



Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility

# Teaching as an Act of Solidarity

**A Beginner's Guide to Equity in Schools**

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## Introduction and Welcome

Welcome, educators, to this guide and toolkit for making your school more equitable and joyful for all students – and adults.

This guide is a gift, an offering to our community of our learnings from an amazing project we were able to undertake over the past five years.

In 2016, we had the good luck of receiving a federal Investing in Innovation (i3) grant to develop and test, in collaboration with schools and researchers, a model for achieving “Whole School Racial Equity.” The aim: to boost students' social and emotional skills, build school communities based on collaboration and mutual respect, and eliminate the disproportional targeting of Black, Latino, and LGBTQ students, and students with disabilities, for punitive discipline.

The model builds on work that Morningside Center has been doing for decades in hundreds of preK-12 schools each year, in partnership with the NYC Department of Education. The strategies and curricula we developed have been shown to strengthen the classroom community, increase the social and emotional skills and well-being of young people and adults, and reduce suspensions and the events that lead-up to them.

Through the i3 grant, Morningside Center partnered with 12 NYC public schools (four elementary, four middle, and four high) and with leading researchers to implement, enrich, and study this model for school change. Dr. Anne Gregory of Rutgers University led a team of researchers in assessing the impact of the project on nine of the schools. That assessment is still underway.

In the course of the project, we and our i3 school partners were able not only to test the strategies that were part of our original model, but develop new strategies and materials aimed especially at increasing racial awareness and reducing racial disparities in discipline. We were able to go deep, and to learn from our experiences. In frequent, eye-opening gatherings of practitioners and researchers, we reflected on what worked, what didn't work, and what we should do next. It was an incredible opportunity for learning.

Fortunately, a key outcome of the project was to share what we learned by creating and distributing a wide range of practical tools and strategies to support schools across the country. Hence, this guide. We are so excited to share some of what we've learned with you!

It's important to note that through the i3 grant, Morningside's team was able to provide extensive training and coaching for the principals, teachers, staff, and sometimes students and parents at participating schools. We wish that we could provide such support for every school that is using this guide. Without it, schools will not be able to faithfully replicate the process we undertook in the Whole School Racial Equity Project. Some of the sessions and materials that we developed require the scaffolding of training and coaching, and may even cause harm without that professional development.

But we want to share the fruits of this project with schools that don't have the resources to pay for this training and coaching. So in this document, we offer guidelines and PD plans that we believe can be successfully implemented without such support. We invite and encourage schools that want to dive deeper into this work to contact us to explore additional support. An outside facilitator can be helpful not only because they may have additional skills and knowledge, but because they aren't under the same pressures and aren't part of the same school culture as the staff members who are so courageously entering into this path.

Doing this work does take courage, and it involves taking risks. It means creating spaces where we may all feel vulnerable. But we all deserve the opportunity to learn, to make mistakes, then try again – to examine what we're doing and how we're doing it, and consider new approaches.

This guide is an invitation for adults to step into being the best version of themselves that they can be – because our kids deserve that. We can and must be the ones to lead this work. If we each start where we are and engage in a conscious and collective effort, we will make progress. And ultimately we will lighten the burden on our students *and* ourselves – and all of us will find more opportunities for joy at school.

We are offering up this guide at a moment when our profession is in crisis. Educators are leaving their jobs. Many are feeling underappreciated. Many even say they feel “disposable.”

So now is a time when we need to create space to talk with each other, to share of ourselves, and to learn from each other. It's the only way for us to climb out of the hole we find ourselves in.

We are aware that teachers, principals, and every other member of the school community is pressed to the limits. We've tried to respect this time pressure by designing this guide

to include sessions that take only about an hour. We are calculating that schools will have two sessions every four to six weeks or so.

But we also want you to know that amid all the workshops and coaching sessions and debriefs involved in the i3 project, we noticed that there was a bit of stardust in it, a bit of magic. It was the magic of time. It emerged from the many hours our teams spent together, in circle-inspired gatherings like the ones embedded in this guide. We took the time to talk about what had happened in our schools. We talked about what we were noticing, what changed, what we learned that we could do, what we wanted to try. We celebrated each other's successes and soothed each other's pain when things didn't work the way we'd hoped.

Time is the one resource that we can never get back. And in schools, where there is never enough time for anything, one of our biggest acts of resistance – and of love – is to give ourselves time. Time to see and honor our own humanity and the humanity of others.

Our fairy dust is in fact backed up by social science research. Human connection, a sense of belonging, relationships, community – these are the things that most powerfully improve the quality of our lives and even the duration of our lives, as well as our capacity to learn. These are the things we and our students need to thrive.

As you and your colleagues travel down this path, we hope you will take the time to be in touch with us. We want to hear your stories. We want to hear how your sessions went, what you learned, what worked and what didn't. And if we can provide any support or guidance to help you on your way, we will.

Thank you for all that you do.

In solidarity and admiration,

Tala Jamal Manassah  
Deputy Executive Director  
I3 Project Director  
Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility  
April 2022, New York City

