

RESTORATIVE PRACTICE KETE



BOOK THREE Restorative Circles

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Introduction

Book One of the Positive Behaviour for Learning Restorative Practice kete introduced the concept of restorative practice in the context of Positive Behaviour for Learning (PB4L), outlined the PB4L Restorative Practice model, and described the approach schools can take to implement the model across their school community. The remaining books of the kete provide schools with the tools and resources to support them in implementing the model.

Kete Book Two explained the first component of the model, the Restorative Essentials, and provided a set of modules for schools to use in designing training in these essentials to suit the needs of their staff and wider community.

Kete Book Three focuses on the second component of the model, Restorative Circles. The final component of the model, Restorative Conferencing, is addressed in kete Book Four.

A NEW USE FOR AN ANCIENT TRADITION

The circle as a forum for dialogue, shared understanding, and consensus decision making is deeply embedded in the traditions of many indigenous peoples around the world. Many communities use circles to maintain their connections and to hear and understand the community's voice. They choose to share the responsibility of reaching consensus, rather than adopt a form of leadership in which decisions for the people are made by only a few.

In education, the concept of circles is not new. Schools often use circles within their communities to connect with one another, support one another's learning, and solve problems. Bringing people together in a neutral environment to listen to and understand one another is becoming more and more common in Western schools and communities. It helps people to strengthen connections and reach a consensus as a group. This book supports schools to use circles within the PB4L Restorative Practice model to create connectedness, share views and ideas, promote respect and understanding, enhance learning, and find positive solutions to challenging behaviour.

Restorative [Practice programmes] in schools aim to develop:

- communities that value the building of quality relationships coupled with clear expectations and limits
- restorative skills in the way we interact with young people – using teachable moments to enhance learning
- restorative processes that resolve conflict and repair damaged relationships
- communities that are forward looking, optimistic, and inclusive.

Harrison, 2007, page 17

THE STRUCTURE OF THIS BOOK

Kete Book Three is divided into five sections:

- The first section explains how Restorative Circles fit into the PB4L Restorative Practice model.
 It shows how the circle process links with *The New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007) and outlines the positive outcomes of implementing Restorative Circles.
- The second section describes each of the six circles in the model.
- The third section discusses the role and responsibilities of the circle facilitator, the elements that make up the structure of a circle session, and circle protocols.
- The fourth section describes the three phases of the Restorative Circle process.
- The fifth section contains the six training modules (there is one module for each type of circle in the PB4L Restorative Practice model).

PB4L Restorative Circles

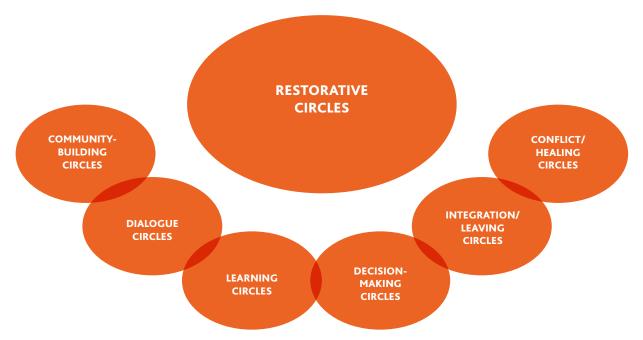
PB4L Restorative Circles are facilitated dialogues used to build school communities, develop positive relationships, and provide opportunities for effective teaching and learning. They foster calmer, more focused classrooms in which less time is spent managing behaviour. Within a circle, all participants share responsibility for maintaining a positive and inclusive learning environment based on trust and on reaching a consensus about how things should be.

The PB4L Restorative Circle process creates a space in which all participants – adults and students alike – can feel that they belong and have an equal voice. Restorative Circles provide the opportunity to speak and contribute without interruption, pressure, or fear of criticism. They offer a platform for members of the school community to share their stories, to feel heard and understood, and to connect with one another. Participants use dialogue to establish ways of learning and working together, to explore issues, and to look for ways to achieve positive outcomes.

CIRCLES IN THE PB4L RESTORATIVE PRACTICE MODEL

In the PB4L Restorative Practice model, there are six interrelated types of Restorative Circle: Community-building Circles, Dialogue Circles, Learning Circles, Decision-making Circles, Integration/Leaving Circles, and Conflict/ Healing Circles.





PB4L Restorative Circles operate on a continuum from greeting newcomers, establishing rapport, exploring school values, and supporting learning through to exploring the drivers behind low-level negative behaviours, looking for ways to repair the harm caused to relationships, and building new cultures and ways of being within a school community.

The first five circles focus on building connectedness and a sense of community, sharing stories, establishing consensus among a group, sharing responsibility, and deepening learning opportunities – outcomes that significantly benefit any school community. The sixth and most formal type of Restorative Circle, the Conflict/Healing Circle, is different in that it uses a restorative script to address low-level conflict or harm that has occurred between two or more people.

RESTORATIVE CIRCLES AND CULTURAL RESPONSIVENESS

In all types of Restorative Circles, from Communitybuilding Circles or whakawhanaungatanga through to Conflict/Healing Circles or ngā tatau pounamu, practice and process must be culturally responsive.

The PB4L Restorative Practice model is underpinned by the relational approach and recognises that cultural responsiveness is essential for developing learning communities of mutual respect and inclusion. All three components of the model, from Restorative Conversations (covered in Book Two) through to Restorative Circles and Restorative Conferences, need to be approached and implemented in a culturally appropriate way, recognising the values and experiences of tamariki, whānau, and Pasifika, and acknowledging the cultural diversity of our schools and communities.

Part of the circle facilitator's role is to acknowledge each student's understanding and view of the world as unique and based on their ethnicity, life experiences, gender, and socio-economic environment – all of which contribute to who they are and what is relevant and important to them. In this way, the facilitator uses the circle process to build on the student's current knowledge by recognising their personal and cultural strengths.

Rather than impose, restorative practices achieve social discipline through participatory learning and decision making. Proactively, they foster the development of relationships and community. They do so by creating opportunities for people to safely express emotion and develop emotional bonds.

Wachtel, 2009, page 8

LINKS TO THE NEW ZEALAND CURRICULUM

The vision of *The New Zealand Curriculum* for the young people of Aotearoa New Zealand is that they become confident, connected, lifelong learners who are actively involved in New Zealand society, contribute to its welfare, and value the traditions, history, well-being, and diversity of our country. Restorative Circles support the principles, values, and vision of *The New Zealand Curriculum*.

By developing effective communication skills while supporting a variety of learning opportunities for students, Restorative Circles are an ideal vehicle for exploring curriculum content in the classroom. They also support students' use and development of the five key competencies of *The New Zealand Curriculum*: thinking; using language, symbols, and texts; managing self; relating to others; and participating and contributing.

Although the New Zealand Curriculum will be delivered to and experienced by students in many ways throughout their school lives, Restorative Circles may be considered a prime tool, as students become integral parts of the learning process, rather than outside observers of it.

Hubbard, n. d.

BENEFITS OF PB4L RESTORATIVE CIRCLES

BENEFITS FOR STUDENTS

As students gain experience with the PB4L Restorative Circles, they become more confident in participating and contributing in them. They learn how to support building positive and safe classrooms, to foster supportive peer relationships, and to listen to others respectfully. They know that they can ask for support if they have been affected by inappropriate behaviour at school. They learn to trust the circle as a safe place to explore thoughts, feelings, and experiences and to value an inclusive, productive learning environment.

BENEFITS FOR STAFF AND OTHER ADULTS

Over time, staff and other adults in the school community develop confidence in using the PB4L Restorative Circles as tools within their pedagogical approaches. They become familiar with the range of circles and understand how they can be used for different purposes, including to support specific learning outcomes. They learn to use circles in many ways – for example, to:

- foster and build positive, safe, and inclusive classrooms
- gain a group consensus and develop shared responsibility for behaviour
- support students to explore how low-level negative behaviours can affect others and how damaged relationships can be mended.

As school staff grow more familiar with the PB4L Restorative Circles, they appreciate how circles can benefit the whole school community – for example, they may use them to engage other staff in dialogue about students' learning and behaviour.

HOW OFTEN SHOULD CIRCLES BE USED?

As a best-practice approach to facilitating a range of circles within a school, the PB4L Restorative Circle process can be used as often as needed. In fact, the more often a school uses the process, the more valuable it becomes. As schools develop consistent approaches for using the different types of circles and adapt them to reflect their individual culture and values, the circle process becomes more robust – it becomes 'the way we do things around here'.

As school leaders and staff come to value Restorative Circles and to take advantage of their potential, students and whānau also begin to trust and value the circle process. Whānau are more likely to engage with and support student learning and achievement if they too participate in Restorative Circles within cultural or sporting groups and through other roles they have within the school community.

In the classroom, Learning Circles can be valuable for introducing a new topic or curriculum approach in a positive, collaborative, and inclusive learning environment. When the circle has a regular slot in the timetable (for example, 1 hour per week), participants have time to think of questions and ideas and to bring along resources to support one another's learning.

The more regularly classroom teachers use circles, the more confident they become with the circle process and able to adapt it to reflect the values and the relational dynamics of the class. Students also become familiar and confident with the process. However, if the way the circle is run becomes too predictable, students may lose interest and disengage. To avoid this, teachers should use a variety of approaches and activities (see Appendix 2).

