

Restorative Practices Trainer's Guide Training Activities

*This activities booklet accompanies the Trainer's
Guide for Working with Schools to Implement
Restorative Practices*



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Four Corners

Overview and Objectives

Beliefs about education, school climate and school discipline are based on cultural, family and individual values, histories and experiences. People live out their values and beliefs on multiple levels and those who hope to convey values, messages and expectations about education, school climate and school discipline need to understand their own beliefs and where those beliefs came from. This exercise will help participants clarify their values and empathize with the values of others have.

During this activity, participants will:

- Examine their personal values about education, school climate and school discipline.
- Consider how their values are different than others' values.

Time Allocation: 20 minutes

Materials Needed:

- Four Corners Worksheet
- Four pieces of paper labeled Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree
- Tape, writing instruments
- A large space where the group can move around

Set-Up/Preparation

Adapt the Four Corners Worksheet for your group by choosing four to five of the statements and/or adding some of your own based on what you know about the group. Aim for a statements that will generate diverse responses. Because this activity involves individual values around sensitive topics, participants may bring strong emotions or ideas to this exercise. Be prepared to create a safe environment for all opinions. Allow participants to share or pass during the processing.

The four pieces of paper labeled Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly Disagree should be posted in the four corners or different areas of the room.

Instructions

Introduce the activity by sharing the following: we will be doing an exercise that will help us better understand our values about education, school climate and school discipline, as well as the values of others.

- Ask participants:
 - Why do you think it may be important to understand our own values when considering school climate initiatives?
 - Where do we learn our values about school climate?
 - How might these values change over time?
 - How does culture or a cultural group's experiences affect our values?
- Share with the group that it is important to recognize that individual values are to be respected. For this activity, we don't have to agree. There is no right or wrong answers to these value statements.
- Hand out the Four Corners Worksheet to participants. Tell them that these worksheets will be collected and anonymously redistributed, so ask them to not write their name on the worksheet. Ask them to complete the worksheet based on their own values and opinions.
- Collect the worksheets. (You can have participants engage in an "indoor snowball fight" by crumpling up their paper and throwing it at you.)
- As you are collecting the worksheets into one place, point out that there are signs in the four corners of the room that match the possible answers on the worksheet.
- Mix up the worksheets and redistribute them randomly. Ask participants not to react if they get their own worksheet.
- Read one value statement and ask the participants to go to the corner of the room that matches what is circled on their worksheet.
- Ask for volunteers in each corner to defend what was chosen on their worksheet. Ask them to respond as if it were their own answer using respectful language (i.e., do not qualify answers with "I don't agree with this, but..."). Encourage discussion to be respectful and realistic (i.e., "reasonable people might agree with this because...").
- Continue with the rest of the questions as time allows.

End of Activity Processing/Key Points

- Did the range of opinions in the room surprise anyone?
- What was it like to defend an opinion with which you didn't necessarily agree?
- Why is important to understand our own values before making a large decision about school climate?

Four Corners Activity Worksheet

| Put a check mark under the answer that best matches your opinion about each of the following statements. | Strongly Agree | Agree | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|---|----------------|-------|----------|-------------------|
| 1. Students should be held accountable for their actions according to the established rules of the school. | | | | |
| 2. Learning happens best in relationship. | | | | |
| 3. Values are best taught at home and are not the school's business. | | | | |
| 4. The most important thing to find out after a serious incident of misbehavior is who is and what their punishment should be. | | | | |
| 5. Schools should focus more on having adults working with children and adolescents rather than doing things for or to them. | | | | |
| 6. It is a students and their families' responsibility to come to school ready to learn. | | | | |
| 7. It is our school's responsibility to be able to accept students where they are and create a welcoming and supportive environment for them. | | | | |
| 8. Positive relationships are possible and essential, even with challenging students. | | | | |
| 9. Accountability is achieved not through punishment and isolation but through understanding impact, repairing harm and restoration. | | | | |

Our Own Experiences with School Climate

Purpose

This exercise is designed to help participants remember their own experiences from school and consider others' experiences with school and to reflect upon it, evaluate it and use it as a guide for giving today's children what they need.

Time Allocation: 15 minutes

Materials: None

Set-Up/Preparation

Because this activity involves individual reflection, participants will bring a variety of experiences to this exercise. These can include difficult experiences, so it is important to create a relaxed and safe environment. Allow participants to share or pass during the processing questions.

