Restorative Circles Intervention Guide

Restorative Circles Intervention Description

**Grade Level(s) Targeted**  
9-12

**Students Targeted**  
All students

**Purpose**  
- Cultivate a safe and supportive environment to:
  - Develop student’s SEL competencies and overall well-being
  - Develop relationships with peers and adults
  - Repair harm and repair/restorative relationships
  - Improve connection to school and thereby attendance

**Root Causes Addressed**  
- Developing relationships has not been prioritized
- Students have not developed strong relationships with peers
- Students have not developed strong relationships with adults
- Students may not know how to establish or maintain positive relationships
- Some adults may not know how to establish or maintain strong relationships with students

**Description**  
- School staff members guide daily restorative classroom circles for students. Restorative Circles focus on building community and SEL skills, repairing harm and restoring relationships through discussions of relevant topics.
- Each circle likely includes the following: mindfulness moment, opening of topic, rounds of opportunities for all participants to share or react to the topic/prompt and closing.
- Circle topics are aligned with class and school-wide expectations, state SEL standards and district priorities.
- Topics may also be determined by classroom/setting/community needs or events.
- Staff members intentionally build relationships with and between students.

**What values, priorities, or work does this align with that may support implementation?**  
- K-12 SEL standards
- SEL focus within the district and emphasis on relationship and community building within classrooms and schools

**What values, priorities, or work does this not align with that may support implementation?**  
- No misalignment with values, priorities or work

**Who may benefit from this intervention and who may be harmed?**  
- All students in participating classrooms benefit.

**Time Required**  
10-20 min depending on grade level

**Frequency**  
Daily

**Staffing Involved**  
- Classroom Teachers lead
- School Counselors, social workers, psychologists may lead
- External community partners may lead
- All staff (including administrators) should participate in circle practice with students

**Professional Development**  
- Circle format/structure
- Lesson/topic development
- Walkthrough/observation feedback

**Materials Needed**  
- Circle topics, talking piece, rug, seating, music for mindful moment

**Space Required**  
- Comfortable space for group to sit in circle in classroom or other dedicated space

**Costs (in dollars)**  
- Circle Forward Book: $100
- Other books/materials for circles range in costs.
- Cost of professional learning.
- Staff time to plan and engage in PL.
- Talking pieces, etc.

**Virtual Adaptation**  
- Can do virtual circles, but will need to be more intentional about how to include circle components: talking pieces, etc.

**Resources**  
- Circle Forward: Building a Restorative School Community, Multiple SEL Resources including SEL literacy pack, and Brain Games Pack
- 8 Minute SEL Lessons

CONTACT US  
provingground.cepr.harvard.edu | provingground@cepr.harvard.edu
**Title of event**

**USER’S EMOTIONS**
How would you expect your user to feel?

**EVENT’S PERSONALITY**
Event personalities inform tone and behavior! How do you want your user to feel?

**TOUCHPOINTS**

- **Environment**
  The physical space in which the event will happen.

- **Tools**
  The physical materials that support users during the event.

- **People & Interactions**
  The people that are part of the event and how they will interact.

**Parent Notification**

- **Parent**: Wanting to know more, need clarity, Student: apprehensive, singled out

**First Circle**

- **Students**: apprehensive, cautious, curious

**Ongoing Circles**

- **Parent**: Wanting to know more, need clarity, Student: apprehensive, singled out

STOP: Before moving forward, take a moment to highlight the critical Touchpoints.
Personality (Paste from Journey Map): Warm, friendly, positive feel, want student involvement in creating belonging in building/classrooms

Environment

WHAT DOES THIS SPACE NEED TO HAVE TO FEEL THE WAY YOU WANT IT TO FEEL?
E.g. furniture, windows, privacy
1. 
2. NA- family will receive letter at home/etc
3. 
4. 

WHAT ARE SPECIFIC SPACES THAT COULD BE USED?
1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 

Tools

LIST TOOLS HERE
1. Letter that is for 9th-12th across buildings/participating classrooms
2. Talking points/fact sheet for teachers/staff
3. 

HOW WILL YOU MAKE THESE TOOLS FEEL RIGHT? Colors? Fonts? Tone of text?
1. Want to emphasize how to bring students perspectives/voice so we can increase sense of belonging
2. Convey respect between student/teacher
3. Everyone feeling valued
4. Limited text, easy to read, friendly tone

People & Interactions

WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PEOPLE WE WANT IN THIS ROLE?
1. Understanding of what is happening and why
2. Positive and knowledgeable

WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS AND CAN SERVE IN THIS ROLE? (Choose individuals or titles who you would do it well or could be supported to do it well.)
1. Principals will sign the letters and have designee send out

WHAT ARE WE ASKING THESE PEOPLE TO DO?
1. Send the letter via Blackboard by X date (date TBD)
2. 
3. 