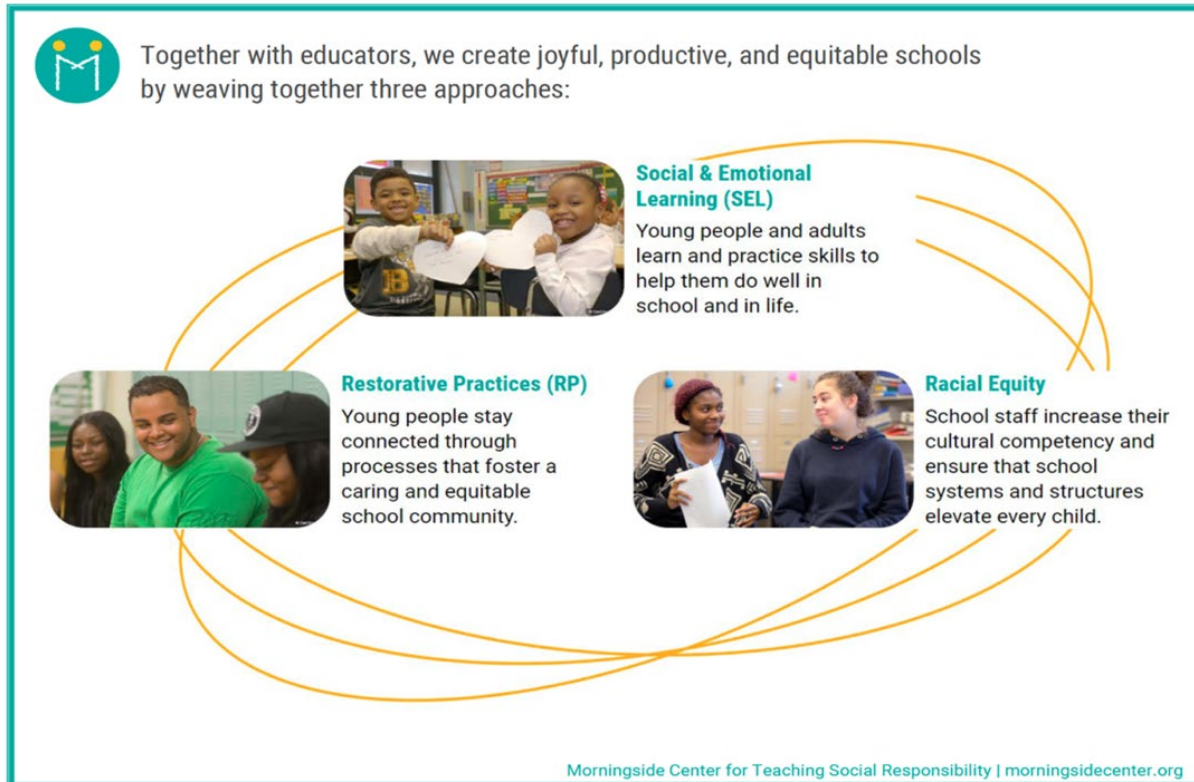
## Introductory Presentation

Pull up the image of “Whole School Racial Equity,” which illustrates the weaving together of the three strands:

- a) Social & Emotional Learning (SEL),
- b) Restorative Practices, and
- c) Racial Equity/Racial Identity Development

These sessions are thoughtfully and intentionally designed to support a school community in addressing some of the most urgent and pressing issues in education in the US today: **The problem of racial disproportionality in school discipline, the need to deepen and broaden SEL for all persons, and the absence of schoolwide practices that address the impact of harm and center healing.**

In the process, we'll be working on strengthening your school community, making it more inclusive and welcoming to all students, staff, and caregivers through the embracing and acknowledging of all of their identities.







Welcome to this fantastic process! Yes, this will be a process and grow into a life-long journey. Please know that you will be supportively guided through articles, chapters, and videos to support with listening, learning and perhaps love. When you see this icon know that it's for you to pause, read, take notes and let this supportive information and truth marinate in your *heart* and *mind*.

The intent of this guide is to supportively guide schools where belonging and natural curiosity is nurtured and protected. Schools should be places where the inherent love of learning that each mind can blossom, and where the development of these minds, bodies, emotions, and personhood brings and reinforces the inherent joy of learning by affirming each person's specialness and worth.

We recognize that to accomplish this we need a well-coordinated and multi-faceted toolkit that considers and integrates a completer and more honest version of history; a learner-centered pedagogy that is strengths-based, trauma-sensitive, healing-centered, and draws on culturally affirming, culturally responsive, and sustaining practices that promote self and community care and concrete strategies for developing and sustaining relational trust.

In this guide, we have integrated aspects of all of these crucial approaches under the three headings illustrated by this summary image: Social & Emotional Learning, Restorative Practices and Discipline, and Racial Equity.

In racial identity development, through the lens of restorative practices and SEL training, participants examine with both their heart and mind that racism is a culture and a mindset. With both our hearts and minds, we can take a deeper dive into how racism is pervasive, difficult to name or identify, infused into society as norms and standards and ever so damaging. Also, practice with language affords us the opportunity to be aware that there is a difference for People of Color and White People in racial identity development.

People of Color should be supportively guided to understand their identity and the historical undercurrents of its development. They learn to, or get better at, highlighting their own lived experiences as well as known or witnessed experiences of harm. This harm and the impact of harm from cultural assimilation or acculturation and identity tensions around it all. Simultaneously, People of Color learn how to internalize their

identity and enrich it with an association and appreciation of their worth, beauty and divinity. Their humanity is seen, heard and not just associated with stories around slavery, Jim Crow, images from police brutality or negative stereotypes around their race and/or color. There is a warm and wonderful growth of value, belonging and understanding of the contributions of their history of resilience, tradition, and legacies of contributions that has an asset and has added beauty and significant value to this country and the world.

Whereas White People should be supportively guided to increase their capacity to be aware of, control, and express their fragility. Another part of this life-long journey is to deepen perspective. To deepen one's historical gaps and experiences of others supports their exploration of a host of common emotions around brave conversations. This layer of courageous learning is needed and fulfilling. Simultaneously, White People are moved to internalize handling and building authentic, interpersonal relationships with others who have different lived experiences -judiciously and empathetically- as part of a continuum of their racial identity development.

There are a host of common emotions felt by all at different times. When diving into social-emotional learning, restorative practices that build community and address the impact of harm in schools, and racial equity work, intense emotions are normal and wanted so that we learn how to navigate them or interrupt them in order to arrive at spaces and experiences of inclusion, belonging, equity and humanity.

Please know that a large part of our individual and collective learning is to be supportively guided and to vulnerably practice. As this is a process and not a prescriptive manual, there are activities that will provide time and liberated space for us to (awkwardly) practice with prompts to build language and muscle memory around being authentic with emotions and with equity and inclusion.

## How This Initiative Works

This innovative, integrated model has been broken up into hour-long participatory PD sessions that can help your school community address equity in school overall, while addressing some of the most urgent and pressing issues in education in the US today.

## Questions and Comments

Ask if there are any questions or comments about the initiative that you'll be embarking on together.

## Staff Reflections

Pull up the following quote by Toni Morrison and read it aloud:

"Inviting compassion into the blood stream of an institution's agenda or a scholar's purpose is more than productive, more than civilizing, more than ethical, more than humane, it's humanizing."