Instructions

Ask participants to make a continuum by placing themselves along an imaginary line in the room in response to the statements below. Remind participants to consider the range of messages they received, going beyond spoken words and including what is observed in relationships.

- If you feel you experienced warm, caring and inclusive relationships and environments, and got helpful information about social emotional skills from reliable sources through elementary, middle and high school, stand on one end.
- If you felt you were left on your own to figure out social relationships, mostly had unhelpful information given to you and felt the school environment was mostly hostile, stand on the other end.
- If you feel your experience with school lies between these extremes, arrange yourself accordingly.

Once the line is formed, start at the end where people felt a less supportive and healthy school climate and ask participants why they chose to stand there. Note: If a full spectrum of experiences is not represented, ask what that says about the people who choose to work in school. Ask participants to consider the range of experiences of parents and other community members with whom they work. Proceed up the line, asking for volunteers as time allows.

End of Activity Processing/Key Points

- When you've heard from each section of the line, lead a discussion about where in the line they'd like their children to stand 10 or 20 years from now and what they can do to ensure that their children get what they need.
- If possible, take time to consider the perspectives of the children most likely to feel alienated or unsupported at school. Assess the range of opinions on whether it is the school's responsibility to be welcoming and supportive of all children or whether it is the child's and families' responsibility to adapt to the school environment.

How Restorative Am I?

(Adapted from Restorative Practice Kete Book Two: Restorative Essentials)

Purpose

Participants will reflect on personal practice and communication skills, identifying areas of strength and opportunities for growth.

Time Allocation: 15 minutes

Materials: How Restorative Am I Worksheet

Set-Up/Preparation

This activity can inform the training design of future sessions.

Instructions

- **Individual/Pairs Reflection:** Ask individuals to complete the worksheet “How Restorative Am I?” After about five minutes, ask them to discuss results with the participant next to them, using the following reflection questions: What are your immediate observations? Did you see any patterns emerging? Were there any surprises?
- **Small Groups:** Ask participants to gather into groups of five to six and briefly discuss findings, summarizing and listing the common strengths that emerge from the group (e.g, the questions where two to three boxes are marked). Repeat for the areas for development that emerge for your group (e.g., where you marked one or no boxes).
- **Whole-Group Discussion:** Discuss the findings of each small group, looking at commonalities, celebrating strengths and considering which areas would benefit from further professional development.

End of Activity Processing

- As time permits, ask how this activity deepens understanding of RP and what additional questions it creates.

How Restorative Am I Worksheet

| Reflect on how, in your role, you deal with students (or staff) when an incident or issue has arisen. Answer the questions below by marking a check in the column choices of no, not often, usually or always. | No | Not Often | Usually | Always |
|--|----|-----------|---------|--------|
| 1. Do I remain calm during the conversation? | | | | |
| 2. Do I really listen, without interrupting? | | | | |
| 3. Does the student understand why they are having this conversation? | | | | |
| 4. Would the student feel I am a good listener? | | | | |
| 5. Do we explore how the school values apply to the issue? | | | | |
| 6. Does the student understand the harm they've caused, who has been affected, and how? | | | | |
| 7. Do I talk about how the incident affects me? | | | | |
| 8. Do I take responsibility for any part I might have played when things went wrong, acknowledge it, and apologize? | | | | |
| 9. Do I consider the extent to which I have a relationship with this student and how that affects my expectations for our interaction? | | | | |
| 10. If the student apologizes to me, do I accept the apology respectfully? | | | | |
| 11. Do I collaborate with the student to formulate a plan? | | | | |
| 12. Have I, at any stage, asked someone I trust to observe my practice and give me honest feedback? | | | | |
| 13. Do I try to handle most issues or incidents myself? | | | | |
| 14. Do I seek support when issues get tricky for me? | | | | |
| 15. Do I follow the school's systems when looking for more support? | | | | |
| 16. Is the relationship with the student repaired? | | | | |

Look through your results and use them to identify where you could further strengthen your communication skills and restorative approach.

Essential Elements: Which Practice, When, By Whom, For What Purpose?

Purpose

Participants will learn the key practices for building community and repairing harm.