WHAT DO THESE PEOPLE NEED TO KNOW AND DO?
1. Awareness of project/purpose of circles
2. Understand why we are sending letters
3. 

HOW WILL WE PREPARE AND SUPPORT THEM?
1. Draft letter for principals to distribute
2. 
3. 

Tip: Content in red boxes will become your action steps.
# Touchpoint Worksheet

## Personality
(Paste from Journey Map): Clear, respectful, positive belonging, encouraging, unique/special/valued

## Environment

**WHAT DOES THIS SPACE NEED TO HAVE TO FEEL THE WAY YOU WANT IT TO FEEL?**
E.g. furniture, windows, privacy

1. Welcoming, visual displays, circle format, rug, space smells good

**WHAT ARE SPECIFIC SPACES THAT COULD BE USED?**

1. PD Room
2. Classrooms

## Tools

**LIST TOOLS HERE**

1. Circle Forward manual
2. First Lesson/Explanation of Circles Plan
3. Music
4. Talking Piece
5. Center Piece

**HOW WILL YOU MAKE THESE TOOLS FEEL RIGHT? Colors? Fonts? Tone of text?**

1. Soothing/calm music
2. Interesting talking piece
3. Collaboratively developed centerpiece
4. First Lesson is interactive, and feels "safe"

## People & Interactions

**WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PEOPLE WE WANT IN THIS ROLE?**

1. Knowledgeable of circle process
2. Warm/supportive
3. Trustworthy
4. Awareness of student/classroom needs

**WHO HAS THESE CHARACTERISTICS AND CAN SERVE IN THIS ROLE?**

Choose individuals or titles who you would do it well or could be supported to do it well.

1. Teachers
2. School Counselor
3. School Social Worker

**WHAT ARE WE ASKING THESE PEOPLE TO DO?**

1. Lead/participate in first circle
2. Support students as they engage in circles

**WHAT DO THESE PEOPLE NEED TO KNOW AND DO?**

1. Circle format/process/expectations
2. Circle topics
3. How to support students in circle process
4. Resources for student/family

**HOW WILL WE PREPARE AND SUPPORT THEM?**

1. PD
2. Purchase/Distribute Circle Forward Materials
3. Planning opportunities with other teachers

---

*Tip: Content in red boxes will become your action steps.*
**Touchpoint Worksheet**

**Personality (Paste from Journey Map):** Empowered, respectful, belonging, encouraging, unique/special/valued

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environment</th>
<th>Tools</th>
<th>People &amp; Interactions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>WHAT DOES THIS SPACE NEED TO HAVE TO FEEL THE WAY YOU WANT IT TO FEEL? E.g. furniture, windows, privacy</td>
<td>LIST TOOLS HERE</td>
<td>WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PEOPLE WE WANT IN THIS ROLE?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Same as initial circle</td>
<td>1. Circle Topics/Circle Content</td>
<td>1. Same as initial circle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHAT ARE SPECIFIC SPACES THAT COULD BE USED?</td>
<td>HOW WILL YOU MAKE THESE TOOLS FEEL RIGHT? Colors? Fonts? Tone of text?</td>
<td>WHO HAS THESE CHARACTERISTICS AND CAN SERVE IN THIS ROLE? Choose individuals or titles who you would do it well or could be supported to do it well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Same as initial circle</td>
<td>1. Circle topics reflect needs in classroom/school/community</td>
<td>1. Possibly Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2. Circle topics reflect student interests in culturally affirming modes</td>
<td>2. Teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>3. School Counselor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4. School Social Worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WHAT DO WE NEED TO DO TO CREATE THESE SPACES?</td>
<td>WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT POINTS TO YOUR AUDIENCE? WHAT CONTENT DOES IT NEED TO INCLUDE?</td>
<td>WHAT ARE WE ASKING THESE PEOPLE TO DO?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Same as initial circle</td>
<td>1. Topics that are relevant to current needs</td>
<td>1. Identify topics for circles based on class/school/community needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>2. Culturally affirming topics and format</td>
<td>2. Lead/participate in daily circles in culturally affirming modes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Alignment with SEL standards 9th-12th</td>
<td>WHAT DO THESE PEOPLE NEED TO KNOW AND DO?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. Circle format/process/expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Have an awareness of common needs in class/school/community and match to lesson topics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>HOW WILL WE PREPARE AND SUPPORT THEM?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1. PD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2. Check-ins with support staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3. Common planning opportunities</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Tip:** Content in red boxes will become your action steps.