- from *The Price of Wealth, the Cost of Care* (2019)



**Cite Black Women.** @citeblackwomen · May 5, 2020

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"Inviting compassion into the bloodstream of an institution's agenda or a scholar's purpose is more than productive, more than civilizing, more than ethical, more than humane; it's humanizing." - Toni Morrison, "The Price of Wealth the Cost of Care" (2019).



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## Pair Share

Invite staff to reflect on this quote.

- a) Ask them to turn to a partner to share any reflections, thoughts and feelings that come up for them as they think about students, staff and families at your school.
- b) Also, ask them to think about how it relates to the work they'll be doing in the context of this whole school SEL, restorative practices, and racial equity initiative.
- c) Last, invite them to think about how we each hold multiple identities, e.g., gender, sexual orientation, race, class, citizenship, etc. and how this quote helps us to invite compassion for all of us holding multiple identities.

How might a project dedicated to equity and racial identity development be what Toni Morrison describes as "humanizing" for all of us in our multiple identities?

### Large Group Share

Invite a few volunteers to share out what came up for them in their pairs.

Summarize what people share and consider adding that part of this project will be about reframing school as the **transactional place**, we've known it to be, where productivity is prioritized, and shifting instead to a more **transformational place** where people are humanized, and relationships are prioritized.

Thank participants for sharing their reflections, thoughts and feelings and for embarking on this journey with you today.

## Session 1 – Names & Storytelling

### Materials:

- Agenda charted on the board or chart paper, or provided as a handout
- Handout: "TING"
- AV equipment to play video: The Neuroscience of Storytelling

### Opening: Stories

Pick one of the following quotes to read aloud with the group:

"Stories have a transformative power to allow us to see the world in a different way than we do if we just encounter it on our own. Stories are an entry point to understanding a different experience of the world."

- Clare Patey, Director of the Empathy Museum

"Listen, stories go in circles. They don't go in straight lines. So, it helps if you listen in circles because there are stories inside and stories between stories and finding your way through them is as easy and hard as finding your way home. And part of the finding is the getting lost. And when you're lost, you really start to open up and listen."

- Fisher, et al., co-founders of A Traveling Jewish Theatre

Explain that we are all sharing stories all the time. Elicit, or explain, that stories promote laughter, build connections, resurrect memories, hold sentimental meaning, preserve history, and reveal identity and bonds that people hold dear. Let participants know that we will learn more about storytelling throughout this session.

Stories also are key to developing empathy. Introduce the definition of empathy:

- Empathy: Sensing others' feelings and perspective and taking an active interest in their concerns.
- People with this competence:
  - Are attentive to emotional cues and listen well
  - Open to diversity

- Show sensitivity, read non-verbal cues and understand others' perspectives
- Help out based on understanding other people's needs and feelings

Using the definition of empathy, invite participants to reflect on the quote in pairs and/or in the larger group. Invite participants to think about a time in their life when a story changed their perspective and/or sparked their empathy. Have a few volunteers share out for your time together, naming the specific and sequential activities all will engage in.

Though some people are fine to go with the flow, others benefit from, or require, a sense of the plan for the day. Giving people an overview of what's to come is considered a trauma-informed practice as it provides the predictability that can help manage some people's uncertainty and accompanying anxiety about what to expect and when. For this reason, we'll also be using a similar and thus predictable format for each session:

- an opening (ceremony)
- checking of the agenda
- a main activity or two, and
- a closing (ceremony)

Additionally, having a visible agenda supports the visual learners in your group.



### Talk Participants Through Today's Agenda

- Opening: Stories
- Introduce the Checking of the Agenda
- Check Agenda
- Storytelling and the Brain
- Video: The Neuroscience of Storytelling
- Listening: The Chinese Character "TING"
- "A" Story of Your Name
- Closing: A Takeaway

### Storytelling & The Brain, The Why of Storytelling

Frame today's learnings by introducing the following core ideas to your group:

- **Learning is a holistic process engaging a person's body, heart, and spirit, as well as their mind, in an integrated process.** Many societies and cultures have long-established storytelling traditions. The stories, and accompanying performances, function to entertain as much as educate.

- **As human beings we are programmed for stories. Our brains are wired to connect to and process stories differently than mere facts.** Before we had written language this is how information was shared, how we passed on lessons learned to keep us safe and help us thrive. Stories are an effective way to transmit important information and values from one individual or community to the next.
- **Stories that are personal and emotionally compelling engage more of the brain, and thus are better remembered, than simply stating a set of facts.** Neuroscience tells us that the brain is more engaged when we hear a good story. And we know that “neurons that fire together wire together” creating neural passages in the brain to facilitate learning.

### Video: The Neuroscience of Storytelling

Consider playing the following video: [The Neuroscience of Storytelling](#) through 1:26 min.

This first part of the video is about how our human brains are wired for storytelling. Connections can clearly be made to learning the classroom and school, as stories help us retain more information. Stories, moreover, trigger the release of oxytocin, which helps to promote empathy.

**Facilitator Note:** The second part of the video revolves around storytelling as a marketing tool, which is less relevant to our session today.

### Large Group Reflection

Ask participants to consider *if*, *when* and *how* they've used storytelling with their students in class before. For what purpose? What was the impact?

Then ask them, given what they've explored about the power of storytelling just now, can they think of (other) ways they might want to use storytelling with their students in class going forward? When would they want to use it and how?

### Listening: The Chinese Character, “TING”

Introduce listening as an essential skill for Social and Emotional Learning, Restorative Practices, Brave Conversations and all teaching and learning. Throughout the different activities in this guide, we encourage you to practice wholehearted listening, whether in pairs, small groups, microlabs or restorative circles.

Distribute the handout of the Chinese character “ting” and explain that before our first pair share today, we’ll prime our “listening pump” so to speak by reflecting on the following graphic: The Chinese Character “TING”



The Chinese character for listen: “**TING**” captures the full spirit of listening and invites us to show up fully in the following ways:

- The upper left part of the symbol stands for ear – our ears to hear the speaker’s words
- The upper right part represents the individual – you
- The eyes and undivided attention and focus are next and finally,
- There is the heart at the bottom right of the symbol.

