

## Restorative Circles



A **circle** is a gathering technique used to connect individuals, show support for each other, and help resolve conflict by developing bonds of trust within a school community. There are many different types of circles in restorative practices. Most are similar in structure but the goals are different. All circles should encourage restorative procedures, empathetic listening, and appropriate dialogue to reassure positive feedback.

**Circle Keeper-** is the one who facilitates the circle process. A Circle Keeper is also known as, a Peace Keeper. A Peace Keeper's role is to help keep the peace. A Circle keeper's role is not to resolve conflict between participants but rather, the keeper's role is to initiate a space that is respectful and safe, and to engage participants in sharing responsibly for the space and for their shared work. (The Little Book of Circle Processes, Kay Pranis 2005)

### Circle Structure:

- Have students meet in a circle – preferably without desks.
- Have a topic to discuss and a script prepared.
- Have a Talking Piece.
- Have circle guidelines posted in the classroom or in the center of the circle to remind participants of what the expectations are during the circle process.
- If a circle is used to resolve conflict, it is necessary that individual needs be addressed for those who have been affected by the harm caused. The focus is on repairing harm and problem solving, and showing support for all members who are participating in the process.

**Note:** Restorative Circle training prior to facilitating a specialty circle is highly recommended. A Specialty circle includes the Conflict and Re-entry Circles.