



CREATING AN ATMOSPHERE FOR LIFE CHANGE

Circles of Support and Accountability and Mediations -Preparation

Circles of Support and Accountability (COSA) and Mediations are two of the primary ways that restorative justice is utilized in schools and in communities. The conferences allow us to identify specific needs for core participants and their families, so that we can create an environment that is conducive to the core participants healing and success. The planning of the COSA and Mediations is the most important part of the process. If any steps are neglected in the planning of the COSA or Mediation, it could potentially undermine the success of the conference. Below you will find the recommended steps for planning a Circle of Support and Accountability or a Mediation.

1. Identify the core participants that may need to have a Circle of Support & Accountability or Mediation.
1. **Assessment:** Meet with the core participant (s) to find out what their felt needs are.
2. Connect with the influencers (parent, siblings, friends) to find out what their needs are regarding supporting the core participant.
3. **Circle of Support and Accountability:** List the names of service providers that may need to be in the circle based upon the information that you received from the core participant. There may be some needs that you may identify based upon you're the assessment of the core participant.
4. **Circle of Support and Accountability:** Begin to mobilize the service providers to support the core participant and their family's needs. Service providers can consist of teachers, mental health providers, counselors, Community in Schools, coach, probation officer (if it applies), school administrators and any other services you think may need to be present.
5. **Mediations and Circles of Support and Accountability Prep:**
 - a. Mediation Questionnaire: Meet individually with each person that will attend the circle/conference to gain context by going through the mediation questions. Ask the participants to write their thoughts on the mediation form so that they can use this information to guide their communication when we bring the parties together.
 - b. Explain the purpose of the circle/conference
 - c. Briefly discuss what is expected of each participant in the circle
 - d. Inform the attendees about the service providers that will be in the circle (if applicable)



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- e. Go over the makeup of the circle (the opening, icebreaker, values round, body and closing).
 - f. Emphasize the need to listen without interruption (emphasize that everyone will have their opportunity to be heard).
 - g. Reassure every participant that there will be a clear plan/agreement established at the conclusion of the circle
 - h. Remind the participant that the circle is a process and the first circle of support and accountability, or mediation may only be the beginning of the process.
6. Ask the core participant who they would like to be in the circle for peer support (this usually applies to a Circle of Support and Accountability).
 7. Meet with the core participant and their peer supporter so that they will understand and trust the process (this usually applies to a Circle of Support and Accountability).

Check-In Circles quick conversations at the beginning of the week to listen to the student's most pressing needs. This could involve discussions about weekend experiences, how they are feeling or their goals for that week.

Check-Up Circles give us the opportunity to engage with students in terms with their relationships with family, peers, teachers and community. This is done midway through the week to offer support and accountability to successfully reach their relational and academic goals.

Check-Out Circles can be used as a tool to celebrate the wins for the week, encourage self-care for the weekend and dialogue about new goals for the following week.

Sample Questions for verbal check-in/up/out:

- What was the low point of your last week?
- What was the high point of your last week?
- How are you feeling today? Is there anything you feel is important for us to know?
- How do you feel about being here in the circle today?
- What-are you carrying into the room that you would like to dump before we go into our activity?
- What would you like us to know about what's up with you that will prevent misunderstandings among us?
- What is bringing joy in your life right now?

Body check- in/up/out:

Invite everyone to stand. Explain that we will do check-in with our bodies without using words. One by one around the circle, each person will pantomime either how they feel or what has happened before coming or anything else important for them to convey to the group. For instance, one might pantomime getting up and showering, taking the dog out, driving or walking to the site, rushing around, getting a phone call with good news or bad news, etc. Each one will do his/her pantomime alone and then will immediately repeat the very same motions with everyone else in the circle joining him/her. And then the next person will do her/his pantomime and then repeat it with everyone joining in. It is, of course, always okay to pass. Keeper goes first to model the activity.

Art check- in/up/out:

When participants arrive at the room, have a table of art materials available. As they enter, ask participants to create something from the art materials that symbolizes how they feel right now or how they are doing since you last met. In the check-in round, invite them to share their pieces and put them in the center of the circle. They may pass on doing the art piece, sharing about it, or putting their piece in the circle. It may be helpful for the keeper to go first if the group is tentative in this activity.

