

# Peace Circles and Restorative Justice

A model for sharing, connecting, and healing in  
community

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# Introductions

- \* Name
- \* Program/Organization
- \* What led you to this workshop?
- \* Is there anything specific you're hoping to learn?

# Background on Restorative Justice

- \* First Nation/Native Communities
- \* Mennonites
- \* Working Definition:
  - “Restorative justice is a process to involve, to the extent possible, those who have a stake in a specific offense and to collectively identify and address harms, needs, and obligations, in order to heal and put things as right as possible.” – Howard Zehr
- \* 3 key components
  - \* Restorative justice focuses on harm;
  - \* Wrongs or harms result in obligations; and
  - \* Restorative justice promotes engagement or participation.

# Peace Circles

- \* One method for practicing restorative justice
- \* Incorporate victims, offenders, and community members
- \* Allows for intentional sharing and listening
- \* Centered on storytelling and personal account/narrative



# Occasions/Uses for Peace Circles



- \* Conflict Resolution
- \* Sentencing
- \* Healing
- \* Growing new relationships
- \* Challenging Discussions
- \* Honest and Candid Dialogue

# Peace Circles

## Basic Flow

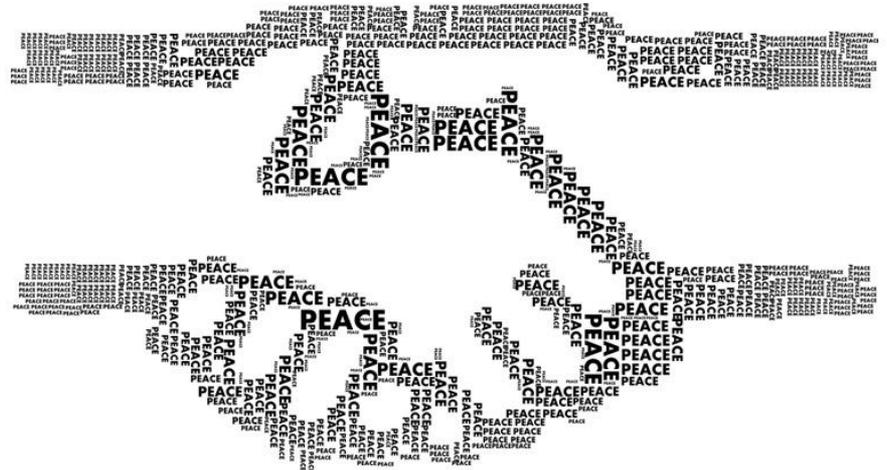
- \* Introduction
  - \* Establish rules and expectations
  - \* Tell a story
- \* Check in
  - \* Can be brief (1 word) or become the first question
  - \* Serves as both an agreement and a warm-up
- \* 3 questions
- \* Check out

## Necessary Elements

- \* Open space with moveable furniture
- \* Chairs for all participants
- \* Talking piece
- \* Centerpieces

# My Experience & Other Proposed Uses

- \* Retreats
  - \* Community experiences and expectations
  - \* Living the program tenets
- \* Unexpected/untimely departure of a Volunteer
- \* Community Conflicts
- \* Staff discussions/conflicts



# What I've Learned/ Basic Tips

- \* Plan ahead, but be flexible (Example: belonging)
- \* Leave a wide window of time
- \* If you bring people down deep, bring them back up as well
- \* If possible, educate the volunteers on Peace Circles *before* actually practicing a circle
- \* Rule enforcement can be challenging – be sure to keep the rules yourself
- \* Setting the environment helps set the tone
- \* Be open to being surprised

# Practice Peace Circle

# Circle Debrief

# General Questions/Comments/Reflections

# Additional Resources

- \* ***The Little Book of Restorative Justice.*** Howard Zehr. Intercourse, PA: Good Books, 2002.
- \* ***Social Work and Restorative Justice: Skills for Dialogue, Peacemaking, and Reconciliation.*** Edited by Elizabeth Beck, Nancy P. Kropf, and Pamela Blume Leonard. New York: Oxford, 2011.
- \* ***Just Peacemakers: An Introduction to Peace and Justice.*** Mary Evelyn Jegen. New York: Paulist, 2006.
- \* ***Handbook of Restorative Justice.*** Edited by Gerry Johnstone and Daniel W. Van Ness. Portland, OR: Willan Publishing, 2007.

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