

RESTORATIVE CIRCLES

Community-building Circles

TIME REQUIRED

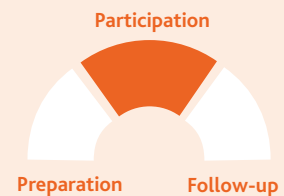
30 minutes minimum

FORMAT

Small groups

OBJECTIVES

- To deepen understanding of the Community-building Circle.
- To practise community-building activities with other staff.
- To facilitate a low-risk, simple Community-building Circle with students.

PROCESS PHASE COVERED**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.

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 ...



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?

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 whānau 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 ...