



Office of Student Discipline: Restorative Practices

Hosting a Virtual Circle

The majority of the work we do in Restorative Practices requires direct contact. However, Virtual Circles allow us to stay connected to our community using technology. Creating virtual spaces allows individuals to remain connected, explore a particular topic, and problem solve using dialogue.

The same core principals of Restorative Circles apply to Virtual Circles except the focus is on maintaining healthy relationships and staying connected using technology in response to a separation. Virtual Circles encourage individuals within a community to come together to help strengthen our real-world bonds and provide an additional platform for support and guidance.

Difference between Traditional and Virtual Circles:

Traditonal Circle	Virtual Circle
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Direct contact without barriers are present.• A talking piece that specifies who is talking is present.• A centerpiece to encourage participates to stay focused or ease tension.• The host reads the script to participants during the process.• Participants need a designated space to host a circle- in addition to a time and appropriate date.• The arrangement of a tradtional circle allows the process to flow in a circle.• Participants can effectively engage with others using direct contact during activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Circle script is visible for all participants to view- no centerpiece is available so allowing participants to view the script is helpful and keeps individuals focused on the topic.• No visible talking piece- participants can have their own talking piece or the speaker can take on the role by selecting individuals during the process.• In zoom, the chat-box and annotate features can be utilized to keep participants engaged.• The direction of the session does not always move in a circle.• Participants do not have to travel in order to participate



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Steps	Preparing for your Virtual Circle						
Virtual Circle Guidelines:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Schedule a date and time that is suitable for all participants. • Create a zoom meeting with the appropriate time and date. • Enable waiting room feature during the zoom session. • Send out a calendar Invite to all participants and provide the zoom link in attachment. • Have a circle script prepared. • Encourage participants to remain visible. • Share your screen to allow participants to view script during the circle. • Send out email reminders to participants the morning of the scheduled circle. <p>Note: Host should sign-on 15 minutes prior to the circle session start-time.</p>						
Circle Script Guidelines:	<p>Step 1: The opening, state the purpose of the circle.</p> <p>Step 2: Explain the structure and direction of the circle.</p> <p>Step 3: Check in activity-used to examine the mood of participants.</p> <p>Step 4: State the norms of the circle.</p> <p>Step 5: The content-have 5-6 questions prepared that relate to the purpose of the circle.</p> <p>Step 6: Debrief</p> <p>Step 7: Closing- thank all for participating in the circle session.</p>						
Virtual Circle Challenges:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td data-bbox="289 1184 467 1339">Background Noise:</td><td data-bbox="467 1184 1563 1339">To eliminate the interference of background noise, ask participants to mute themselves if they are not speaking. Zoom allows hosts to mute all participants at once, allowing them to unmute themselves when they are speaking.</td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="289 1339 467 1549">Technical Issues:</td><td data-bbox="467 1339 1563 1549">You can avoid technical issues by testing your equipment and zoom link prior to the circle start time. Encourage participants to test equipment prior to the start time.</td></tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="289 1549 467 1675">Visual Distractions:</td><td data-bbox="467 1549 1563 1675">Encourage participants to turn off device if they need to step away for a moment, or if they are interrupted during the process.</td></tr> </table>	Background Noise:	To eliminate the interference of background noise, ask participants to mute themselves if they are not speaking. Zoom allows hosts to mute all participants at once, allowing them to unmute themselves when they are speaking.	Technical Issues:	You can avoid technical issues by testing your equipment and zoom link prior to the circle start time. Encourage participants to test equipment prior to the start time.	Visual Distractions:	Encourage participants to turn off device if they need to step away for a moment, or if they are interrupted during the process.
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For more information on virtual circles, please visit the link: <https://healingcirclesglobal.org/how-to-host-a-virtual-circle/>