The six Restorative Circles

Together, the six types of Restorative Circle in the PB4L Restorative Practice model are appropriate for a wide range of situations and needs. They are semi-formal (in that there is a process) and are facilitated by the classroom teacher, a cultural leader, or a student. Mostly they follow a similar approach (see 'Structuring the circle', page 11) – the group sit in a circle, the facilitator uses activities and asks prompting questions to build trust and support dialogue, and the participants take turns to contribute. What distinguishes one circle from another is its purpose. But whatever its intended outcome, a Restorative Circle uses a non-hierarchical, consensus approach in which all participants have an equal voice.

The uses for Circles in school settings are infinite and are by no means limited to the ones described. In preparing future generations for this world, the Circle becomes an essential tool for imparting knowledge, providing a forum for reflective dialogue, and encouraging the use of creative and peaceful solutions to conflict. The possibilities are endless.

Pranis, 2005, page 73

COMMUNITY-BUILDING CIRCLE

Community-building Circles focus on creating connections across the school community, building healthy relationships and a culture of care in the classroom and community, and celebrating positive behaviour and achievement. They are an ideal way of introducing students to circle activities and protocols, such as ice-breakers and the talking piece (see page 12). They support students to accept diversity in viewpoints, experiences, background, and culture. Community-building Circles encourage participants to listen to one another with respect and to handle opposing opinions in positive ways.

The aim [of the Community-building Circle] is to support students in whatever process they are feeling; to give permission to "come as you are". This in turn can support the authenticity of the dialogue when the circle moves into taking care of business such as discussing conflicts or other class issues.

Clifford, 2013, page 18

Community-building Circles can include a variety of activities. They can be used to establish rapport among a new class or group of people, share experiences, hear one other's stories, and support whakawhanaungatanga. Module 1 focuses on Community-building Circles.



DIALOGUE CIRCLE

The Dialogue Circle (covered in Module 2) is a platform for discussion. It offers the opportunity to explore topics, share ideas on a particular subject, hear different perspectives, and share understandings. It creates an inclusive environment in which all participants feel confident about joining in a discussion, and can be particularly helpful in encouraging the less outgoing among the group to contribute their opinions and ideas. The Dialogue Circle does not require a collective agreement or outcome.

This kind of circle allows people to explore different viewpoints with honesty and respect, as equals. The discussion can involve any issue – for example, a minor disagreement, class rules, the code of conduct for a sports or cultural group, and learning expectations. Teachers can use the process to touch base with colleagues (for example, at department meetings) or groups of students on a regular basis. The Dialogue Circle promotes connectedness by encouraging staff and students to share their taonga and unique stories. It enables the links between school values and expectations of behaviour to be made explicit – for example, by exploring the values of the school, a sports or cultural group, or a classroom.

Dialogue circles are a process that ... often results in a sense of increased harmony, fellowship and creativity.

Queensland Studies Authority, 2010, page 1

LEARNING CIRCLE

Like the Dialogue Circle, the Learning Circle is a platform for discussion that does not always require a collective decision or outcome. A Learning Circle tends to be facilitated by a staff member; however, one of the learning circle activities may be smallgroup dialogues facilitated by students.



Learning Circles focus on deepening participants' understanding of specific curriculum-related topics or projects. They provide a forum for sharing prior knowledge, expertise, and individual perspectives on a chosen topic, for informing learning objectives, and for encouraging both teacher and students to share their unique experiences and individual understandings in order to build the knowledge base of the whole group.

Learning Circles are useful for project-based work, where they give students the opportunity to understand the different ways in which people learn, to take ownership of their individual learning needs and expected achievement outcomes, and to facilitate one another's learning. Learning Circles are covered in Module 3.

Deep learning impacts the mind, the body, the emotions and the spirit. It involves introduction, trust-building and preparation, exploration of issues, and moving towards action. Deep learning moves a person, through creative tension toward harmony and balance. Deep learning moves people from debate to shared vision. The learner's focus shifts from positions to interests. Teaching and learning in Circle does all of this. It is student-centered education that calls out critical thinking skills and higher thought processes.

Lewis, 2003, page 4

DECISION-MAKING CIRCLE

The Decision-making Circle (see Module 4) is a collaborative process through which adults and students can establish agreement on expected behaviour and develop group, class, or school protocols. It allows participants to explore options, plan learning and achievement outcomes, create agreements, and draw up procedures for managing situations and relationships when things go wrong. Decision-making Circles are also suitable for establishing whole-school values and expectations of behaviour, particularly with regard to implementing the PB4L Restorative Practice model within the school community.

In a Decision-making Circle, participants can define issues and generate ideas for solving problems, evaluate solutions, create and prioritise plans, and discuss what level of consensus is acceptable to the group. While the circle focuses on collaborative decision-making and no one person controlling the outcomes, the facilitator plays a vital role:

... the circle leader [the facilitator] is the most important person in terms of [the circle's] success or failure. The leader guides the group toward reaching the goals that have been set by the organizer and the participants. It is the leader's responsibility to stimulate and moderate the discussion by asking questions, identifying key points, and managing the group process. While doing all this, the leader must be friendly, understanding, and supportive.

Rudd, 2005, page 47

USING DECISION-MAKING CIRCLES WITH A SENIOR CLASS

Teacher (to the class): "We have reached the end of this topic. We need to complete an assessment by Thursday next week – I don't mind if it's an assignment, a practical exercise, or a test. In your groups, decide on one of those options. In a few minutes, I'll come back to each group for a decision."

The students talk in their groups; the majority decision is that a test would be the best option.

Teacher: "OK, thanks for that. Now, I'll need two days to do the marking, so we need to have the test done by Tuesday next week. When between now and next Tuesday would you like to sit the test? In your groups, decide on a date. I'll come back in a few minutes to hear your decision."

The students decide on Thursday afternoon.

Teacher: "Thursday is fine by me. Thanks for that."

In this way, Decision-making Circles resulted in a group of students deciding on an appropriate assessment. The students were given responsibility for the decision-making process, and the teacher got what she needed – all within 10 minutes.

INTEGRATION/LEAVING CIRCLE

The Integration Circle is an opportunity for introducing and welcoming new staff, students, and whānau to the school community. It allows people to get to know each other and fosters belonging, connection, and inclusiveness. Integration Circles provide a platform for new students, staff, and whānau to introduce themselves, mihi one another, and get a sense of the values and culture of the school (or class or group) and the expectations of behaviour and learning within this community.

Transition and integration into a school community can be a daunting experience. Schools sometimes expect new students and staff to know how things work without any induction process. For a new student or staff member, an informal introduction in the form of a circle is a more relational and inclusive approach than, for example, receiving good wishes and a copy of their timetable.

Integration circles provide a process for:

- welcoming individual staff and students to a school community or class
- welcoming cohorts of students to a school community
- welcoming students, their whānau, and staff back from an extended time away.

As a farewell or poroporoaki, the Leaving Circle provides an opportunity to express individual and collective appreciation of those leaving, acknowledge the contribution they have made, and affirm their place in the story of the school community (see 'The praise round' in Appendix 2).

The Leaving Circle acknowledges the positive attributes and strengths of those leaving. It provides them with an opportunity to hear the hopes and good wishes of their peers and the school. This is particularly important for students who are leaving, as it supports their ongoing relationships with others from within the school community. Integration/ Leaving Circles are covered in Module 5.

CONFLICT/HEALING CIRCLE

The Conflict/Healing Circle is a semi-formal process for exploring low-level harm between two or more people in a class. This circle typically involves approximately three to six people and includes those who have caused harm, those who have been harmed, and those who are there to provide support. It has the same aim as a Restorative Conference, but a Restorative Conference addresses incidents of more serious harm, uses a more formal process, and is facilitated by a specially trained staff member or adult.

A Conflict/Healing circle can be used as the next step for classroom teachers who have had a Restorative Conversation with individual students to address low-level behavioural issues but have observed little or no change in the students' behaviour. Examples of such issues include:

- being habitually late to class
- undermining others within the class
- using culturally inappropriate language
- ongoing disruptive behaviour.

The aim of the circle is to consider who has been affected, establish how they have been harmed, and reach an agreement about what needs to be done to put things right.

This type of circle requires the teacher to act as facilitator and uses a restorative script to explore challenging incidents within the classroom or school (see Appendix 4). However, if the classroom teacher has also been harmed, then the circle will need to be facilitated by a syndicate head, head of department, or other trusted colleague.

The facilitator follows the three phases of the restorative process (preparation, participation, and follow-up). In the preparation phase, the facilitator interviews each participant. This allows the facilitator to gauge the dynamics within the group and the extent of the harm caused before facilitating the circle. It also prepares the participants for the types of question they will be asked during the circle and to discuss what the expected outcomes might be.

During the participation phase (i.e., the actual circle), following a particular speaking order is important. For the first four steps of the script, those who have caused harm should speak first, followed by those who have been harmed. This allows participants to better understand the motivations behind particular actions and others' responses to them.

For the classroom teacher, one of the benefits of facilitating this type of circle is that it provides participants with an opportunity to repair the harm and to reach an agreement that supports positive changes in behaviour. It also gives the teacher more ownership when managing low-level issues in their classroom in the future.

Having started Circles in several classes that were once very much a 'problem', it became immediately clear that the students were operating from a very low sense of trust with each other. The bickering, put-downs, inattention to work, belligerence towards teachers were in many ways an expression of that mistrust. Once we had begun to build trust with Circle exercises, many elements of class behaviour began to show significant improvement and continue to do so.

Hubbard, n.d.