The symbol captures listening with our ears, maintaining eye contact, giving the speaker our undivided attention and being empathetic to their story. We realize, of course, that eye contact while listening is not considered respectful in all cultures but the intent is to be fully present with the other person, bearing witness, physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually, as we meet in a shared exchange.

We realize that listening is a skill to be learned and practiced, which we’ll start with in this next activity.



## Storytelling Pair Share: "A" Story of Your Name

During this pair share, you'll invite participants to share a story of their name.

Invite participants to pair up. Have pairs decide who will speak first and who will listen.

Explain that each person will get 90 seconds to share, while their partner practices wholehearted listening, keeping the Chinese character, "ting" in mind. If people's stories don't fill the 90 seconds, they may share another story about their name or sit in silence as they let the rest of the time pass. This is *not* a back-and-forth conversation.

After 90 seconds, partners will switch roles: listeners become speakers and speakers become listeners.

Explain that they'll be sharing a story of their name(s). We understand that people may have different stories about different parts of their names, but in the interest of time, you'll invite people to share one story. Invite them to consider telling a story about their first, middle or last names, given or chosen names, married or single names, nicknames, etc. They might talk about:

- why it was given to them; by whom
- whether they were named after anyone
- what the ethnic, cultural, or religious root(s) of their name is/are
- what the meaning of their name is
- whether a name is ever misspelled or mispronounced
- whether they (dis)like their name and possible reasons why
- whether their name is unique or common
- whether and how their name fits them, or not
- what feelings any and all of this brings up
- who they might ask to learn more about their name(s)
- what other ways they might learn more about their names

Model the activity by sharing a story of your name before you invite pairs to initiate their exchange. Let them know that when they come back to the large group, they'll be asked to introduce their partner with their name(s) and their story/ies.

When the three minutes of sharing and listening are up, invite people back to the large group. Then invite participants, one after the other, to introduce their partners with their name(s) and story/ies.

## Large Group Reflection

When all participants have been introduced by their partners, consider asking any, or all, of the following questions as you facilitate a group discussion on the stories of our names.

Make sure you end by asking the last question about the importance of names:

- What was this activity like for you?
- How was it to listen to your colleagues/be listened to by colleagues?
- What about the introductions to the group? What was that like?
- Did this activity allow you to connect with your colleagues? If so, how?
- How do you feel about an activity like this early in the year with students/staff?
- Why is it important to explore and discuss our names in this way?

**Note:** Some participants will know more about their names than others. The reasons for this range from the simple and mundane to the extremely complicated and painful. Always invite participants to share as much, or as little, as they feel comfortable sharing and emphasize that this activity is about sharing “a” story of your name, not “the” story of your name. This also opens the door for participants to share how they may have come to name themselves. For more information about names and naming, see the next session, Session 2: The Importance of Names.

## Closing: A Takeaway

Depending on the number of people in your group, invite all, or several, participants to share out a takeaway from today's session.

## Additional Resources: Session 1

### Additional Written Resources:

["How Stories Connect And Persuade Us: Unleashing The Brain Power Of Narrative"](#) by Elena Renken

["What Can the Chinese Character for "Listen" Teach Us?"](#) by [simonendr](#)

"Unpracticed" by N'Jameh Camara, *Teen Vogue*

["Why Hearing Your Own Name Might Just Be the Sweetest Sound, Ever!"](#) by Anna K. Gallagher, [hustlefromtheheart.com](http://hustlefromtheheart.com)

["My Teachers Mispronounced My Name. Decades Later It Still Stings, and Influences the Way I Coach Educators"](#) by Dionne Grayman, *Chalkbeat*

["Pronouncing Students Names Should be a Big Deal"](#) by Punita Chhabra Rice

["The Importance of Learning Students' Names"](#) by Tamara Glenz

["What is Deadnaming and Why Is It Harmful"](#) by Ariane Resnick

["Deadnaming: What Is It and Why Is It Harmful?"](#) by KC Clements

### Additional Video Resources | TED Talks:

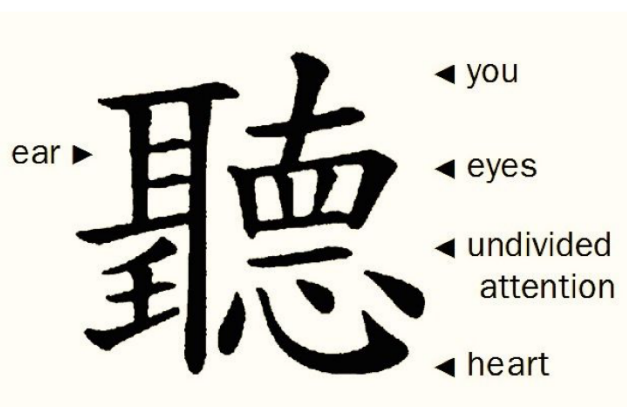
[Getting It Right: Why pronouncing names correctly matters | Gerardo Ochoa | TEDxMcMinnville](#)

[Your Name is the Key! | Huda Essa | TEDxUofM](#)

## Handout: The Chinese character for listen: "TING"



### CHINESE SYMBOL FOR LISTEN *TING*



The left side of the symbol represents an ear.  
The right side represents the individual- you.  
The eyes and undivided attention are next and finally  
there is the heart.

This symbol tells us that to listen we must use both  
ears, watch and maintain eye contact, give undivided  
attention, and finally be empathetic.  
In other words, we must engage in active listening!

## Session 2 – The Importance of Names

### Materials:

- Agenda charted on the board or chart paper, or provided as a handout
- AV equipment to play videos: Facundo the Great, The Secret to Changing the World (Part 1) and The Importance of Learning Student Names

Explain that today you'll continue building on the session from last time about names and storytelling to further increase awareness about the importance of creating welcoming communities where all students feel they belong and are seen and valued for who they are.

### Opening: Stardust

"If you rip up the letters of anyone's name into small enough pieces, you will find that you are handling stardust." - 11<sup>th</sup> grader, *Emily Mata*

Invite participants to contemplate Emily Mata's words and then make connections between this quote and their learnings/takeaways from the previous session.



