



Restorative Circles

How They Work and What They Do

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METTA CENTER
for **NONVIOLENCE**



Why a Circle?

A circle approach to conflict resolution and community relationship building makes room for inclusion and healing while eliminating power positions. It is a space where everyone can be heard on an equal playing field.

Helpful Resources

International Institute for Restorative Practices:

<https://www.iirp.edu/restorative-practices/what-is-restorative-practices>

The Metta Center for Nonviolence: <https://mettacenter.org/restorative-justice-animation-resources/>

Evidence Supporting the Use of Restorative Justice - RJ Council:

<https://restorativejustice.org.uk/resources/evidence-supporting-use-restorative-justice>

IIRP on School Climate: <https://www.iirp.edu/pdf/IIRP-Improving-School-Climate.pdf>



Choosing a Circle That Best Fits your Conversation

Listening & Connection: The circle content is light, almost like an icebreaker to get a better idea of who you are sharing the circle with. This is giving everyone a space to be vulnerable and authentic.

Meditation & Mindfulness: Time to reset. Using guided mindfulness and meditation to center yourself and clear your mind can improve mood and work ethic.

Conflict Resolution: These circles have the most moving parts. You have multiple (possibly hesitant) parties involved that are being brought together to reach a middle ground or understanding as to what each party needs in order to heal.

Strategy: Circle can also be used as a form of business meeting. Using an inclusive circle format to make sure all employees ideas and opinions are given space to be heard.

Facilitating a Conflict Resolution Circle



Step 1:

Have a separate meeting with each circle participant. Get each person's perspective and story and establish needs and expectations.



Step 2:

Once each party is willing to participate, establish circle guidelines and agreements.

(See "Circle for Beginners")



Step 3:

Take a mindful moment to transition from outside time to circle time.



Step 4:

Pose an opening icebreaker question, then use the Restorative Questions to get to the root of the conflict and start the healing process.

(See "Circle Questions")

What Do I Bring to a Circle?

- An open mind & open mind
 - Talking pieces that represent you that you are comfortable with everyone using. (See “A Circle Sequence for Beginners”)
 - A written plan *if needed*
 - Make sure all participants are aware of the time commitment and do not hesitate to hold multiple circles around the same topic
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