenges?
- What demonstrates respect?
- How do you demonstrate respect?
- What are three “gifts” that best describe you?
- What is something you value about your family? Why?
- What is something you value about yourself? Why?
- What is something you are thankful for? Why?
- What is the difference between something you want and something you need?
- What does power mean? What do you or others demonstrate having power?