### Talk Participants Through Today's Agenda

- Opening: Stardust
- Check Agenda
- Video on Names: Facundo the Great
- Video on Names: The Secret to Changing the World, Part 1
- The Importance of Learning Student Names
- Closing: The Importance of Names Revisited

### Video: Facundo the Great

Explain that we'll continue exploring stories about names. Then show the two-minute StoryCorps video of [Facundo the Great](#).

Invite a few volunteers to share out any connections, thoughts, or feelings that came up for them during their viewing. Have them consider their students and school community

in particular.

Make sure the following talking points are touched on:

- **Names are an important part of a person's identity.**
- **Honoring people's names, and how they want to be named, is important.**
- **Correct use of people's names impacts their sense of belonging and self-esteem. It shows that you respect them, you value them, you see them how they want to be seen.**
- **In the video, the students are Latino/a/x. The teachers are white and in a place of power and authority within an institution and system that privileges their voices.**
- **Altering names is a form of racism and a predictable pattern of white superiority**

**Background:** Students and staff with non-Anglo names used to have their names Anglicized, or otherwise changed, on a regular basis, to make the names easier to pronounce in a predominantly Anglo culture. In the video, Juan's name was changed to "John" and Ramon "Chunky" Sanchez to "Raymond."

Fortunately, these days, more people are aware of the importance of names as it relates to a person's sense of belonging and self-esteem. This is true for people who have non-Anglo names, but also for those who've chosen to take on different names, because their assigned names don't fit, affirm or reflect who they are.

Take transgender people, for whom undergoing a name change can be an important and affirming step in their transition. It can help them and the people around them begin to see them as the gender they know themselves to be. *Deadnaming* a trans person (i.e., referring to them by their old name) can not only feel invalidating, but it also causes a person to feel you don't respect them for who they are, that you don't support their transition, or that you don't want to make the effort to call them by what is known as their *affirmed name*.

Recent research shows that hearing our actual names pronounced correctly causes a chemical reaction in the brain, similar to patterns reported when individuals make judgments about themselves and their personal qualities. Dopamine and serotonin are released when we hear our name said out loud which "[makes people happy](#) and sends unconscious signals such as empathy, trust, and compassion to the unconscious brain." (Anna K. Gallagher)

Therefore, making a concerted effort to use people's actual names and say them correctly, is important. Educational leader and coach, [Dionne Grayman writes](#):

"Whenever teachers mispronounced my name, it made me feel they had taken a shortcut and that the added step of learning the correct pronunciation wasn't worth the effort. Which meant, to some degree, that I wasn't worth the effort. I returned the favor by not participating in class or doing just enough to pass."

## The Secret to Changing the World, Part 1

Show the start of Lee Mun Wah's video: [The Secret to Changing the World](#) (from 0:00-2:34 min).

In the clip, Lee (pronounced Lay) Mun Wah touches on the powerful ways on what it is like to not be part of the mainstream and how that is reflected in "a story of HIS name."

Explain that we'll come back to the rest of this TED Talk in a later session. For now, we're going to reflect on these first few minutes.

### Pair Share

In pairs, invite participants to discuss Lee Mun Wah's "story of his name" and what it brought up for them. Have them reflect upon some of the questions Mun Wah poses in the video:

- Why did his parents put "Gary" on his birth certificate after taking two months to find his name Lee Mun Wah (he who writes)?
- What would it take for us to notice that Lee Mun Wah didn't laugh when the audience did?
- What would it take to ask: "Why didn't you laugh?" and "What came up for you?"
- What would it take to change the world to become more conscious of how we respond to the marginalization of other cultures?
- Better yet, what would it take to change the world to *stop* the marginalization of other cultures?
- Does anyone know what Lee Mun Wah's given name is? Ask if anyone knows what Lee Mun Wah's given name is. What about his family? (Explain that in Chinese culture, the family name is stated first, followed by the given name. So, in this case, Lee is the family name, Mun Wah his given name.)

Invite participants to pair up. Have pairs decide who will speak first and who will listen.

Explain that each person will get 90 seconds to share while their partner practices wholehearted listening. After 90 seconds, partners will switch roles: listeners become speakers and speakers become listeners. Cue partners to switch using a timer, bell, or another auditory signal of your choosing.

## The Importance of Learning Students' Names

Distribute the article, [The Importance of Learning Students' Names](#) by Tamara Glenz, which in addition to emphasizing the importance of learning students' names, provides tips and pointers on how to do so.

### Pair Share

In the same pairs, invite participants to discuss the article and how it relates to them and their classrooms in particular.

### Large Group Share

Invite participants to share any learnings from the pair shares based on the Lee Mun Wah video and/or the Tamara Glenz article.

## Closing: The Importance of Names Revisited

Warsan Shire's advice about names:

"Give your daughters difficult names. Give your daughters names that command the full use of tongue. My name makes you want to tell me the truth. My name doesn't allow me to trust anyone that cannot pronounce it right."

Uzoamaka Nwanneka Aduba adds:

"My family is from Nigeria, and my full name is Uzoamaka, which means "The road is good." Quick lesson: My tribe is Igbo, and you name your kid something that tells your history and hopefully predicts your future. So anyway, in grade school, because my last name started with an A, I was the first in roll call, and nobody ever knew how to pronounce it. So, I went home and asked my mother if I could be called Zoe. I remember she was cooking, and in her Nigerian accent she said, "Why?" I said, "Nobody can pronounce it." Without missing a beat, she said, "If they can learn to say Tchaikovsky and Michelangelo and Dostoyevsky, they can learn to say Uzoamaka."



Consider having Uzoamaka tell her story herself by playing the following two-minute video clip: [Uzo Aduba never liked her name](#).

Have participants reflect upon and then consider what they can do to learn their students' (and colleagues) names correctly and remember them. Invite a few volunteers to share out before closing this session.

**Note on Quote Sources:**

Warsan Shire is a Somali British writer and poet.

Uzoamaka Nwanneka Aduba is a film, television, and stage actress. People may know her by her (shortened) stage name Uzo Aduba, possibly for some of the reasons she describes in the quote and video clip.