Time Allocation: 30 minutes

Materials: Two copies of Essential Elements Worksheet and scissors.

Set-Up/Preparation

Make a copy of the Essential Elements Worksheet and then cut each along the lines to make individual cards.

Instructions

- Tell group you will be asking for 10 volunteers. Five people will get a card with a specific restorative practice on it and five people will get a card that explains when a practice is used and who facilitates the practice, but it does not name the practice. Tell them they will need to quickly find their appropriate match. Ask for 10 volunteers and give them each a card. Allow two to three minutes for them to find the match. Ensure matches are correct.
- Ask any additional participants to join one of the groups, making an even number. Tell the groups you will give them five minutes to prepare a role play in which they introduce the practice to the rest of the group using a scenario likely to happen in school. Assure them you are not looking for perfection, as this is an introduction to the practices. Ask them to simply interpret the cards as they understand them.
- Have groups act out their scenario for two to three minutes each. Then interrupt the role play, thank the group and briefly process the what, why, when and who of each practice. Praise any especially effective strategies and provide constructive feedback on anything that went against restorative principles.

End of Activity Processing

Assure the group that they will be appropriately trained on each of the practices. Ask for volunteers to share some initial reactions to the practices.

Essential Elements of Restorative Practices in Schools

| Practice/Purpose | Notes on Use |
|---|--|
| <p>Community Building Circles</p> <p>What? A formal process which includes preparation, a formal, planned process with intentional seating arrangements and scripts, facilitated by a trained adult in an appropriate setting with sufficient amount of time.</p> <p>Why? To build community, relationships, social emotional skills and relationship skills</p> | <p>When? Morning ritual in class, staff meetings, teaching content, to deal with or process crises, integration/leaving circles, decision-making, dialogue, problem-solving circles.</p> <p>Who? Circle keeper and all others needed.</p> |
| <p>Restorative/Affective Language and Active Listening Skills</p> <p>What? An informal process to convey via an affective statement how a behavior makes a person feel followed up with an affective question to allow others to reflect on how their actions have impacted others.</p> <p>Why? To teach empathy. Regular use of affective statements is important because it builds the skills of students to recognize their feelings thereby increasing communication and social skills. Students who can describe how they are feeling can connect feelings with real life situations.</p> | <p>When? In all types of interactions with students dealing with both positive and negative behavior.</p> <p>Who? Anyone who has learned it.</p> |
| <p>Restorative Chats/Impromptu Conferencing</p> <p>What? A relatively informal interaction facilitated by an adult, lasting as little as two minutes, in which students have a chance to acknowledge and discuss the impact of their actions.</p> <p>Why? Help wrongdoer identify emotions, recognize link between emotions and actions, understand impact of behavior and avoid similar behavior in future.</p> | <p>When? Minor wrongdoing by an individual that causes generalized harm (or potential harm) to others – disruptive or rule breaking behaviors, or when two individuals of equal power are engaging in disrespectful behavior without a clear victim.</p> <p>Who? Adult “in charge” and 1-2 children involved</p> |

| Practice/Purpose | Notes on Use |
|---|---|
| <p>Circles or Conferences to Repair Harm What? A formal process which includes preparation, a formal, planned process with intentional seating arrangements and scripts, facilitated by a trained adult in an appropriate setting with sufficient amount of time. Why? Help wrongdoer understand impact of actions, take responsibility and make a plan to repair harm and be restored to community and to stop the wrongdoing and avoid it in the future.</p> | <p>When? Clear harm caused by individual(s) to other(s), the class or the school through a particular incident Who? Circle keeper or conference facilitator, all those responsible plus allies, and those affected plus allies</p> |
| <p>Mediation/Peer Mediation What? A formal process in which both individuals explain their perceptions and experiences to each other and work towards a mutually agreed upon resolution. Mediator facilitates understanding but does not suggest or decide resolutions. Why? To identify any deeper source of the conflict, resolve the conflict and agree on future behaviors.</p> | <p>When? More serious conflict between two individuals, but with no clear harm, (e.g., fallouts, disagreements). Who? Trained mediator plus (usually) two people in conflict.</p> |

‘Ask’ Versus ‘Tell’ – Developing Effective Questions

Adapted from Restorative Practice Kete Book Two: Restorative Essentials

Purpose

Participants will improve questioning strategies when addressing inappropriate behavior and share and co-create some best-practice understandings about questioning strategies for adults and staff within the school community.