Exploring Values should a part of every Circle:

**** Community Building Circles** will intensely converse the importance of each person's values by discussing what it means to honor or dishonor that value, this will allow each participant to understand each other's boundaries) review, agree/disagree=discuss values to maintain the circle guidelines. (Participants can use existing values that are available in the classroom/space).

**** Check In/Up/Out Circles** will review, agree/disagree=discuss values to maintain the circle guidelines. (Participants can use existing values that are available in the classroom/space).

3 COSA Questions:

- 1. What is a NEED that you have from student?**
- 2. What is a POSITIVE about student?**
- 3. What SUPPORT are you willing to offer to ensure students success?**

Circle Outline & Prep Sheet

- Community-Building Circles -

1. Welcome and Hospitality (name tags, greeting):

2. Opening Ceremony (reading, music, spoken word, song, meditation, drumming, etc):

3. Icebreaker:

4. Share purpose of circle & basic expectations (i.e. confidentiality, cell phone use, etc):

5. Explain Center and Use of Talking Pieces:

6. Check-in Round (prompting question?):

7. Safe Space discussion (art activity?):

8. Create Values and Reach Consensus:

9. Create Guidelines and Reach Consensus:

10. Question or Activity #1 (Opportunities to build relationships through story-telling, experiences, discussion topics, etc):

11. Check-out Round (Prompting Question?):

12. Closing Ceremony (reading, music, spoken word, song, meditation, drumming, etc):

Additional Notes/Ideas:

Value focused Rounds:

- When you are being human, at your best, what are you? (In a word or short phrase)
- Imagine you are in conflict with a person who is important in your life. What values do you want to guide your conduct as you try to work out that conflict?
- What value would you like to offer for our space together?
- Tell us about your work and what the challenges are.
- What is your passion?
- What do you keep returning to in your life?
- What touches your heart?
- What gives you hope?
- What demonstrates respect?
- What is something you value about your family? Why?
- What is something you value about yourself? Why?
- What is something that you are thankful for? Why?
- Talk about something that you want and something that you need. What is the difference?
- What have you learned about power? What does it mean to you?
- What have you learned about work? What does it mean to you?
- What have you learned about money? What does it mean to you?
- In your experience, what supports healing?
- What sustains you during difficult times?

Getting acquainted "Ice Breaker" ideas:

- Share a happy childhood memory.
- Share a funny story from your work (or life).
- If you could be a superhero, what super powers would you choose and why?
- What do you appreciate about your work or main activity?
- How would your best friend describe you?
- What would you not want to change about your life?
- If you could talk to someone from your family who is no longer alive, who would it be and why?
- If you had an unexpected free day, what would you like to do?
- If you were an animal, what animal would you be and why?
- Name two things or people who always_ make you laugh.
- I like to collect...
- Name one male and one female who is a good model for young people.
- When was the last time you said "yes" and would have liked to say "No?" Why did you say, "Yes?"
- If you could have a face-to-face conversation with someone alive today or someone who has passed on, who would it be and why?
- Describe your ideal job.
- Describe your favorite vacation.
- If you could change anything about yourself, what would it be?
- What is one skill or talent you have?
- What are three "gifts" (attributes of yourself) that you bring to the circle?
- If you were a reporter, what kind of stories would you like to write about?
- Who are some of your heroes? Why are they your heroes?
- What do you think other people see as your best quality? Why?
- What is the silliest thing that ever happened to you?
- What is the best thing that happened to you this past week?
- What was the most difficult or challenging thing that happened to you this week?



