

School-Based Restorative Practices Video Series
Core Processes of Restorative Justice Circles
Video Session Guide

Community Building	All Grades	SEL, PBIS/MTSS Support
Session Focus	Introduce and review key components and process of Restorative Circles with school leadership, behavior staff, social workers and teachers.	
Facilitator Knowledge and Skills	Familiarity with restorative practices and community building circles.	

AGENDA

I. Getting Started	II. View Video	III. Video Discussion	IV. Planning Resource
5 Minutes <i>Reflect on the importance of being connected to community</i>	10 Minutes <i>Learn or review how restorative circles support community building in schools</i>	10 Minutes <i>Discuss components and strategies demonstrated in video</i>	10 Minutes <i>Create model circle to be used in classroom or school community</i>

MATERIALS

Video	Planning Resources
Facilitators and participants can access the <i>Restorative DC Circles Video</i> here: Core Processes of Restorative Justice Circles	Overview of Circle Process and Worksheets <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Overview of Circle Process</i> • <i>Circle Facilitation Practice</i> • <i>Restorative Practices Assessment Guide</i>

CONTEXT

Video Context	Restorative circles provide structured space to build relationships, establish routines and develop resilience for staff, students and families.
Key Points	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restorative circles are aligned to and support SEL practices (CASEL), PBIS and MTSS at all tier levels in schools. • Restorative circles can be used for community building, problem solving and restoration of harm (responsive), difficult conversations and academic support.

SESSION: Getting Started (5 Minutes)

Opening Questions:

- Think about a time when you felt connected to a group or community:
 - What did you see, hear and feel as part of that connection?
- Reflect on a time when you felt your voice was not being heard:
 - What did you feel at that time, and what actions did you take in order to be heard? How did your actions impact your ability to have your voice heard?

Facilitator Note: *Encourage participants to consider situations in which they feel most and least connected to a group or community. Take some time to consider what elements are important for a person to feel a part of a group, and reflect on actions that an individual may take when they are feeling separate from the group. How do these actions impact the well-being of the individual and the group/community?*

Sample Response: *I felt most connected to a community when I was able to share my ideas about a workshop. I felt my ideas were being listened to, and incorporated into the flow of the process as I was speaking. On the other hand, when I feel apart from the group when I am ignored or my ideas are not taken seriously. I will withdraw and not engage with the group to complete the project.*

VIEW VIDEO (10 Minutes)

Restorative Practices Connection and Framing: *In this video, you will be introduced to the components of the circle process, and hear from educators and youth how the circle process supports community building by establishing trust, strengthening relationships, and providing space for structured communication. School leaders identify circles as a tool to have difficult conversations and generate ideas for transformation at their schools. Youth highlight the ways in which a circle process builds key communication skills and provides an opportunity for their voice and vision to be heard in an equitable atmosphere.*

Guiding Questions: **As you watch the Circles video consider the following questions:**

- What social and emotional skills are demonstrated in the video? How can Circles process support the development of these skills?
- What components of Circles are key to developing trust and building the capacity of your classroom or school community?
- How could Circles be useful in dealing with conflict in your classroom or schools? How could the structured Circle process enable difficult conversations to take place amongst school leadership and staff?

VIDEO DISCUSSION (10 Minutes)

Reflection Questions:

- How do Restorative Circles support relationships, establish routine, and build resilience in classrooms and school communities?
 - How can we use circles to teach our school-wide expectations and values?
 - How can we ensure circles are part of our master schedule (or Tier One practice)?
- What support or resources would you need to create and sustain Restorative Circles in classrooms and school communities?
- How could Restorative Circles support relationships with families and community members outside of the school building?

Sample Responses:

- **How do Restorative Circles support relationships, establish routine, and build resilience in classrooms and school communities?**
 - *When restorative circles are facilitated and held on a consistent basis, participants have many opportunities to listen to each other and offer their*

voice, opinion and ideas on selected Circle topics. By increasing communication and listening skills, trust and empathy are established, which builds the foundation for relationships in the group and community. The consistency of circles builds a routine in the classroom or school setting that the group can depend on and utilize in times of uncertainty. The strength of relationships and connection with routine strengthens the resiliency of the participants as individuals and as a group/community.

- **What support or resources would you need to create and sustain Restorative Circles in classrooms and school communities?**
 - *As someone who might be new to Restorative Circles, it could be very helpful to participate in a few different types of circles and/or observe the different models of circles to understand their use. It would also be useful to really understand each component of the circle and have some guidance on how to create the storytelling rounds of the circle. If I have had some experience with Circles, I would appreciate some additional guidance and coaching around storytelling rounds and ideas of how to deal with situations in which participants don't follow the guidelines or are disruptive during the circle process.*

- **How could Restorative Circles encourage relationships with families and community members outside of the school building?**
 - *Restorative Circles could be used as part of family functions to build connections between family members, consider difficult issues that have arisen in the classroom or school building and create space for family members to feel like partners in their children's education and social progress. Circles could also be useful for building partnership and strengthening relationships with community members and businesses in the neighborhood surrounding the school.*

Planning Resource (10 Minutes)

Creating A Circle: Ask participants (in groups or individually) to review the **Overview of the Circle Process** and use the worksheets to create a model circle for their classroom or school community.

- *Using the worksheet, ask participants to identify what elements of the Circle they feel most comfortable in creating, and what components they will need additional support to establish.*
- *Ask participants to consider how the components connect with their classroom themes, school culture, or needs of families.*

Going Deeper

The following are additional resources to deepen your understanding and skills of the Circle Process:

- *[Circle Forward: Building a Restorative School Community](#) by Carolyn Boyes-Watson & Kay Pranis*
- *[The Little Book of Circle Processes: A New/Old Approach to Peacemaking](#) by Kay Pranis*

- *The Little Book of Racial Healing: Coming to the Table for Truth-Telling, Liberation, and Transformation* by Thomas Norman DeWolf and Jodie Geddes