Time Allocation: 20 minutes

Materials: Converting Telling Into Asking Worksheet

Set-up/Preparation

Have room prepared to allow for pairs, small groups and whole group discussions.

Instructions

- Begin by sharing with the group: “When challenging issues arise, it can be tempting to tell students what they need to do and how they need to go about it. At other times, it seems easier to ignore an issue in the hope that it might blow over, resolve itself, or just go away. A more relational approach is to engage the student in the issue and support them to come up with their own solutions. This approach emphasizes the importance of students being actively involved in providing feedback about what they learned, how they learned it and their experience.”
- Tell participants that the Converting Telling to Asking Worksheet contains seven “telling” statements relating to issues that could arise in school.
- **In pairs:** Ask participants to work in pairs to reframe the statements into questions that address the issues without being confrontational. Ask them to see if they can provide more than one question for each statement.
- **Whole-group discussion:** Discuss the questions from the first part of the activity and decide which are most effective. What makes them so effective?

End of Activity Processing

- As time permits, ask how this activity deepens understanding of RP and what additional questions it creates.

Converting Telling into Asking Worksheet

| Telling | Asking |
|---|--------|
| Don't lean back on your chair. I've already told you about that this morning. | |
| You are making far too much noise in the hallway. There is a class trying to work in the next room. | |
| Don't leave your trash there. Show some pride in your school. | |
| Don't fight in the line. It's really annoying for the other people who are waiting. | |
| That is inappropriate language, and it's not okay in this school. | |
| If you keep disrupting the class, I'm going to send you to the principal. | |
| You just hurt Jack. You go and apologize to him | |

Simple, Challenging, Outrageous

(From Facilitating Restorative Group Conferences, Minnesota Department of Corrections, 1999)

Purpose

Participants will experience how people perceive and respond to different situations and will consider how restorative processes are both intervention and prevention.

Time Allocation: 15-30 minutes

Materials: Whiteboard and markers or flip charts and markers

Set-Up/Preparation

Write as three headings on the top of a flip pad or blackboard: Simple, Challenging, and Outrageous. Have three different color makers for processing as it's easier for everyone to read if you use a different color marker for each column.

Instructions

- Organize the participants into small groups. Ask them to spend five minutes listing behaviors into three categories—simple, challenging and outrageous—that they see in their schools that are against the rules, cause harm or are frustrating. Ask them to try to come up with at least one situation for each of the three categories.
- After 5 minutes, ask each group to share one situation for the Simple category and write one to two word descriptions of their situations as a vertical list under the Simple heading on the flip pad/blackboard. Do the same thing for Challenging, and for Outrageous. Keep going around until you have a report from each group.
- Ask participants what they see when they look at the lists. What stands out? Did some behaviors end up in more than one column? Is there something that you would not use a restorative process to address?

End of Activity Processing/Key Points

- Different groups may list similar situations differently. (E.g., school hazing may be “simple” or “outrageous”). Some people see possibilities in the same situation that others may feel is impossible to conference.
- “Simple” to an observer may be “outrageous” to a conference participant. For instance, a pen stolen from a grade school boy may seem like a simple matter to an adult. But to the boy it may be the 10th time his stuff has been stolen in school and the final straw for trying to make it at that school or it may have been a very special and meaningful pen to him, such as one of the last gifts his grandmother gave him before she died.

- Restorative conferencing is an intervention and a prevention process. By intervening at young ages and with lower level offenses, the process has the potential to prevent more serious harms. To illustrate, choose situations which correspond from the three lists or use these: If we don't intervene with a child who is calling someone names (a "Simple" situation in most eyes), that child is much more likely to escalate to a more serious level like bullying, and without intervention that same behavior can later become a hate crime. By intervening respectfully to teach the child about the harms caused we can stop her or him from committing much more harm in the future.
- Restorative face-to-face processes are being used for all levels of harm. All of the examples listed have a comparable case in real life that is being processed with a restorative face-to-face practice, including crimes of severe violence – here in Minnesota, elsewhere in the nation and internationally. In Texas there are state employees and trained volunteers (in victims' services) who do victim offender dialogs and conferences at victims' requests in crimes of severe violence; many of those crimes were murder. On a national level for example, restorative processes were used to try to resolve wartime harm in Bosnian, Rwandan, and Palestinian communities. Truth and reconciliation committees have been used to address historical harms in Canada, Liberia and other countries, following the example of the South Africa Truth and Reconciliation Commission which addressed the harm of apartheid in that country.
- Extra training is required to facilitate examples in the "Outrageous" column. The more severe the harm, the more experience, training and professional support the facilitator must have, and the more preparation and resources are needed.