Role of the facilitator

The role of the facilitator is to guide the circle process, keep the proceedings respectful and safe, support learning in the group, and ensure that the purpose of the circle has been clearly stated. The facilitator models the behaviour expected in the circle by being calm, inclusive, and respectful. They prepare thoroughly beforehand, particularly when running an Integration/Leaving Circle or a Conflict/ Healing Circle, for which all participants are prepared as well.

It is often beneficial to have a co-facilitator for a circle, particularly for Conflict/Healing circles. The co-facilitator can provide support, act as a scribe, and play devil's advocate in order to encourage more robust dialogue from the participants. After the session, they can also offer the lead facilitator feedback and constructive advice.

Using a co-facilitator can also provide opportunities to build capacity among both staff and students. Acting as a co-facilitator allows those new to or less confident in the role to be supported throughout the process, building their confidence and preparing them to facilitate their own circles. If they get stuck or go off track, the lead facilitator can take over, guiding them back to the original objective of the circle.

STRUCTURING THE CIRCLE

The format of Restorative Circle sessions can vary according to their purpose and type, but they usually include most of the following aspects:

- appropriate environment and seating
- a welcome and an opening ceremony he korero tairitenga
- an introduction or mihi te whakatuwheratanga
- an explanation or creation of a centre piece
- an explanation of the talking piece
- agreed guidelines and values ngā tikanga
- participants' stories, views, and feelings
- discussion of issues and ideas whakawhitiwhiti whakaaro
- exploration of options
- agreement on solutions
- clarification of expectations
- summing up
- a closing ceremony he poroporoaki.

Some of the above aspects are discussed in more detail below.

ENVIRONMENT AND SEATING

A circle is best held in a room that is quiet and free from external interruptions and distractions. For Conflict/Healing Circles in particular, privacy is important so that the talk cannot be overheard from outside. The chairs should be arranged in a circle so that everyone can clearly see everyone else, with breathing space in between. Anything that could be a barrier – desks, bags, and so on – should be moved to the sides of the room. This arrangement provides an equal platform for participants – a circle has no head. If the facilitator is familiar with the relationship dynamics of the group (for example, they teach the class), they can draw up a seating plan to make sure that any participants who are likely to be antagonistic towards the process don't sit next to each other. Alternatively, they can use some of the activities given in Appendix 2 to mix up the group.

OPENING CEREMONY

The opening ceremony signals that participants are moving out of the ordinary school day into a separate space. It allows them to focus and be present in the moment. The opening ceremony can take various forms – for example, the facilitator or a student may share a quotation, a poem, a personal story, a karakia, or a piece of music.

A CENTRE PIECE

Sometimes a centre piece is used in a Restorative Circle to create a focal point and to reinforce the topic or context for the circle. The centre piece can be prepared in advance by the facilitator, or put together as part of the circle process by participants adding objects that have meaning for them in the context of the discussion. For example, students in a history class focusing on a local historical event may bring to a Learning Circle topic-related personal objects and stories to share with others in the class.

The center of the circle is an important element. While it can be left clear, it is often more powerful when something is placed in the center to provide focus. Creating the center can be part of the ritual of moving into circle time. Students often enjoy doing this ...

It is traditional in circles to speak into the center. The idea is that everyone's voice is added to the center, and it is from the center that the wisdom of the class will begin to emerge. Once someone has spoken into the center, their contribution becomes the property of the circle. It becomes part of a shifting story, a pathway toward an understanding that comes clearer little by little.

Clifford, 2013, page 13

THE TALKING PIECE

During the Restorative Circle process it is common practice to use a talking piece, an object that is passed around the circle as the right to speak passes from one person to another. Put simply, a talking piece is used to establish who is talking and who is listening.

The talking piece does more than encourage one person to speak at a time. The action of passing the talking piece fosters respectful listening and can slow the pace of conversation down so that participants can follow it more easily. The talking piece offers participants a sense that the environment is controlled and they are safe to share honestly. It also ensures that everyone has the opportunity to speak and that no one person dominates the circle.

Junior students sometimes find it difficult to engage in the circle process and may not respond to their turn appropriately. If this happens, it may be beneficial to go around the circle again to elicit a more genuine response. It may also be appropriate to use one of the seating activities in Appendix 2 to move participants out of cliques.

When choosing a talking piece, consider an item that has meaning for the group or a natural object such as a river stone or a smooth piece of wood. Make sure it is appropriate for the context of the circle and the age of the participants. It also needs to be big enough to be clearly seen by everyone.

Two techniques for passing the talking piece are:

- The round the talking piece is passed from one person to the next around the circle. The person holding the talking piece speaks while others listen. If someone does not wish to speak, they pass the talking piece to the next person.
- The pick-up the talking piece is put in the centre of the circle to signal that it is available for anyone who wishes to speak. The person picks up the talking piece and after speaking returns it to the centre, or to the next person who wishes to share.

GUIDELINES AND VALUES

Before the group begins the circle, the participants need to establish guidelines and values for the discussion. The guidelines are agreed by the group and serve to translate the agreed values into action.

Common guidelines are:

- keep confidentiality
- use the talking piece to speak
- do not interrupt
- listen with respect no criticisms, arguments, or put-downs
- speak from the heart
- focus on solutions
- strive for a positive outcome.

The values underlying circles include honesty, respect, trust, safety, inclusiveness, consensus decision making, understanding, shared responsibility, and personal accountability.

SUMMING UP

At this stage, the facilitator sums up the discussion from the circle and the agreements reached (if appropriate), and records them on a large sheet of paper or on the whiteboard so that they are visible to all. This is also the point at which to acknowledge any tricky or sensitive issues encountered during circle time that may have affected some of the students. Immediately after the circle is closed, the facilitator should talk to these students to gauge whether they need any further support.



CLOSING CEREMONY

The closing ceremony completes the circle and returns the participants to their everyday classroom routines. Through the closing ceremony the facilitator acknowledges the efforts of the group, summarises what has been learned, expresses a sense of hope, reaffirms connectedness, and encourages participants to focus on the good that was achieved.

Closings ... convey a sense of hope for the future, and prepare participants to return to the ordinary space of their lives. Openings and closings are designed to fit the nature of the particular group and provide opportunities for cultural responsiveness.

Pranis, 2005, page 33

USING A SERIES OF CIRCLES

Sometimes the purpose of a circle is to explore an issue that may subsequently require another type of Restorative Circle (a Decision-making Circle or a Conflict/Healing circle, for example). In this case, it may be appropriate to start by facilitating a Community-building Circle or a Dialogue Circle, so that participants can become familiar with the circle process and are sufficiently prepared to be able to make informed decisions. Approaching a difficult issue in this way will also help build trust among the group before they address the issue.

BUILDING TRUST

PB4L Restorative Circles require the facilitator to build trust among the group by using low-risk prompting questions (see Appendix 1) that encourage participants to share their views and feelings in safe ways, without intimate self-disclosure and the risk of criticism or judgment.

The facilitator needs to give all participants opportunities to contribute to the circle while keeping the focus on the original objectives and expected outcomes and maintaining a positive, inclusive environment. Sharing views and experiences on challenging topics may prove difficult for some participants, especially students, because there is always a risk that confidentiality may be compromised.

Participants should not be expected to answer personal questions or questions that ask them to judge others. They may have good reasons for not wanting to share within the circle. How much and how openly they contribute to the discussion is a good measure of how safe they feel. Frequent passing of the talking piece without contributing also suggests that there is a lack of trust among the group.

If there appears to be insufficient trust, the facilitator should end the circle by thanking the participants and stating that the circle will reconvene at a later date. A more foundational level of circle such as a Dialogue Circle may be needed to build connectedness and trust.

MANAGING BEHAVIOUR

EFFECTIVE LISTENING AND USE OF SILENCE

Effective communication skills include effective listening. A good facilitator models these skills for participants by waiting 5–7 seconds after a dialogue prompt or a question. This pause allows participants to hear the prompt or question, understand it, and formulate a response. It also allows them to experience silence as a respectful and effective way of listening to others. When the facilitator models this technique, participants are less likely to be uncomfortable with the pause and will grow familiar with it over time.

There may also be silence in the circle when the participants are in a moment of deep contemplation. In this situation, the facilitator will eventually allow the silence to be broken by a participant wishing to speak or respond. Demonstrating to participants the power of silence early on in circle practice supports learning about managing self – one of the key competencies of *The New Zealand Curriculum*.

HAND SIGNALS

Hand signals are a respectful way for facilitators and participants to communicate in the circle without interrupting others. The signals are used to express a desire to speak next or to respond to the speaker. They can also be used to reinforce expectations of positive behaviour in the circle.

Common hand signals include:

- The outstretched hand: "Can I please use the talking piece next?"
- The raised hand: "I'm beginning to see or hear things that don't fit our expectations of behaviour here – either from the speaker's words or from the actions of a non-speaker."

DEALING WITH INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR

However well facilitators may prepare for a circle, there will still be times when they need to manage unexpected behaviour from one or more of the participants.

It is crucial that the facilitator remains calm and quietly reminds participants about the expectations for behaviour within the circle and the school. Lowlevel inappropriate behaviour and distractions should first be addressed through non-verbal signals such as hand gestures and eye contact, or by changing the seating arrangement of the circle (see Appendix 2).

The raised hand signal can be used by students and adults alike to deter low-level inappropriate behaviour such as talking while the speaker is speaking, laughing at another participant, or assigning blame.

Students should be encouraged to raise their hand if they believe they are witnessing any disruptive behaviour. It can be a powerful signal when one or more peers acknowledge that something being said or done in the circle is inappropriate. This system gives participants the opportunity to reflect on their own and others' behaviour in relation to the agreed values. It also gives them a chance to manage their behaviour in a positive and non-judgmental environment. However, the facilitator needs to be careful that one or more participants are not using this signal to single out another student.