## Additional Resources: Session 2

### Additional Written Resources:

["How Stories Connect And Persuade Us: Unleashing The Brain Power Of Narrative"](#) by Elena Renken

["What Can the Chinese Character for "Listen" Teach Us?"](#) by [simonendr](#)

["Names That Are Unfamiliar to You Aren't Hard, They're Unpracticed"](#) by N'Jameh Camara, *Teen Vogue*

["Why Hearing Your Own Name Might Just Be the Sweetest Sound, Ever!"](#) by Anna K. Gallagher, [hustlefromtheheart.com](http://hustlefromtheheart.com)

["My Teachers Mispronounced My Name. Decades Later It Still Stings, and Influences the Way I Coach Educators"](#) by Dionne Grayman, *Chalkbeat*

["Pronouncing Students Names Should be a Big Deal"](#) by Punita Chhabra Rice

["The Importance of Learning Students' Names"](#) by Tamara Glenz

["What is Deadnaming and Why Is It Harmful"](#) by Ariane Resnick

["Deadnaming: What Is It and Why Is It Harmful?"](#) by KC Clements

### Additional Video Resources | TED Talks:

[Getting It Right: Why pronouncing names correctly matters | Gerardo Ochoa | TEDxMcMinnville](#)

[Your Name is the Key! | Huda Essa | TEDxUofM](#)

## Session 3 – Building a Courageous Community

### Materials:

- Agenda charted on the board or chart paper, or provided as a handout
- Handout: [“It Takes Courage to...” poem](#)
- Handout: [“Courageous Educators: Leaning into the Discomfort”](#) by Jasmine Scott, or
- Handout: A segment of Parker Palmer’s on “Institutions and the Human Heart” from [The Heart of a Teacher](#)

### Opening: On Courage

“Courage is the most important of all virtues because without courage, you can’t practice any other virtue consistently.” - *Maya Angelou*

“Courage doesn't mean you don't get afraid. Courage means you don't let fear stop you.” - *Bethany Hamilton*

Invite participants to reflect on one, or both, of these two quotes. Ask some volunteers to share their reflections in a large group setting. Ask participants to be mindful of brevity, or to “say just enough.”

### Note on Quote Sources:

Maya Angelou was an award-winning author, poet and civil rights activist. In 1969, she made history with her memoir, *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings*, becoming the first Black woman with a nonfiction bestseller.

Bethany Meilani Hamilton is an American professional surfer and writer. In 2003, when she was only 13 years old, she survived a shark attack in which she lost her left arm. A few months later, she returned to surfing and turned pro in 2007.



## Talk Participants Through Today's Agenda

- Opening: On Courage
- Check Agenda
- "It Takes Courage To..." Poem
- Grounding Practice
- Courage in Education Article and Discussion
- Closing: On Courage

### It Takes Courage To...

Explain that in today's session we'll explore a poem about courage.

Distribute the handout, [It Takes Courage to ....](#)

Explain that you'll invite participants to read the poem out loud collaboratively. Invite the first volunteer to read the first stanza. Then as participants feel moved, they can volunteer to pick up where their colleague left off— one after the other. When the full poem has been read out loud, ask participants to sit with the poem for a bit and then consider what will take courage for them.

Using the prompt, "It will take courage for me to..." invite participants to jot down any lines, words, or phrases that speak to them from the poem as they begin to create their own courage poem using the existing poem lines as building blocks. For example, they might start with language from the 2<sup>nd</sup> stanza, "It will take courage for me to" "make waves," "to find wholehearted ways." Then from the 3<sup>rd</sup> stanza they may add lines that may continue with "to say I was wrong" and maybe some from the 6<sup>th</sup> stanza "to trust what courage can do and give [myself] time to find out." Say to participants that "no poem is wrong because you are expressing the vulnerability of what it will take courage for you to do."

Now invite them to write their next stanza using the prompt, "It has taken courage for me to..." Invite participants to jot down any lines, words or phrases from the poem that captures what it has taken courage for them to do. In this way, vulnerability of participants is acknowledged and we are celebrating each other's humanity.

Give participants 3-5 minutes to create their own courage poems, letting them know that when they're done, they'll be sharing out parts of their poems with a colleague in a pair share.

## Pair Share

Count off by twos, having *ones* and *twos* pair up for a pair share. Explain that in their pairs, each participant will share as much, or as little, of their courage poems as they wish while their partner pays close attention, practicing what is sometimes called mindful listening—being fully present with what the other person shares. Invite participants to decide who will share first. Remind them that their sharing doesn't have to be perfect or complete. They don't need to do anything beyond sharing the lines from their poem. Give each partner sufficient time to share before coming back to the large group. One way to know when participants have had sufficient time is when the hum of conversation dies down.

## Large Group Share

When the group reconvenes, invite a few participants to share what the experience of sharing and listening was like for them.

Use the following engaging skills below to practice validating what was shared:

- I hear that you feel...
- I can see that from your perspective you think...
- I'd probably feel \_\_\_\_, too...

**Facilitator Note:** This can be a powerful activity for people, activating their strong emotions. Say something to this effect and invite participants to breathe through the activity and ground themselves. Deep abdominal breathing (also known as belly or diaphragmatic breathing) can help to reduce stress and strong feelings.

According to the [Harvard Health Blog](#): "One way to change our reaction to modern stress is to learn how to belly breathe instead of chest breathe. Belly breathing stimulates the vagus nerve, which runs from the head down the neck, through the chest, and to the colon. This activates your relaxation response, reducing your heart rate and blood pressure and lowering stress levels."

We'll get into this in more detail as we encourage people throughout this guide to develop a grounding practice that works for them. This is so that, when the going gets tough,

when courageous, painful, uncomfortable conversations are called for, people have a practice to draw on to stay as present as possible.

## Grounding Practice

Mindful and grounding practices can be helpful in different situations and we'll touch on them throughout this guide. They can be useful when transitioning from one activity, or space, to another to help us show up more fully in the moment. They can also be a benefit to us when we're experiencing stress and our thinking gets clouded due to overwhelming feelings. This can be distracting, preventing us from being present with each other and our students. It can also prevent us from making thoughtful decisions.

At times like these, it can help to turn to mindful and grounding practices to "soothe" the brain and release some of our stress. Ideally, we want to have these grounding, mindful practices to prevent us from getting too agitated, anxious and overwhelmed in the first place, but they can also serve as a practice to come back to when we get triggered and pushed off balance.