Keeping the Small Things Small

(Adapted from Restorative Practice Kete Book Two: Restorative Essentials)

Purpose

Participants will share and discuss effective, non-confrontational strategies for handling and de-escalating situations to build their toolkit of strategies that they can draw on in everyday practice.

Time Allocation: 40 minutes

Materials: Keeping the Small Things Small Worksheet

Set-up/Preparation

Have the room prepared to allow for discussions in pairs as well as the entire group. Prepare your own strategies in response to the worksheet to help guide initial thinking by the group.

Instructions

- **Individual:** Begin by asking participants to spend four to five minutes reading and reflecting on the “Keeping the Small Things Small” worksheet. Reflect on the most effective, least intrusive techniques you use to de-escalate situations and turn the heat down.
- **In pairs:** Share these strategies with a colleague for two to three minutes. Repeat this three to four times with different colleagues.
- **Whole-group discussion:** Discuss and evaluate the strategies. Ask participants to reflect whether they tend to de-escalate with some students more than others. Have each person choose two to three strategies that are new to them to try out in the next month.

End of Activity Processing

- Record the strategies for display in the staff room or distributing online.

Keeping the Small Things Small Worksheet

Read the scenarios in the following worksheet and consider how you would respond in order to effectively de-escalate each situation and arrive at a satisfactory outcome. Then list your top three strategies for keeping the small things small. After paired discussions, write down two additional strategies you want to try out in the coming month. You only need to list five total strategies.

| Scenarios | Your Top Strategies |
|---|----------------------------|
| 1. Two students are having a noisy argument in the school grounds. | 1. |
| 2. Two students are having a noisy argument in the school grounds. | 2. |
| 3. Two students are having a noisy argument in the school grounds. | 3. |
| 4. You hear a student swearing in the school hallway. | 4. |
| 5. While on duty you come across a student who is clearly breaking the school dress code. | 5. |
| 6. A student is continually distracting others in your class. | |
| 7. You see a student casually drop litter on the school grounds. | |
| 8. A student is using an electronic device in class for social purposes. | |
| 9. You discover a student smoking on the school grounds. | |

Restorative Practice and Established Expectations

(Adapted from Restorative Practice Kete Book Two: Restorative Essentials)

Purpose

Participants will strengthen the connections between the restorative approach and the school's established behavioral expectations.

Time Allocation: 45 minutes

Materials: Restorative Practice and Established Expectations Worksheet

Set-Up/Preparation

Have room prepared to allow for small group and whole group discussions.

Instructions

- **Small groups:** In groups of three to four, consider some of the most effective ways in which your school's behavioral expectations are made explicit within the school community. Ask the following questions:
 - What do these behavioral expectations mean for staff?
 - What are some of the ways that you as staff can consistently model these behavioral expectations?
 - When parents come into the school, what do these behavioral expectations mean for them?
- Consider the scenarios in the Restorative Practice and Established Expectations Worksheet. For each, how could you use your school's behavioral expectations in a conversation to address the situation? List some questions or statements you could use.
- **Whole-group discussion:** Discuss and evaluate the statements for each scenario. Do they make the school's expectations clear? Which are likely to be most effective? Why?

End of Activity Processing

- Discuss how to deal effectively with students who want to challenge the schools' expectations.

Restorative Practice and Established Expectations Worksheet

Consider the scenarios in this worksheet. For each scenario, how could you use your school's behavioral expectations in a conversation to address the situation? List some questions or statements you could use.

| Scenario | Questions or Statements You Could Use Drawing on Your School's Expectations |
|--|--|
| A student yells really loudly to his friends as he leaves the main entrance. Several visitors to the school are waiting there. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. |
| A student is repeatedly late to your first-period class. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. |
| A student is constantly running in the hallways on his way to individualized classes. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. |
| A staff member jokes inappropriately with a colleague in the staff room. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. |
| A group of teachers share a classroom. Some are getting frustrated by the way others are leaving it. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. |
| A parent on the sideline of a school soccer game yells abusively at a player on the visiting team. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. |
| A parent raises their voice angrily at one of your colleagues. | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 2. 3. |

Positive and Negative Comments

(Adapted from Restorative Practice Kete Book Two: Restorative Essentials)

Purpose

Participants will observe and give feedback on another colleague's practice.