The facilitator can also manage behaviour by calling a break during the circle time. This gives participants a chance to move around and stretch their legs while the facilitator takes one or two aside for a brief Restorative Conversation before continuing the circle.

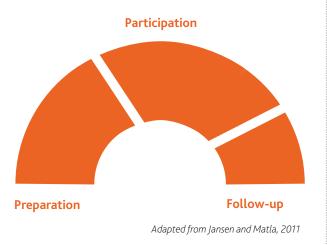
On the rare occasion that a participant does not respond positively to non-verbal communication and is not making any attempt to modify their behaviour, the facilitator may ask the participant to leave the circle. For example, a facilitator might say: "I'm hearing some disrespectful language from you, Stacey. We want you to be included in this circle, but you need to follow our agreed expectations of behaviour. Are you able to do this?" If the student says "No", the facilitator might say: "Stacey, I need you to stand and move your chair out of the circle."

The circle closes up, leaving Stacey outside and no longer able to participate. The co-facilitator (or another adult or trusted student) can escort Stacey to a supervised office or room until circle time is completed. The facilitator will need to follow up with Stacey soon afterwards. This may include referral to, for example, a dean or guidance counsellor to support a change in behaviour.

The PB4L Restorative Circle process

As with Restorative Conversations (see kete Book Two), the Restorative Circle process has three phases: **preparation**, **participation**, and **follow-up**.

FIGURE 2: THE THREE PHASES OF A PB4L RESTORATIVE CIRCLE



PREPARATION

SELECT THE CIRCLE

Which type of Restorative Circle is most appropriate for your purpose? Choose the type of circle that best suits the requirements of the situation. You may find it helpful to ask a colleague to observe or cofacilitate the circle and provide feedback.

If you are preparing for a Conflict/Healing Circle, draft an appropriate script. Other circles do not require a script, because so much of the dialogue is generated by the participants; the facilitator's role is to guide the discussion back to the topic if it starts to wander.

Design a seating plan that will support the relational dynamics in the class or group. If a separate room is necessary, book it in advance if possible and arrive early to arrange chairs and set up resources for activities.

LAY THE GROUNDWORK

Prepare the participants before running the circle. Some types of circles will require more preparation than others. For a Conflict/Healing Circle, it is important to conduct preparatory interviews with all participants using a restorative script (see Appendix 4). This allows the facilitator to get the facts straight and supports participants to view the circle as a way of fixing the problem and moving forward.

The setting needs to be quiet and large enough to contain a circle of chairs for the class or group with tables moved aside. Arrange the space so that participants can see each other and are sitting in an evenly spaced circle without obstacles such as desks or bags.

Identify any risks involved in the circle – for example, relational dynamics, different learning needs, and location. Explain the circle process to the participants before the session, beginning with the importance of safety for everyone who takes part.

Have a back-up plan – for example, ask a colleague to be available to co-facilitate the circle if the dynamics in the group are such that the dialogue might go off track or create harm, or if you are a new facilitator wanting an experienced facilitator there to provide support.

If you decide to use a talking piece, select something suitable; natural objects in wood or stone have appeal. If you are using a centre piece, select a piece of fabric or tapa to place on the floor in the centre of the circle, where participants can place any relevant objects such as photographs, books, or artefacts they wish to share as part of the discussion.

ENGAGE THE STUDENTS

With the students, discuss the objectives of the circle. Establish the content, topic, issue, or theme of the dialogue – if appropriate, have the group engage with readings on the selected topic before circle time or ask them to bring items to share that are related to the topic.

Clarify understandings about confidentiality. It is vital that information shared during circle time is respected by all participants and kept confidential, even after the circle is closed. If even one person does not consent to a confidentiality agreement, the rest of the group need to be aware that what they say may be talked about outside circle time.

Allow the students to develop the guidelines for discussion, behaviour, and ceremony in the circle – this can be done using, for example, a Decisionmaking Circle or Dialogue Circle. These guidelines could be displayed on a poster or the whiteboard whenever a circle is held. Be mindful of the diverse experiences, backgrounds, and values of all participants. For your group, is there any special protocol or kawa associated with the type of circle you have selected?

The group may need 'meta-learning' (using a circle to learn how the circle process works) in order to reach consensus on expectations of behaviour, on guidelines for using the talking piece, and on the format of opening and closing ceremonies.

CHOOSE STARTER RESOURCES

Prepare appropriate prompting statements or questions (see Appendix 1 for suggestions) and select one or more suitable activities (see Appendix 2).

PARTICIPATION

Welcome the class or group and, depending on the type of circle, conduct an opening ceremony. Make sure that everyone is clear on the agreed learning intentions, and expectations of behaviour, for the circle – for example, listening with attention, being respectfully honest, and being aware of the safety and well-being of all the participants. Ensure that students understand beforehand what is relevant and appropriate for the type of circle. It's much harder to stop a student from sharing an inappropriate story in the circle once they have started.



If participants don't already know each other, provide them with an opportunity to introduce themselves, to mihi, and to make connections using selected activities.

Manage the pace. Allow time for reflective thought and use silence to encourage participants to talk. Without pressuring participants, encourage them to speak to the extent they are comfortable with. A participant who is reluctant to speak may nominate a friend or whānau member to speak on their behalf.

Stimulate dialogue by asking prompting questions that encourage students to respond with more than "Yes" or "No" answers (see Appendix 1). Alternatively, you or a participant could bring a relevant item to share, such as a significant object, photograph, or even poem. These contributions, however small, all help to build confidence, trust, and understanding among the group.

Use inclusive language when facilitating a circle – for example:

- "Today we will ..."
- "Work together to ..."
- "Learn from each other by ..."
- "As a group we will ..."
- "Together we will plan ..."

Throughout the session, be mindful of how the dialogue may be affecting the other participants. Monitor behaviour and protocols closely, reinforcing the expectations of behaviour that were established at the beginning of the circle.

Allow time at the end of the circle for participants to reflect on successful outcomes and next steps. Record any suggestions or themes that could be used for future reflection.

Thank all participants for their contribution and provide a brief summary of the discussion and the outcomes of the session, acknowledging any difficult or sensitive issues encountered during the session. Summarise any agreements or decisions that require follow-up, and give them a time frame for completion. Agreements should be explicit and clearly understood by the whole group. If there is no consensus, then there is no agreement.

Assign follow-up tasks to students and staff as required. Next steps may involve establishing a monitoring team or choosing a few class champions to help keep track of any agreements made.

If appropriate, finish with a brief closing ceremony. There are many possibilities for a closing ceremony; it is important because it signifies the end of the circle process and marks the return to the everyday routines of school. Where possible, allow students to have input; they often appreciate an opportunity to provide a whakataukī or karakia for the group.

After the circle, discuss it with a colleague to identify what went well and any areas for improvement.

FOLLOW-UP

At the agreed times, follow up and review any agreements or decisions from the circle (if applicable) and check that any tasks are completed, particularly for a Learning Circle. If there is a series of circles on the same subject, agreements and decisions will grow and change over time.

In the next class, collate feedback on outcomes from the circle and have the group break into smaller groups to discuss the feedback. For example, for a previous circle that explored school values, students might go into small groups to discuss whether and how those values are now being displayed in class. They could then use a Learning Circle to begin a project that involves surveying and data collection on the school's values from within the school community.

Remember to reaffirm progress and celebrate successes.



Modules¹

A

¹ For an explanation of the PB4L Restorative Practice modules, see page 11 in kete Book Two.



COMMENT: WHAT DOES RESTORATIVE PRACTICE LOOK LIKE?

In the PB4L Restorative Practice model, the Community-building Circle is the foundation for the other Restorative Circles. Community-building Circles focus on creating connections and building healthy relationships and healthy cultures in the classroom and the wider school community.

Community-building Circles can include a wide range of activities to establish rapport among a new group or class. This module provides opportunities for staff to experience and facilitate such activities, using a talking piece and a variety of dialogue prompts. In the following week, they use a Community-building Circle with their class and discuss how it went in a subsequent PLD session.

When preparing for this module, note that resource sheet 1c requires participants to bring an object that has special significance for them, such as a photograph or taonga.

ACTIVITY

Practising community-building activities with other staff

In groups of 8–10, choose **resource sheet 1a**, **1b**, **or 1c**. One member of each group role-plays the facilitator and chooses a prompt from the resource sheet. The members of the group respond in turn, using the talking piece to pass the speaking right from one person to the next. When all members of the group have had a turn as the facilitator, discuss how you found the experience of the circle. Some points to consider are:

- What did you learn about others in your group?
- How did it feel to be listened to by the group?
- Are you able to think of other types of conversations or sentence starters that would work effectively in a Community-building Circle?
- How different was it to be the facilitator rather than a member of the group?

If time permits, repeat the activity with one of the other resource sheets. If the second sheet takes a different approach to using the talking piece ('round' vs 'pick-up'), did using the different approach make any difference to participants' sharing?

Practising facilitation with students

In the following week, each participant should facilitate a Community-building Circle with their class, using one of the three resource sheets. In the next PLD session on circles, have participants get into the same groups as before and discuss how the circle went and what they and their students learnt from it.

1a RESOURCE SHEET: BUILDING CONNECTIONS

This resource sheet provides a simple activity to encourage sharing among circle participants, using sentence starters as prompts. Each prompt is used by everyone in the circle, with each speaker using the talking piece and then passing it to the next person. In each round, the person role-playing the facilitator responds to the prompt first, modelling the spirit of the activity and an appropriate level of detail in the answer.