Life Anew

CREATING AN ATMOSPHERE FOR LIFE CHANGE

Disparately impacting youth of color, punitive school discipline and juvenile justice policies activate tragic cycles of youth violence, incarceration, and wasted lives. Life Anew Inc. works to interrupt these cycles by promoting institutional shifts toward restorative processes that actively engage families, communities, and systems to repair harm, maximize the effectiveness of instruction time for teachers, create a school environment conducive for student learning and social and emotion development. Life Anew trains staff and administrators how to utilize restorative processes that helps to end the cycle of incarceration, suspension, and expulsion of students. **Below you will find some a menu of Life Anew Training Courses.**

Circles 101- Community Building Circles (Tier 1)

You will learn how to implement restorative circles in the classroom that will assist with establishing class values, create a space where students can develop socially and emotionally through developing empathy, respect boundaries by learning to listen to others without interruption and increase the effectiveness of instruction time by creating a structured environment in the classroom.

Circles 102- Circles of Support and Accountability/Re-Entry (Tier 2 & Tier3)

You will learn how to facilitate a process in which a student will be supported in establishing a success plan to navigate through the school year, learn how to give students a supported re-entry into the classroom and create an environment where students and teachers can provide supports for one another.

Circles 103 – Family Group Conference (Tier 1, 2 & 3)

Family group conferences allow us to engage the entire family and student support staff to work to identify problems and provide supports around the student and family to create an environment that is conducive for the student and families' success.

Circles 104 – Conflict resolution Circles (Tier 2)

You will learn how to facilitate circles that will assist in resolving conflict when it occurs between students and students or students and adults. In this course, we will learn how to give equity to the school community, the victim and the offender in order to repair the harm that has been caused within the context of relationships.

Restorative Processes 201- Whole School Approach (Tier 1, 2 & 3)

You will learn best practices are implementing a whole school approach to restorative processes with fidelity. This training will include a school readiness assessment, forming your Leadership Implementation Team and ways to engage parents in the restorative process.

CREATING THE SPACE



THE CIRCLE

The creation of a safe place to dialogue to build healthy relationships, repair harm or support a participant in life changing matters. The circle implements equality and eliminates the top-down or debate setting by maximizing the opportunity for both the quiet and loud voices to dialogue and listen without interruption. All empty chairs should be removed to eliminate any gaps in the circle.



TALKING PIECE

A creative item used as a "microphone". When you are holding the talking piece you are the only person allowed to talk from the heart. Everyone else should be listening from deep within the heart. The talking piece is passed in one direction, giving everyone the right to speak or pass during their turn. This piece is not to be tossed across the circle, but can be suspended temporarily for open dialogue during a particular round.



CENTERPIECE

A canvas of some type of paper or fabric is the foundation of the well purposed center at the core of the circle. The theme of your circle should be reflected by the items that you use to provoke intentional thought about the purpose and desired outcome of the conversation.



REFRESHMENTS

What better way to have a conversation!? Food satisfies the stomach while a drink is refreshing for those who may be utilizing this time to engage in conversation!

5 ELEMENTS OF CIRCLE



OPENING

The birth of the circle, can be a warm welcome, poem, song, etc. that dictates the pace and sets the mood for the conversation.



ICE BREAKER

Can be used for introductions and as a creative way to build relationships and transition into the space created. Involves peer interaction, movement and relevant exercises.



VALUES

Consensus based guidelines of morals, principles and beliefs that the circle has agreed to uphold to maintain a standard of the safe place created to dialogue.



BODY

Why we are here!! Create rounds about the topic.



CLOSING

The ceremonial ending that connects us to our next steps as participants in *circle*.



Life Anew

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE CREATING AN ATMOSPHERE FOR LIFE CHANGE

Family Group Conference Prep

- Separate meetings to hear what happened
- Explanation of the purpose of the conference including benefits and risks
- Exploration of the impact the event has had on self and others
- Discussion of what is needed to address the harm (what the person harmed wants and what the responsible person could do)

Suggested questions to ask:

1. Who is the support system at the school? Contact/prep that person
2. Who all needs to be involved in the circle?
3. Find out what the event was that lead to the family group conference.
4. Ask the student, what do you need from your support system?
5. What do you need so that you can feel successful?
6. What are your personal and career goals?
7. Ask the parent or guardian, what supports they need to support their student?
8. Ask the parent what needs do you have?



Life Anew Restorative Justice Inc.