Time Allocation: 10 minutes

Materials: None

Set-Up/Preparation

This is an assigned activity. Facilitator should explain the instructions to help participants choose an appropriate partner.

Instructions

- Find a partner with whom you are comfortable and logistically able to observe each other. Have each colleague sit in the back of the others' classroom to watch you for at least 20 minutes, noting every time in your interactions with students you make a negative comment or statement and every time you make a positive one.
- Sit down together following class and discuss what you thought your balance of negative versus positive comments was and what your colleague observed. Make notes and keep them for the full group discussion.

End of Activity Processing

- Once everyone has had a chance to observe and be observed, ask how it went. Discuss whether there were common patterns in the perceived versus observed balance of positive versus negative statements.

Effective Listening – The 80:20 Dialogue

(Adapted from Restorative Practice Kete Book Two: Restorative Essentials)

Purpose

Participants will explore, discuss, observe and give feedback to enhance strategies and skills for using affective language and restorative chats.

Time Allocation: 10-20 minutes

Materials: None

Set-up/Preparation:

Ensure the room is prepared for groups of three to work together.

Instructions

- Begin by saying: “Affective statements and restorative conversations are for the students’ benefit – they should be doing most of the talking and reflecting in order for the conversation to be effective and to change their behavior. As educators, we often struggle to listen more than we speak. Listening with real attention enhances any dialogue. It can make a significant difference to young people’s engagement in the interaction. A good balance to aim for is the 80:20 ratio for student input: teacher input.
- In groups of three: Choose a familiar scenario based on a low-level incident. Two members of the group role-play a three-minute restorative chat or affective statement interaction at a school. One person is a staff member and the other plays a student. The third person observes the conversation, noting how much talking is done by the “staff member” and how much by the “student.”
- At the conclusion of the interaction, the two actors reflect on how long their character spent talking and whether it enhanced the conversation. The observer then shares his/her notes.
- Now discuss the conversation, focusing on the benefit it would have had for the student. How close was it to the 80:20 ratio of student input to staff member input?
- If there is time, swap roles and repeat the exercise.

End of Activity Processing

- Discuss whether participants feel their skills are increasing with practice and where they still feel challenged.

Welcome and Values Circle

This is a suggested script for conducting the Welcome and Values Circle. Thank you for volunteering to be the circle keeper! Please read this entirely so that you are acquainted with the basic outline. You may use these words or most certainly, your own words, to conduct and to keep the conversation.

Keeper: Welcome, everyone, to circle.

Focus ritual: Invite people to breathe--three breaths in and out.

Opening: A Norwegian principal, Kai Robert Johansen, visited the Minnesota Department of Education and shared his school's values and methods. Tunhaug School serves middle and high school students. Mr. Johansen shared the school's relationship philosophy: ROSE. "Its name reflects its content," he said. "ROSE has nothing to do with the beautiful flower. Rather here is what it means: R—for giving and receiving praise—ros in Norwegian; O—for giving and receiving care—omsorg in Norwegian; S—for socialization, creating and managing relationships with others and E—for empathy."

The principal continued: "We also call our school the "human" school. We focus on the whole student. We try to remember that it is not enough to connect to the cellular phone and Internet. At Tunhaug, we greet our students with a handshake every morning. We look each other in the eye and exchange a few kind words. We are then logged onto the human network and ready to start the day and our work."

There we have notes from across the Atlantic, where teachers like us are getting ready to teach or are teaching. This will be a circle about our own values and philosophy.

Meeting, getting acquainted: "First, let us go around and introduce ourselves. Say your name, what you do here at school and one thing you saw on the way to work today." (The keeper answers the prompt and gives the talking piece to the person to the left. The talking piece goes around in order.)

Telling stories: "Thank you for sharing your stories in that round. Now, I invite you to take a piece of paper and write on it a value word. What was a value that you learned in your family of origin or your work family or your chosen family that helps you get through the day? Write that word on the paper." (Give people time to think and write.)