If needed, guide the group through a breathing (or other grounding) activity in which you invite them to place the soles of their feet on the ground, place one hand on their stomach and one on their heart as you invite them to breathe in through their nose and out through their mouth. Encourage people to pause between the inbreath and outbreath and to try to have the out breath be slightly longer than the in breath.

Some people might want to stand up, stretch and move their bodies. Encourage people to do what feels right for them. Whatever they choose, invite people to pay attention to their bodies and their breath.

## Validation That Human Beings Are Holistic

Explain to the group that we invite people to show up as their full selves—physical, mental, emotional and spiritual—which contrasts with the way most of us are socialized to show up in the rest of our lives. When at work, we are often asked to compartmentalize or create clear boundaries between the personal and the professional. Many of us are expected to show up “professionally” which often means we are *discouraged* from showing up emotionally.

Validate participants for showing up during your time together as their full selves, embracing their physical, mental, emotional and spiritual facets equally, which can feel risky and challenging.

We believe in honoring the full humanity and experiences of those engaged with us in our work. We encourage you to start doing the same at your school, and not just in this space, if you're not doing so already—even if it means leaning into discomfort.

## Courage in Education

Invite participants to read one, or both, of the articles at the end of this session:

- 1) [Courageous Educators: Leaning into the Discomfort](#), by Jasmine Scott
- 2) A segment of Parker Palmer's on "Institutions and the Human Heart" from [The Heart of a Teacher](#).

Both talk about higher education but make important points about what courage could look like in K-12 education as well.

Reflection questions to consider for [Courageous Educators: Leaning into the Discomfort](#):

- What are your thoughts, feelings, connections, and reflections on this article?
- What aspects of the transformative work that Jasmine Scott describes in her article would you like to see more of in your school? Why?

Reflection questions for [Institutions and the Human Heart](#):

- What are your thoughts, feelings, connections, and reflections on this article?
- What aspects of the vulnerable work that Parker Palmer describes in his article would you like to see more of in your school? Why?

## Closing, Option 1: On Courage

Invite participants, one after the other to share one line from their "It Takes Courage" poem, co-creating a new poem on courage together.

## Closing, Option 2: Parker Palmer on Courage

Invite participants to reflect on Parker Palmer's quote on courage below:

"If we want to grow as teachers – we must do something alien to academic culture: we must talk to each other about our inner lives – risky stuff in a profession that fears the personal and seeks safety in the technical, the distant, the abstract."



## Additional Resources: Session 3

### **Additional Written Resources:**

["A Talk to Teachers"](#) by James Baldwin

["Ease Anxiety and Stress: Take a \(Belly\) Breather"](#) by Matthew Solan

### **Additional Video Resources | Parker Palmer on The Courage to Teach:**

[10. The Emotional Life of Children – The Courage to Teach Guide](#) by Parker Palmer

[12. Ways of Knowing - The Courage to Teach Guide](#) by Parker Palmer

## Handout: Courageous Educators: Leaning into the Discomfort, by Jasmine Scott

At some point in your life, you may have heard the phrase, “ignorance is bliss.” I’ll take a moment to validate that – ignorance *is* bliss. Ignorance is blissful because it allows us to view the world through a skewed lens, detached from the lived experiences of those in our respective communities. As an educator, I believe that when we fail to address ignorance in our students and peers, we are reinforcing the message that:

It’s acceptable to value individuals in our community differently because of their social identities.

The only perspective that matters is our own.

Connection doesn’t matter; it’s ok to live in a world devoid of human emotion.

As a person committed to creating and constructing inclusive campus environments, reinforcing that message makes me uneasy. And because that sentiment troubles me, **I’ve realized that as an educator is perfectly acceptable to be gritty and raw.**

Tenacity is necessary as we seek to elevate inclusion and social consciousness. I believe that there is a layer of vulnerability that comes with being tenacious. **It’s this realness that allows us to support and validate our students while simultaneously encouraging them to view an issue through a different lens.**

We only begin to master this delicate balance when we commit to our own ongoing personal work, leaning into the discomfort of the unknown. Discomfort feels like exposure, anxiety in the pit of your stomach as you begin to introduce an opinion that differs from the majority. It is uneasiness and awkwardness, not always having the right words to say but knowing that you should be saying something. **Discomfort is seeking critical feedback and modeling the openness that you expect of others.**

Discomfort is also knowing when it’s appropriate to take risks. This past week, I saw an advertisement for on-campus student employment with dining services, titled “Poor College Students.” To say the least, I was appalled. With a single headline the department managed to trivialize the lived experiences of the 46 million Americans who actually live below the poverty line, stigmatize the current student workers employed by dining services, and publicly contribute to the power differential between the staff members and student consumers. It felt important to my being that I say something, but I was also

afraid of the repercussions. I've been labeled somewhat of a spitfire in the department and part of me was worried that offering a thoughtful critique to the upper administration would be the last straw. I stared at my computer screen for 10 minutes before deciding to hit the "send" button in Outlook, forwarding my response to the head of our department. The uneasiness I felt sending that email was nothing compared to uneasiness some of the current student staff members saw when they read that email. **Sometimes discomfort is not always knowing what's going to happen but choosing to engage anyway.** In my particular situation, a few moments of discomfort led to the department removing and revamping those advertisements. As I reflect on that experience, the issue almost feels trivial. **But even the smallest acts contribute to a culture of inclusion and acceptance or disaffirm the identities of our students.**

I've become more at ease with the unknown by engaging in conversations with my peers in brave spaces. My ideal brave space (and I'm lucky to have found it) allows those involved to be offended and to disagree, affirms lived experiences, and encourages us to move away from external definition. We are encouraged to ask critical questions and challenge assumptions because we know that the actual world isn't a brave space. I can lean into the discomfort because I've done (and continually do) the prep work necessary. **Oppression isn't going to be overcome through cowardice.** A more equitable world isn't going to take form by forgoing the discomfort associated with educating ourselves and then others.

You have the power to be courageous in your work as an educator. We can choose to rationalize the ignorant behavior of our students and peers who say that they "didn't know any better" or we can teach them how to be better. **My goal as an educator is to create self-aware, critical thinkers.** Drawing a student into a conversation about current issues is not "multicultural bullying." It's a pivotal moment where we have the opportunity to facilitate a deep examination of how that student is constructing their beliefs and how they are making meaning of their world.