More suggestions for low-risk prompts are given in Appendix 1.

BUILDING CONNECTIONS

This is a universal exercise for encouraging participants to share something about their lives and how they are feeling – it may be as simple as "In the weekends, I love to walk my dog on the beach."

Sample prompts to encourage sharing include:

- The thing 'on top' for me right now is ...
- This morning has been ...
- On a scale of 1–10 today, I'm feeling like a ...
- The thing I am most excited about at the moment is ...
- A special thing for me today is ...

Less personal, 'safer' prompts to encourage participants to share thoughts and feeling include:

- I came here today from ...
- One interesting thing about me that you might not guess is ...
- My favourite place in the world is ...
- A person I admire is ...
- One of my favourite things to do in [our town/city] is ...
- In the weekends, I love to ...



1b | RESOURCE SHEET: GOALS AND DREAMS

This resource sheet provides a simple activity to encourage sharing among circle participants, using questions as prompts. Participants indicate they wish to speak by picking up the talking piece from the centre of the circle. The person role-playing the facilitator answers the question first, modelling the spirit of the activity and an appropriate level of detail in the answer.

More suggestions for low-risk prompts are given in Appendix 1.

GOALS AND DREAMS

This activity encourages participants to share their dreams, goals, and visions in low-risk, playful ways.

Sample questions to encourage sharing include:

- If you could have one super power, what would it be?
- If you could be anywhere in the world right now, where would you be?
- If you could win any Olympic gold medal, what would it be for?
- What is one thing you would like to achieve in your life?
- If you won an award or a prize, what would you like it to be for?
- If you could have a conversation with someone you look up to, who would it be?
- If you could speak any language, what would it be?
- If you could be an animal, what would it be?
- If you could do anything at all for six months, what would you do?
- If you could play a musical instrument, what would it be?

1C | RESOURCE SHEET: SHARING OUR STORIES

This resource sheet provides a simple activity to encourage sharing among circle participants, using objects that participants have brought. The facilitator holds the talking piece and introduces the activity by sharing something about their object, modelling the spirit of the activity and an appropriate level of detail in the answer. They can choose whether to use one of the prompts below or not. They then pass the talking piece to the next person in the circle, who shares something about their object and why it is significant to them.

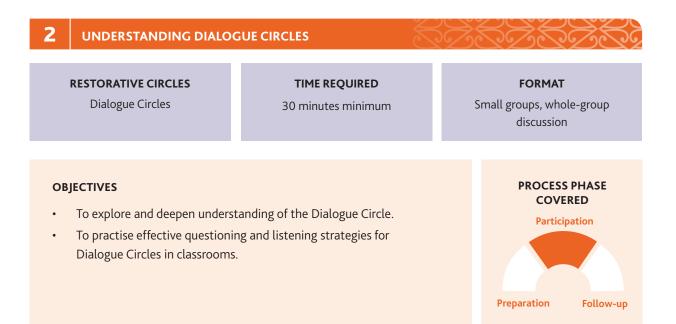
SHARING OUR STORIES

This activity encourages participants to share something that is special to them in a supportive context.

Prompts could include:

- This object is ...
- I have brought this object to the circle today because ...
- This reminds me of ...
- A connection I have with this object is ...
- This object is important to me and my whanau because ...
- This object is significant to our project/topic because ...
- This object makes me feel ... because ...
- When I hold/use this object, it makes me feel connected to ...
- One tradition about this object in my whānau/culture is ...
- I use/hold this object when ...





COMMENT: DIFFERENT USES OF DIALOGUE CIRCLES

The Dialogue Circle uses low-risk prompts aimed at making connections and building trust rather than reaching an agreement or consensus. (Low-risk prompts are effective for opening up discussions on topics and sharing perspectives.) It can be particularly useful when a group of students want to take action on an issue, allowing them to hear each other's views before moving into a Decision-making Circle.

Like other circles, Dialogue Circles are based on an agreed commitment to respectful speaking and listening, without criticism. This agreement, reinforced by the facilitator and by protocols such as the raised hand signal (see page 15), provides a safe way for less outgoing participants (those who would usually choose not to speak out in class) to contribute to the discussion.

By gauging the reactions of others in a Dialogue Circle, participants can begin to deepen their understanding of what socially acceptable and unacceptable dialogue and behaviour look and sound like.

The resource sheet for this activity has a number of low-risk prompts to encourage dialogue. (For more suggestions, see Appendix 1.)

ACTIVITY

Small groups

In groups of five, select a few questions from the resource sheet **Low-risk prompts for Dialogue Circles**. Form a circle and practise answering the questions over a couple of rounds, with one participant taking the role of the facilitator to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to contribute.

Share your experiences in the circle and discuss either how you have used Dialogue Circles to support and enhance learning in your classrooms, or how you could use them to do so in the future. Record the main points from your discussion for sharing with the whole group.

Whole-group discussion

After each group has presented their main points, identify common themes and responses and record them on large sheets of paper for displaying in the staffroom. If possible, revisit these findings in a follow-up PLD session in a few weeks.

2 RESOURCE SHEET: LOW-RISK PROMPTS FOR DIALOGUE CIRCLES

Below are some low-risk prompts to encourage participants to contribute in Dialogue Circles. More prompts and starter questions are given in Appendix 1.

In groups of 3–5, select a few of the prompts, form a circle, and practise answering the questions over a couple of rounds, with one participant taking the role of the facilitator to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to contribute.

Share your experiences in the circle and discuss either how you have used Dialogue Circles to support and enhance learning in your classrooms, or how you could use them to do so in the future. Record the main points from your discussion for sharing with the whole group.

PROMPTS TO ENCOURAGE SHARING

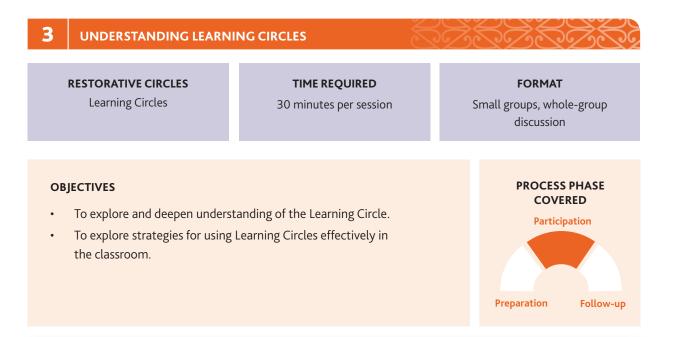
- What things make you feel hopeful?
- · Can you share a story about when a friend helped you achieve something?
- What keeps you going when facing challenging situations?

CONVERSATION STARTERS

- The best thing about where we live is ...
- If we could change one thing about our school, it should be ...
- My friends are important to me because ...
- A difficult experience I got through was ...
- The best thing that happened in class today was ...

EXPLORING VALUES

- What does respect look like?
- What are the good things about our school community?
- What things about our school community are not so good?
- What would you like to see changed?
- How would you go about making that change?
- What does a good class look and feel like?



COMMENT: USING LEARNING CIRCLES

Learning Circles are a structured process for gathering, collating, and sharing information. They can be used for beginning new topics and for providing feedback on learning outcomes and achievement. They are appropriate for a wide range of groups and occasions, including staff meetings, parent information evenings, and sessions for sports teams and cultural groups.

Learning Circles provide opportunities for individual leadership as well as collective responsibility and experience. They can be used for a broad range of learning outcomes, as they scaffold the learning for the whole group through collaboration and dynamic activities. They provide opportunities for sharing prior knowledge and peer expertise that are often missing in more traditional learning approaches.

Learning Circles are particularly useful for project-based work in which achievement and successful learning are the responsibility of the participants in each group. In the activity below, Session 1 provides an initial experience of a Project-based Learning Circle. Staff can then choose to extend the experience by continuing with the project over several days or weeks using Sessions 2 and 3.

ACTIVITY

Session 1: Small groups

In groups of 3–5, use the resource sheet **Project** – **Reducing Litter in the School Grounds**. To begin the circle, use a talking piece to explore individual participants' understanding and thoughts about the topic, using some of the suggested prompts.

Then agree on a facilitator and someone to record key questions and ideas, and discuss your group's initial approach to the project, drawing on participants' thinking in the previous discussion. Use the suggested prompts to guide your planning and decision making for collecting data on the topic, considering a wide range of options – for example, surveys, questionnaires, interviewing student or community groups, photographing trouble areas, and bringing in a guest speaker from the local community (for example, a local Green Party MP).

Once you have decided on the ways in which you will collect data, discuss the time required for each of them, and assign each member of the group responsibility for one or more of them.

Finally, consider the questions at the bottom of the resource sheet, and record the main points from your discussion for sharing with the whole group.

Session 1: Whole-group discussion

After each group has presented their main points, identify common themes and responses and record them on large sheets of paper. It will be particularly useful to note the comments from groups with members who have previous experience of Learning Circles. Others may wish to arrange a time with these individuals to observe how they facilitate this type of circle in their classroom.

Session 2

In the next session, each small group reviews their data and how they will present it to the whole group. They also spend time identifying the key tasks, in the light of their data, that will meet the aim of the project – to reduce litter in the school grounds.

Each group then feeds their findings from data collection and their identified key tasks into the whole group, opening up the dialogue to enable comparisons between the different groups' findings and recommended tasks.