"For this round, tell us who your people are and what your word is. Tell us a little about what that word means to you today. When you are finished, place the paper with your word on it around the centerpiece so we can all see it. I will start. My people originally came from....my word is...." (Again, the talking piece goes to the person on the left.)

"Let us look at all these values—(read them off). On this round, is there anything you would like to say about another value besides your own? Remember, you may pass or not pass."

Addressing Issues: “From these values together we can begin to establish a safe and caring work environment. What do you need in order to work with your colleagues, so that you can try to work according to these values? Can someone take notes on the ideas? Thanks. I will pass the talking piece around two or three times so people can take their time thinking. “

Making Plans: “Thank you for these ideas. Please read what was said about these values. What is one thing that you can do as school begins to help each other as staff members to keep connected?”

Sense of Unity: “For our final round, how was this activity for you?”

Closing: “To close our circle let me share this bit of encouragement for the new school year in the words of Ada Teixeira: ‘If your efforts are sometimes greeted with indifference, don't lose heart. The sun puts on a wonderful show at daybreak, yet most of the people in the audience go on sleeping.’ Thank you for participating in this circle.”

Talking Piece Circle

This is a suggested script for conducting the talking piece circle. Please read this entirely so that you are acquainted with the basic outline. You may use these words or most certainly, your own words, to conduct and to keep the conversation.

Keeper: “Welcome, everyone, to circle.”

Focus ritual: (Invite people to breath —three breathes in and out.)

Opening: “A symbol is an object that can stand for more than one thing — it can have many meanings. A talking piece is like that. It can be an object or it can also represent other things not as tangible, not as specific. While the apple is a piece of fruit, it can also symbolize all fruit or health or education. The talking piece can symbolize who we are as individuals. We can talk about whom we are by telling the story of the talking piece and what the parts mean.”

Meeting, getting acquainted: “First, let us go around and say your name and answer this question: if you were a type of weather today, what kind of weather would you be?”

Telling stories: “Now, let's explain our talking pieces. What did you use to make your piece? Why did you choose those things, those ribbons or beads or colors or sticks, those elements? What does this talking piece say about you? I will go first.”

Addressing Issues: “What ideas do you have for using these talking pieces and for the circle process? Please share your ideas. Can someone take notes on the ideas? Thanks. So, what ideas do you have for using circle in our classroom?”

Making Plans: I thank you for the ideas. We can talk about them in more detail at our next circle. Who would like to lead that circle?”

Sense of Unity: “For our final round, think of one word to describe how this activity was for you.”

Closing: “Our talking pieces are unique, like each one of us is unique. Thank you for sharing your work.”

Compassionate Schools Principles Circle

Keeper: Cut out the list below of the compassionate instruction and discipline principles from *Compassionate Schools: The Heart of Teaching and Learning* and use this list as a talking piece.

Compassionate Instruction and Discipline Principles

- *Always empower, never disempower*
- *Provide unconditional positive regard*
- *Maintain high expectations*
- *Check assumptions, observe and question*
- *Be a relationship coach*
- *Provide guided opportunities for helpful participation.*

Opening: Invite people to think of a young person they appreciate. Sit silently for a moment while people collect their thoughts. Read the principles aloud.

Meeting and Getting Acquainted

Round One: Say your name and the name of the student who came to mind.

Round Two: Which of the principles listed on the sheet do you like the most today?

Storytelling: Share a time when you had a teacher treat you in a manner that embodied or illustrated one of the principles.

Addressing Issues:

1. Share an example of where you see one of these principles in practice in your school. Think about yourself, the staff or students. (Send the talking piece around twice as people may want to pass the first time to think.) Make a list of examples.
2. Share an example of where these principles might be used to improve practice in your school. (Again, send the talking piece around twice.) Make a list of examples.
3. What are some suggestions or ideas to either enhance what is working well, or address what could be improved upon?

Making Plans/Sense of Unity: What is one thing you can commit to doing that will help promote one of the Compassionate Principles?

Final round: Does anyone have anything else they would like to say?

Closing: “In the words of Mona M. Johnson: ‘When the heart speaks, listen. Then respond compassionately and consistently.’ Thank you for your time in circle.”