CREATING AN ATMOSPHERE FOR LIFE CHANGE

Restorative Connections

Purpose: This connection is a tool to maintain healthy formal and informal conversations that allows us to continuously listen to the students to meet pressing needs or concerns. This "connection" allows us the opportunity to continue building the relationship that will enable us to prepare for a circle in the future if needed.

"Changing the Language, Changing the Atmosphere" is an outcome that can be experienced almost immediately and result in a greater trust developed in your relationships. Many times a student will already assume the direction of the conversation. We often hear *"you already know Ms/Mr"*! It is very important to have the conversation or circle with a clear mind of listening to *all* sides and not begin to dialogue with a preconceived opinion of who is right or wrong.

The restorative language consists of using restorative chats by asking a series of questions to allow those in conversation to take responsibility for their feelings, actions and to be a part of making wrongs right.



Restorative Chats

"Walk and Talk" is a simple and very effective tool used to converse with students about their day or a particular situation that may have occurred. This conversation can take place between the student and the coordinator, administrator or teacher walking in the hallway, around a track, cafeteria and even in a classroom!

1. To the person who has done the harm:
 - What happened?
 - Who else was there/around when it happened?
 - What were you thinking at the time?
 - Who has been affected/upset/harmed by your actions?
 - How do you think they have been affected?

2. To the person who has been affected:
 - What was your reaction at the time of the incident?
 - How do you feel about what happened?
 - What did you think at the time?
 - What have you thought about since?
 - How has it upset/hurt/harmed you?
 - What has been the worst or hardest thing for you?
 - What is needed to make it right/to make you feel better?



Life Anew Restorative Justice

CREATING AN ATMOSPHERE FOR LIFE CHANGE

In restorative Justice we foster relationships that matter by developing empathy for the people who are a part of our community. This is done through the act of listening to one another's stories. Every person that we interact with has a story to tell.

The Power of Story Telling: Tell a story about a time that you attempted to communicate with someone and they totally misunderstood what you were saying? What thoughts came to your mind about the other individual?

Tell a story about a time when you misunderstood what someone else was attempting to say to you? What thoughts came to your mind about the other individual?

Community Building Circle Exercise

“Getting the RIGHT point across”

Purpose: The goal in the opening circle is to introduce ourselves and begin to build community with those who we will spend the next few hours with. In this circle we will discuss our values and belief system as well as build a consensus around guidelines to establish a healthy space to meet our needs, grow and learn.

Materials: Talking Piece, Center Piece, Sticker Name Badges, Paper, Pens/Markers, Tissue, and Index Cards ** Estimated time for community building circle is 30min

Facilitator should explain the following and answer each round/question first:

- Talking Piece- The talking piece allows the one holding it to speak without interruption. Everyone else should be deep listening (listening is the most important part of this process).
- Centerpiece- Circle Keepers use a centerpiece to create a focal point that supports speaking from the heart and listening from the heart. The centerpiece usually sits on the floor in the center of the open space inside the circle of chairs. Sub-consciously reminds us of why we are here. It should be set up according to the event.



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- Who else was there/around when it happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- Who has been affected/upset/harmed by your actions?
- How do you think they have been affected?

2. To the person who has been affected:

- What was your reaction at the time of the incident?
- How do you feel about what happened?
- What did you think at the time?
- What have you thought about since?
- How has it upset/hurt/harmed you?
- What has been the worst or hardest thing for you?
- What is needed to make it right/to make you feel better?



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3. To the person who has done the harm:
Is there anything else you want to say?

4. To each person including any observers:
What would you like to see happen to repair the harm?
Is that okay? / Do you agree? Is that fair?
Is this realistic and achievable?
How can we make sure this doesn't happen again?
Is there anything I can do to help?
Is there anything else you would like to say?

5. Conclusion:
Formally record the agreement.
Congratulate the students for working it out.
Arrange time to follow-up / meet again to see how things are going.

6. To each person
Is there anything else you would like to say?

Resource: sample questions by www.healthiersf.org/RestorativePractices



Making Wrongs Right!

As adults, we are automatic decision makers who are able to fix almost anything! We frequently hear the resolution of a matter to change schedules, initiate stay away agreements to protect the victim or punitive discipline such as out of school suspension or in school suspension to teach the "offender" a lesson. The reality is that our students still have to walk down the same hallways, eat in the same lunchroom and spend their entire school day under the same roof.