Note down the key tasks – these could include, for example, capturing student and community

voice, strategies for combating littering (such as using the school newsletter, website, and posters to improve awareness), students making a video about littering, and monitoring and evaluating the success of the project.

Assign each small group one of the key tasks. Each group then begins to dialogue and make decisions about how they might approach their task, who will be responsible for different aspects of it, what resources they will need, and how to make the best use of the time allowed to complete the task.

Session 3

Allow as much time as required for the groups to complete their tasks, and then regather for Session 3. In this session, each small group presents their finished task to the whole group, and the group as a whole discusses how successful the project has been. It may also make decisions about presenting the outcomes to the school community (for example, at assemblies and online), ongoing monitoring and evaluation, and how to sustain the reduction in litter in the future. This resource sheet is for Session 1 of Module 3.

PROJECT TOPIC: REDUCING LITTER IN THE SCHOOL GROUNDS

Use a talking piece to explore individual participants' understanding and thoughts about the topic, using some of the following prompts:

- What I already understand about littering is ...
- My experience of working in an environment where littering is an issue is ...
- The thing that most concerns me about littering is...
- What I find most challenging in combating the littering problem is ...
- Some ways to strengthen awareness of littering in the school grounds are ...
- Some ways in which littering connects with the key values of the school are ...
- What I enjoy about our school environment is ... What I don't enjoy is ...

Then decide on your group's initial approach to the project, using the following prompts to guide your decisions:

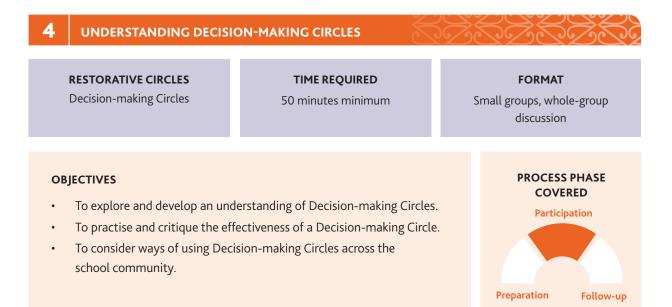
- Who will lead our group?
- What are some approaches for collecting data to inform our project?
- How much time does each approach require?
- Who will be responsible for each approach?
- What does each group member therefore need to bring to the next session?

Finally, consider the following questions:

- Have you previously used or been involved in a Learning Circle in a classroom?
- At what stage of introducing a new topic to a class or group could a Learning Circle be useful?
- What learning outcomes would this type of circle promote in your classroom?
- What are (or might be) some barriers or risks in using a Learning Circle?

Record the main points from your discussion for sharing with the whole group.





COMMENT: WAYS OF USING DECISION-MAKING CIRCLES

The purpose of a Decision-making Circle is specifically to reach consensus. The decision making is generally facilitated by a staff member, but the responsibility for the decision rests with all the participants in the group. When they share in the decision making in this way, participants are more likely to engage with and adopt more effective ways of working together.

Some preparatory work is often needed before a Decision-making Circle. For example, a Community-building or Dialogue Circle may be used first to build trust among a class and to explore the values, expectations for learning, and expectations for behaviour in the class. The class might then divide into several small groups, each of which uses a Decision-making Circle to establish the rules for maintaining the values and expectations agreed on.

Decision-making Circles can also be used to identify which members of a group or class are suitable for particular roles and responsibilities (for example, as student representatives, house leaders, and leaders of cultural and sports groups).

Decision-making Circles can include low-risk prompting questions such as:

- What actions could we take to strengthen the ways that we learn? What support do we need to do this?
- What are two things group members can do to support each other to learn in the classroom more effectively?
- What are two things staff and adults within the school can do to support us to learn more effectively?
- What are some of the challenges to learning in our group? How can we work through them?

More low-risk prompts can be found in Appendix 1.

ACTIVITY

Small groups of five

Decide on who will be the facilitator to keep your group on track, summarise the key decisions, and record how the group reached each solution.

Use a Dialogue Circle to discuss how serious each issue listed on the resource sheet **Finding solutions** with **Decision-making Circles** is for your school.

Then select three of the significant issues. Discuss your school's current approaches to them and identify one or two new solutions for them. When you have worked through the issues, reflect on the questions on the resource sheet and record the main points from your discussion for sharing with the whole group.

Whole-group discussion

Listen as each group shares the main points of their reflection. What responses emerge most strongly? Discuss the suggested possibilities for using Decisionmaking Circles and record them on large sheets of paper. It will be particularly useful to note the comments from groups with members who have experience of Decision-making Circles. Others may wish to arrange a time with them to observe how this type of circle is facilitated in the classroom.

4 RESOURCE SHEET: FINDING SOLUTIONS WITH DECISION-MAKING CIRCLES

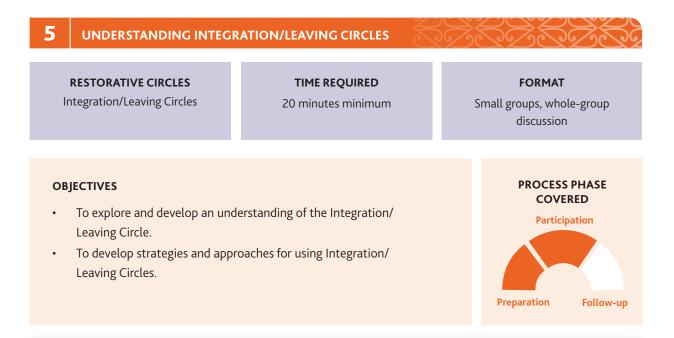
Use a Dialogue Circle to discuss how serious each of the following issues is for your school. Then select three of the significant issues. Discuss your school's current approaches to them and identify one or two new solutions for them. When you have worked through the issues, reflect on the following questions:

- Were you able to agree on solutions for the issues you selected?
- What was it like to work towards a consensus using a Decision-making Circle?
- What are the possibilities for using Decision-making Circles in your faculty or department (for example, to address differing approaches to learning and behaviour)?
- How useful would students find this type of circle when making decisions on expected behaviour and learning in the school?

ISSUES

Disruptive behaviour	Smoking
ncorrect uniform	Truancy
Eating in class	Physical assault
Lateness to class	
I E	ncorrect uniform ating in class

ISSUE	NEW SOLUTIONS	NOTES FROM DISCUSSION
1.		
2.		
3.		



COMMENT: KEEPING MANA INTACT

The Integration/Leaving Circle focuses on a set of protocols for students, staff, and whānau entering and leaving the school community. Using these protocols effectively makes joining or leaving the school community a positive, affirming experience for those involved and for the broader school community.

For new students, **staff**, **and whānau**, the transition or integration into a school community can be a daunting experience. Integration circles provide a process for welcoming:

- individual students and staff to a school community or class
- · cohorts of students to a school community
- students, their whānau, and staff back from an extended time away.

A teacher going on sabbatical or maternity leave can use an Integration Circle to hand over their class to the relieving teacher. Students need to be prepared carefully, so that the new teacher isn't made to feel undermined by the process or that they are not a welcome replacement.

Appendix 1 gives examples of low-risk prompts for Integration Circles. These and the activities in Appendix 2 are a good starting point for facilitating an Integration Circle.

When a student is reintegrated into a class after a long absence or a withdrawal, it is important to ensure that they are reconnected with the class in positive and inclusive ways. If there has been a withdrawal, the teacher and the students in that class will have been affected by it. The reintegration process should be supported by the dean or head of faculty who has been responsible for managing the behaviour throughout the withdrawal period. In some circumstances, a Conflict/Healing Circle may be more appropriate (see Module 6).

Leaving Circles support staff, students, and whānau who are leaving a school community. The Leaving Circle is the coming together of the person leaving with the people who have been involved in his or her school life – friends, peers, whānau, and significant adults from the school community.

Questions for staff to consider before facilitating a Leaving Circle include:

- What aspects of the circle would have the most value for the person leaving?
- What aspects of the circle would have the most value for those in the school community?

A praise round (see Appendix 2) is an excellent activity when people are leaving.

ACTIVITY

Small groups

Consider the two scenarios on the resource sheet **Exploring Integration/Leaving Circles** and discuss the questions that follow. If you have a particularly powerful experience of an Integration or Leaving Circle, share your story with the group. If anyone has been involved in a formal reintegration, discuss the success of that occasion.

Whole-group discussion

Share the main points of the small-group discussions with the whole group. Consider these questions:

- What are some of the challenges when starting a new position without any integration or induction process?
- What would it be like for students starting at a school without any kind of welcoming or integration process?
- What are some of the challenges for staff when a student has been withdrawn for a period of time and then comes back to class without any reintegration process or acknowledgement?
- What are the benefits of a Leaving Circle for the people leaving and for the community they are leaving behind?

5 RESOURCE SHEET: EXPLORING INTEGRATION/LEAVING CIRCLES

Consider the two scenarios below and discuss the questions that follow.

SCENARIO 1

A school employs five new staff members at the beginning of the year. Their teaching backgrounds vary considerably – some have had international teaching experience, while others are quite new to the profession.

The principal spends some time with each of them, showing them around the school. Before the start of the school year they each spend time at the school familiarising themselves with the student management systems and the library and reading curriculum resources.

In the first week of term, the principal asks the Restorative Practice coach to talk to the five new staff members about the school's approach to building and managing relationships. When the coach asks the group if they have ever worked in a restorative school, they look at one other and ask: "What's a restorative school?"

Questions for discussion

- How effective is this introduction to Restorative Practice in the school? How could it be done better?
- What are some of the risks if we don't have systems for introducing new staff, students, and whānau to the school community?
- How important is it to introduce new staff, students, and whānau to the values and culture of the school?
- What do we do to integrate new staff and students into our school community?