Through the circle process we are able to allow each person to be a part of the healing and restorative process by building the success plan from scratch. This will allow each person have input and satisfaction in the redemption plan. Allow your students to be creative in their agreements.

Story:

A handful of boys took items from a book fair at school. The librarian caught them and asked the principal for a circle. During this time each boy told his story about how he ended up in the situation and took full responsibility for their actions. The librarian shared how the cost of the items would come out of her own pocket. The boys agreed to return the items and work in the library for the remaining cost.



CREATING AN ATMOSPHERE FOR LIFE CHANGE

Restorative Practices in Schools

Types of Circles

Purpose: Disparately impacting youth of color, punitive school discipline and juvenile justice policies activate tragic cycles of youth violence, incarceration and wasted lives. Life Anew Restorative Justice Inc. (LARJ) works to interrupt these cycles by promoting institutional shifts toward restorative processes that actively engage families, communities and systems to repair harm, maximize the effectiveness of instruction time for teachers, create a school environment conducive for student learning and social and emotional development. LARJ trains administrators and staff how to utilize restorative processes that helps to end the cycle of incarceration, suspension and expulsion of students.

Objective: Strengthen Cultural Proficiency

Participants will learn about different cultures and build relationships with people in cultures that you may not be familiar with.

Circles 101- Community Building Circles (Tier 1)

You will learn how to implement restorative circles in the classroom that will assist with establishing class values, create a space where students can develop socially and emotionally through developing empathy, respect boundaries by learning to listen to others without interruption and increase the effectiveness of instruction time by creating a structured environment in the classroom. *** average check in/up/out circle will take 45 minutes for a class up to 22*

Circles 102- Check In/Up/Out (Tier 1)

- **Check-In Circles** quick conversations at the beginning of the week to listen to the student's most pressing needs. This could involve discussions about weekend experiences, how they are feeling or their goals for that week.
- **Check-Up Circles** give us the opportunity to engage with students in terms with their relationships with family, peers, teachers and community. This is done midway through the week to offer support and accountability to successfully reach their relational and academic goals.
- **Check-Out Circles** can be used as a tool to celebrate the wins for the week, encourage self-care for the weekend and dialogue about new goals for the following week.

*** average check in/up/out circle will take 15-20 minutes for a class up to 22*



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Circles 201 – Family Group Conference (Tier 1, 2 & 3)

Family group conferences allow us to engage the entire family and student support staff to work to identify problems and provide supports around the student and family to create an environment that is conducive for the student and families' success. *** average circle will take 45 minutes to 1.5 hour*

Circles 202 – Conflict resolution Circles (Tier 2)

You will learn how to facilitate circles that will assist in resolving conflict when it occurs between students and students or students and adults. In this course, we will learn how to give equity to the school community, the person who was harmed and the person who caused the harm in order to repair the harm that has been caused within the context of relationships. *** average circle will take 30 minutes to 1 hour*

Circles 203- Circles of Support and Accountability/Re-Entry (Tier 2 & Tier3)

You will learn how to facilitate a process in which a student will be supported in establishing a success plan to navigate through the school year, learn how to give students a supported re-entry into the classroom and create an environment where students and teachers can provide supports for one another. *** average circle will take 45 minutes to 1.5 hour*

Circles 301 – Re-Entry Circles (Tier 3)

You will learn how to facilitate circles that will support a student who is returning to school and/or home. This student has likely been removed from the school community through suspension, transfer to DAEP or JJAEP. In this course, we will learn how to give equity to the school community, the person who was harmed and the person who caused the harm in order to repair the harm that has been caused within the context of relationships. A success plan is created to support the student, family and school. *** average circle will take 45 minutes to 1 hour*

Restorative Processes 401- Whole School Approach (Tier 1, 2 & 3)

You will learn best practices are implementing a whole school approach to restorative processes with fidelity. This training will include a school readiness assessment, forming your Restorative Practices Leadership Team and ways to engage parents and community in the restorative process.

***** all elements of the circle are implemented in every circle***