SCENARIO 2

After 8 years teaching in a college science department, you have built up collegial relationships and genuine friendships with your colleagues. However, your partner is offered employment 100 km away and you both decide to move.

As a parting gift your colleagues, together with the year 13 form class you have taught since they were in year 9, prepare a Leaving Circle. The circle time includes a slide show of photographs of your time at the school and the presentation of a leaving gift.

What you value most, however, is that everyone in the Leaving Circle has prepared something to say to send you on your way – funny poems, anecdotes, and heartfelt appreciation and praise for your hard work over the years. You feel more connected to the students and school community than ever before.

Questions for discussion

- Have you facilitated or participated in a Leaving Circle? What were the major benefits for both the adults and the students involved?
- What do we do to farewell staff, students, or whanau leaving our school community?
- What could we do better when farewelling those from our school community?



COMMENT: MANAGING LOW-LEVEL CONFLICT IN THE CLASSROOM

A Conflict/Healing Circle is a facilitated process involving those who have caused low-level harm, those who have been harmed, and those there to support their peers. It is used as the next step when a Restorative Conversation has not been successful in addressing the low-level behaviour. It provides those who have caused the harm with an opportunity to repair it and supports them to make positive changes to their behaviour. This type of circle is usually facilitated by a classroom teacher. However, if the classroom teacher is the person harmed, another staff member, such as the head of department or dean, will be required to facilitate the circle.

The fundamental difference between a Conflict/Healing Circle and a Restorative Conference (see kete Book Four) is that the circle process allows the classroom teacher to explore and repair low-level harm, whereas a Restorative Conference requires a trained facilitator. For example, if two students have been covertly picking on another student in the class and one-on-one Restorative Conversations with the students have not changed their behaviour, the next step can be to prepare all three students for a Conflict/Healing Circle. The teacher may choose not to include whānau or the dean at this stage, but has the opportunity to alert those who have harmed that if the behaviour continues, whānau and the dean will become involved.

A Conflict/Healing Circle requires the facilitator (teacher) to follow the three phases of the restorative process (preparation, participation, and follow-up). In the preparation phase, before running the circle the facilitator interviews each participant using a restorative script. This allows the facilitator to prepare them for the process and to gauge what the dynamics may be like within the circle and the extent of the harm caused.

The Conflict/Healing Circle uses the five steps of a restorative script (see page 36). Because the circle involves both those who have harmed and those who have been harmed, its script includes questions to explore the harm from both points of view.

Student behaviours that may require a Conflict/Healing Circle include:

- one or more students are singling out or excluding another in the class (sometimes in covert, hard-topinpoint ways)
- an item goes missing from a student's bag, and so one student is accusing another of theft
- some students are intimidating others (for example, by standing in the doorway and not allowing others to enter the classroom)
- · some students are using culturally inappropriate language during class
- an issue between a small group of friends in the class is affecting their learning.

Conflict/Healing Circles can also be used to resolve issues among adult members of the school community – for example, by heads of department for an issue among department staff, by cultural group leaders for an issue among whānau, or by the principal for an issue among staff or cultural groups.

ACTIVITY

Small groups (8–10)

Run a Conflict/Healing Circle using the scenario on the resource sheet **Restorative script for Conflict/ Healing Circles**. Five members of the group role-play the characters from the scenario; the rest observe the process.

The facilitator (the 'teacher') prepares the 'students' separately for the circle by using the restorative script (page 36) to explore the harm caused and who has been affected. Points to cover include:

- Do the students who have caused harm understand the effects of their behaviour, and are they prepared to put things right?
- What are some of the expected outcomes from the circle, for both those who have been harmed and those who are responsible for causing the harm?
- Is the student who has been harmed comfortable about taking part in a circle? What do they need to feel safe?
- What do those who have been harmed want to see as a result of the circle?

The others in the group observe the facilitator's questioning and listening skills during preparation.

Once everything is prepared the facilitator begins the circle, using the restorative script and with the objective of reaching an agreement to put things right with the student harmed and to change the other two students' behaviour in the future.

In the first four steps (Tell the story, Explore the harm, Repair the harm, Reach an agreement), the order of speaking should begin with the students who have caused the harm, followed by the student who has been harmed. In the fifth step (Plan follow up), the participants are free to contribute in any order.

At the end of the role play, the observers give their feedback:

- What was challenging?
- What worked well?
- What would be some of the barriers to facilitating a successful Conflict/Healing Circle?
- What might happen if you didn't use the script in your preparation for this type of circle?

Whole-group discussion

Listen as each small group feeds back their observations and comments on their role play. Then discuss other possible ways of using Conflict/Healing Circles in the school community and share past experiences (if any) of this type of circle.

6 RESOURCE SHEET: RESTORATIVE SCRIPT FOR CONFLICT/HEALING CIRCLES

Run a Conflict/Healing Circle using the scenario below. Five members of your group role-play the characters; the rest observe the process. The facilitator (the 'teacher') should prepare the 'students' separately for the circle by using the restorative script (page 36) to explore the harm caused and who has been affected by the behaviour. The others in the group observe the facilitator's questioning and listening skills during preparation.

Once everything is prepared, the facilitator should begin the circle with the objective of reaching an agreement to put things right with the student harmed and to change the other two students' behaviour in the future. At the end of the role play, the observers give their feedback.

SCENARIO

The form teacher of a year 10 class overhears some furtive, culturally insensitive comments made by two female students to a male student in the classroom. Seeing the same behaviour in the following two form classes, the form teacher tries to stop it by standing close by, making eye contact, and shaking her head to show disapproval. After discussing the behaviour with a colleague, she decides to address it with the two girls.

The next day she engages each of the girls in a Restorative Conversation. She feels that they listen and agree to stop the behaviour. However, a week later she notices the same thing happening again. The form teacher talks to the year level dean about the incidents. They decide that the form teacher will hold a Conflict/Healing Circle to address the behaviour and put a stop to it. The dean offers to support this process by participating in the circle.

SCRIPT QUESTIONS FOR THOSE WHO HAVE HARMED	SCRIPT QUESTIONS FOR THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN HARMED
 Tell the story What happened? Tell me your story. What was happening when you became involved? What were you thinking about when you did that? 	 Tell the story What happened? Tell me your story. What did you think when this was happening?
 Explore the harm Who do you think has been affected? In what ways? Who else may have been affected by your behaviour? What do you think it must have been like for them? 	 Explore the harm How have things affected you? What has the class been like for you since? What's been the worst thing about this for you?
 Repair the harm What needs to happen to put things right again? What do you think needs to hear from you right now? Is there anything else you can think of that might help? 	 Repair the harm What would make things better for you right now? What do you think needs to happen to put things right?
 Reach an agreement If this happens again, what will you do differently? What do you need from me/us to support you? What will the plan for the future include? If this happens again, what will we do about it? 	 Reach an agreement What would you like to see happen as a result of the circle? What would make you feel safe in class?
 Plan follow-up When would be a good time to check in with you and see how you're going? What will happen if our agreed outcomes haven't been reached? 	 Plan follow-up When would be a good time to check in with you and see how you're going?





Prompts

Low-risk prompts are an effective way of sharing perspectives and opening up discussion. They serve to build connections and exchange ideas rather than reach an agreement or decision.

Prompts that support low-risk dialogue are:

- easy to respond to
- age appropriate
- relevant to the group
- often fun and creative
- fundamentally about making connections.

The aim is for the facilitator to:

... steadily increase the depth of intimacy and authenticity invited by prompting questions, [by] choosing prompts that invite more intimate exposure of personal thoughts and feelings. This carefully managed and sequenced journey into greater intimacy and authenticity is a cornerstone of building community with circle dialogue.

Clifford, 2013, page 15

ICE-BREAKING PROMPTS

The following questions and statements can be used in any kind of circle as an introductory, icebreaker activity. Asking for reasons for answers will encourage participants to share rather than just give one- or two-word answers.

- If you could have one super power, what would it be?
- If you could jump on a plane and go anywhere in the world right now, where would you go?
- If you could win any Olympic gold medal, what would it be for?
- What would you not want to change about your life?
- What is your favourite food?
- If you could be an animal, what animal would you be, and why?
- What is your favourite book?

- What is your favourite type of music?
- What do you find annoying?
- Name a group where you felt happiest, most included, and most comfortable.
- How would your best friend describe you?
- What activities do you do well?
- If you had an unexpected day off, what would you do?
- Name two things that always make you laugh.
- Describe the best thing about your last holiday.

DIALOGUE CIRCLES

EXPLORING VALUES

Questions and statements that explore values include:

- What are you passionate about?
- What behaviours make you feel angry/sad/ frustrated?
- What keeps you going when facing challenging situations?
- What things warm your heart?
- What is most important to you?
- What things make you feel hopeful?
- What does respect look and feel like?
- My friends are important to me because ...
- What are some positive and supportive ways we can manage a problem?
- What is the first thing you would do if a problem or issue arose in this class?
- How do we show our school values in the classroom? In the school grounds? Outside school?
- What do we mean by 'class culture'? What would a positive class culture look and feel like?
- What do words like 'inclusive', 'supportive', and 'respectful' look like in this class/group?
- What would you be doing if you were being inclusive?
- What things within our school community do you enjoy? What do you not enjoy?
- What would you like to see changed in our school?
- How would you go about making that change?

SHARING STORIES

There are many possibilities for prompts for participants to share a story – for example, "Can you share a story about ...":

- A positive experience that you'll never forget?
- When a friend helped you achieve something?
- When an adult helped you achieve something?
- An experience when you were outside your comfort zone?
- When at first you didn't like someone but gradually began to like them? What did you learn from that experience?
- A time when you felt excluded from a group or that you didn't belong?

LEARNING CIRCLES

Prompts for Learning Circles include:

- What I already know about [this topic] is ...
- I have experience of [this topic] through ...
- The thing I enjoy about [this topic] is ...
- The thing I find a challenge in [this topic] is ...
- One relevant issue relating to our topic is ...
- Something else I think about this topic is ...
- My reaction to the reading is ...
- I can relate to the character in the text because ...
- I disagree with the choices made by the character in the movie because ...

Prompts for project-based Learning Circles include:

- Who is the person to lead our project group?
- In what ways can we collect data?
- Who is going to be responsible for each project task?
- What outcomes are we hoping to obtain?
- What are our time frames for completing the project?

Prompts for exploring learning itself include:

- When I need support with my learning I ...
- I feel more supported with my learning when ...
- What kind of classroom supports you to learn well?
- What things can we do to support one other to learn well?
- What are the risks involved in this class experiment/group/learning activity?
- What are two learning or achievement goals you have for this week/term/year?
- Name one goal you have for this week. How will you reach it?

DECISION-MAKING CIRCLES

Prompts for Decision-making Circles include:

- What are the ways we can look at this?
- In your groups, decide ...
- Who will be responsible for ...?
- What do we need to know before we can make the best decision?
- What is the best approach to ...?
- What changes would you like to see in ...?
- What can we do differently now?
- What needs to happen now to make our school/ classroom a safe place?
- Is there anything else we should think about?

INTEGRATION/LEAVING CIRCLES

INTEGRATION CIRCLES

Questions for the new person could include:

- How far have you travelled to be here today?
- What is your whakapapa, your lineage?
- What was your previous school like?
- What would make you feel most welcome and included?

Questions for the rest of the class or group could include:

- How far have we each travelled to be here today?
- Where have we come from? What is our whakapapa, our lineage?
- Where are the places of significance to our school community?
- What are the best things about our school, class, or group?
- What things do we expect of each other to get the best out of our class?
- What are our hopes for this class?
- What are our school values? How do we show them in the classroom? In the school grounds? Outside school?

- What are some of the ways we support each other?
- What support do we need to give [name of new person] from here on?

LEAVING CIRCLES

Questions for Leaving Circles include:

- What are two good qualities of ______
 that you appreciate?
- What are the positive contributions that
 _____ made to our class, group, or community?
- What are two things about ______you will miss when she's no longer here?
- What are some fun things you did with
 _____?
- What are some parting words of wisdom you have to share with _____?
- What are your good wishes and final words for
 ____?
- What is one thing you would like ______ to remember about this class/group?





Activities for circles

Effective circle activities are dynamic and fun. They support staff and students to build positive learning environments, and they enable groups of people to achieve realistic goals within short time frames. Circle activities can engage even the most reluctant participants and encourage them to contribute and find value in the process.

Some circle activities are given below. A wide variety of resources can also be found on the web to support circle activities. A particularly valuable text is Margaret Armstrong and David Vinegrad's 2013 book *Working in Circles in Primary and Secondary Classrooms*.

THE PRAISE ROUND

The praise round is an effective way of building trust and enhancing the mana of all the members of a group, class, or community. As the talking piece is passed around the circle, each participant makes a positive comment about the person or group who is the subject of the round. The praise round encourages people to look for and acknowledge attributes in one other that they can respect and admire; it can be especially useful for Leaving Circles and Conflict/Healing Circles.

Ways to begin a praise sentence could include:

- I noticed that ...
- Something that you did that deserves more praise (attention) is ...
- One thing I really appreciate about you is ...
- A good thing about this class, group, or school is ...

USING LEARNING CIRCLES TO EXPLORE A TOPIC

This activity is essentially a jigsaw activity.

- 1. Divide the class or group into several small circles.
- Give each circle information on a specific aspect of the topic. Provide a large sheet of paper so that one member of the circle can record a summary of the discussion.

- Each circle brainstorms in response to the information, sharing ideas and preparing a summary of their thinking and findings on the large sheet of paper.
- 4. Put the large sheets of paper on display around the room.
- Rearrange the circles so that each new circle includes someone from each of the previous circles. Each participant shares the thinking and ideas from their previous circle, referring to the written summary if need be.

USING CIRCLES TO ASCERTAIN PRIOR KNOWLEDGE

- Organise the whole class or group into a seated circle, moving tables and bags to the side of the room.
- 2. Ask low-risk prompting questions to gauge the group's prior knowledge and understanding of the topic.
- 3. If some participants appear to know more about the topic than others, use the Learning Circle prompts from Appendix 1 to encourage them to share their understanding and experience of the topic with the rest of the group.
- 4. Ask a different participant to summarise what has been shared on the whiteboard or a large sheet of paper.
- Divide the class or group into smaller groups, each with a participant who has prior knowledge of the topic and who can act as facilitator. Use the summary as the starting point for these smaller groups to conduct Learning or Dialogue Circles.
- Bring the small groups back together to discuss their findings and learning with the whole group or class. Summarise additional ideas on the whiteboard or on large sheets of paper that can be displayed around the room.
- If appropriate, use these summaries as the starting point for the next learning activity or assignment.

USING AN INNER AND OUTER CIRCLE

There are different versions of the 'doughnut circle'. Below is an option suitable for older students, and an alternative for younger students.

FOR SENIOR STUDENTS (YEARS 11–13)

- Select the issue or topic and one person to be the initial spokesperson about the topic.
- Arrange the class or group into two circles an inner circle of about five people and the selected spokesperson, and an outer circle consisting of the rest of the group.
- Give the spokesperson 1–2 minutes to discuss the topic. Encourage the others in the inner circle to use prompting questions to clarify what the spokesperson has said.
- 4. For the next 5–10 minutes, participants in the inner circle discuss the topic. When someone wishes to speak, they pick up the talking piece and take the spokesperson's place. If the topic is an issue that needs resolution, encourage participants to discuss how together they can resolve the issue.
- 5. During this time, participants in the outer circle must listen without speaking. However, they may tap a participant (not the current spokesperson) in the inner circle on the shoulder to indicate that they would like to change places and contribute to the discussion.
- After the 5–10 minutes is up, ask the initial spokesperson to summarise the key points of the discussion. If these cover resolving an issue, clarify what support the group will need.

FOR YOUNGER STUDENTS

- 1. Select the issue or topic.
- If the room space is big enough, have all participants stand in an inner and outer circle where they are paired up facing each other (hence creating a doughnut). If you have less room, create two or three doughnut circles.

- Give the pairs of students 2 minutes to discuss the topic, explaining beforehand that each person must have an equal chance to contribute. (Note that this can get quite loud.)
- 4. Once the first discussion is complete, rotate the outer circle by moving two people to the left.
- Rotate one or two more times, depending on how time is going.
- 6. Bring all students back to a central circle and prompt them with the following:
 - Something I learnt today is ...
 - Something I appreciate (liked) about today is ...
 - Something I still need more information on is ...

ACTIVITIES FOR ARRANGING SEATING

Some students or participants in a circle may want to sit in exclusive groups or cliques. As the facilitator, you can use brief activities such as the following to seat participants next to people they wouldn't normally sit with and minimise any minor attempts to undermine the process. If necessary, repeat the activity until you reach a satisfactory seating arrangement.

- Ask participants to stand up if they are the oldest sibling in their family. Then ask them to swap seats with those in the circle who are also standing.
- Have students sit outside the circle. Ask the group to nominate a leader to start the activity. The leader gives a simple instruction such as "Stand up if you …":
 - catch a bus to school
 - made your lunch this morning
 - have at least one brother.

When a participant stands up, they move and sit down in an empty seat.





CIRCLES PLANNING SHEET		
Date: Time:	Venue:	
Class/group:	Number of participants:	
Circle type:	Topic/theme:	
Talking piece:	Other objects:	
Facilitator:	Support staff:	
Resources: Introduction/mihi Guidelines and values Questionnaires for participants Agreement sheet (if required) Other	Notes:	
Objectives:		
Next steps:		
Facilitator's reflections:		



Restorative script for a Conflict/Healing Circle

SCRIPT QUESTIONS FOR THOSE WHO HAVE HARMED	SCRIPT QUESTIONS FOR THOSE WHO HAVE BEEN HARMED
 Tell the story What happened? Tell me your story. What was happening when you became involved? What were you thinking about when you did that? 	 Tell the story What happened? Tell me your story. What did you think when this was happening?
 Explore the harm Who do you think has been affected? In what ways? Who else may have been affected by your behaviour? What do you think it must have been like for them? 	 Explore the harm How have things affected you? What has the class been like for you since? What's been the worst thing about this for you?
 Repair the harm What needs to happen to put things right again? What do you think needs to hear from you right now? Is there anything else you can think of that might help? 	 Repair the harm What would make things better for you right now? What do you think needs to happen to put things right?
 Reach an agreement If this happens again, what will you do differently? What do you need from me/us to support you? What will the plan for the future include? If this happens again, what will we do about it? 	 Reach an agreement What would you like to see happen as a result of the circle? What would make you feel safe in class?
 Plan follow-up When would be a good time to check in with you and see how you're going? What will happen if our agreed outcomes haven't been reached? 	 Plan follow-up When would be a good time to check in with you and see how you're going?

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