Combatting ignorance and indifference has nothing to do with proving the other party wrong and everything to do with helping others gain understanding. This is the transformative work that we have the privilege to do daily in higher education. Can we commit to being bold and engaging in the unknown? I'm not interested in working in a field of professionals who have become comfortable and complacent. I'm yearning to work alongside individuals with character and strength of purpose.

## **Handout: Institutions and the Human Heart, by Parker Palmer**

My concern for the “inner landscape” of teaching may seem indulgent, even irrelevant, at a time when many teachers are struggling simply to survive. Wouldn't it be more practical, I am sometimes asked, to offer tips, tricks, and techniques for staying alive in the classroom, things that ordinary teachers can use in everyday life? I have worked with countless teachers, and many of them have confirmed my own experience: as important as methods may be, the most practical thing we can achieve in any kind of work is insight into what is happening inside us as we do it. The more familiar we are with our inner terrain, the more sure-footed our teaching—and living—becomes.

I have heard that in the training of therapists, which involves much practical technique, there is a saying: “Technique is what you use until the therapist arrives.” Good methods can help a therapist find a way into the client's dilemma, but good therapy does not begin until the real-life therapist joins with the real life of the client.

Technique is what teachers use until the real teacher arrives, and we need to find as many ways as possible to help that teacher show up. But if we want to develop the identity and integrity that good teaching requires, we must do something alien to academic culture: we must talk to each other about our inner lives—risky stuff in a profession that fears the personal and seeks safety in the technical, the distant, the abstract.

I was reminded of that fear recently as I listened to a group of faculty argue about what to do when students share personal experiences in class—experiences that are related to the themes of the course, but that some professors regard as “more suited to a therapy session than to a college classroom.”

The house soon divided along predictable lines. On one side were the scholars, insisting that the subject is primary and must never be compromised for the sake of the students' lives. On the other side were the student-centered folks, insisting that the lives of students must always come first even if it means that the subject gets short-changed. The more vigorously these camps promoted their polarized ideas, the more antagonistic they became—and the less they learned about pedagogy or about themselves.

The gap between these views seems unbridgeable—until we understand what creates it. At bottom, these professors were not debating teaching techniques. They were revealing the diversity of identity and integrity among themselves, saying, in various ways, “Here are

my own limits and potentials when it comes to dealing with the relation between the subject and my students' lives."

If we stopped lobbing pedagogical points at each other and spoke about who we are as teachers, a remarkable thing might happen: identity and integrity might grow within us and among us, instead of hardening as they do when we defend our fixed positions from the foxholes of the pedagogy wars.

But telling the truth about ourselves with colleagues in the workplace is an enterprise fraught with danger, against which we have erected formidable taboos. We fear making ourselves vulnerable in the midst of competitive people and politics that could easily turn against us, and we claim the inalienable right to separate the "personal" and the "professional" into airtight compartments (even though everyone knows the two are inseparably intertwined). So we keep the workplace conversation objective and external, finding it safer to talk about technique than about selfhood.

Indeed, the story I most often hear from faculty (and other Professionals) is that the institutions in which they work are the heart's worst enemy. In this story, institutions continually try to diminish the human heart in order to consolidate their own power, and the individual is left with a discouraging choice: to distance one's self from the institution and its mission and sink into deepening cynicism (an occupational hazard of academic life), or to maintain eternal vigilance against institutional invasion and fight for one's life when it comes.

Taking the conversation of colleagues into the deep places where, we might grow in self-knowledge for the sake of our professional practice will not be an easy, or popular, task. But it is a task that leaders of every educational institution must take up if they wish to strengthen their institution's capacity to pursue the educational mission. How can schools educate students if they fail to support the teacher's inner life? To educate is to guide students on an inner journey toward more truthful ways of seeing and being in the world. How can schools perform their mission without encouraging the guides to scout out that inner terrain?

As this century of objectification and manipulation by technique draws to a close, we are experiencing an exhaustion of institutional resourcefulness at the very time when the problems that our institutions must address grow deeper and more demanding. Just as 20th-century medicine, famous for its externalized fixes for disease, has found itself required to reach deeper for the psychological and spiritual dimensions of healing, so

20th-century education must open up a new frontier in teaching and learning the frontier of the teacher's inner life.

How this might be done is a subject I have explored in earlier essays in *Change*, so I will not repeat myself here. In **"Good Talk About Good Teaching,"** I examined some of the key elements necessary for an institution to host non-compulsory, non-invasive opportunities for faculty to help themselves and each other grow inwardly as teachers. In **"Divided No More: A Movement Approach to Educational Reform,"** I explored things we can do on our own when institutions are resistant or hostile to the inner agenda.

Our task is to create enough safe spaces and trusting relationships within the academic workplace—hedged about by appropriate structural protections—that more of us will be able to tell the truth about our own struggles and joys as teachers in ways that befriend the soul and give it room to grow. Not all spaces can be safe, not all relationships trustworthy, but we can surely develop more of them than we now have so that an increase of honesty and healing can happen within us and among us—for our own sake, the sake of our teaching, and the sake of our students.

Honesty and healing sometimes happen quite simply, thanks to the alchemical powers of the human soul. When I, with 30 years of teaching experience, speak openly about the fact that I still approach each new class with trepidation, younger faculty tell me that this makes their own fears seem more natural—and thus easier to transcend—and a rich dialogue about the teacher's selfhood often ensues. We do not discuss techniques for "fear management," if such exist. Instead, we meet as fellow travelers and offer encouragement to each other in this demanding but deeply rewarding journey across the inner landscape of education—calling each other back to the identity and integrity that animate all good work, not least the work called teaching.

## Session 4 – The History of SEL in Schools

### Materials:

- AV Equipment to play video: [Dr. Terry Harris, TED Talk video: And How Are the Children?](#)
- Agenda charted on the board or chart paper, or provided as a handout
- Handout: SEL + RP + RE
- Handout: "A Short History of SEL"
- Journals and pens

### Opening: And How Are the Children?

Play the 15-minute [Dr. Terry Harris, TED Talk video: And How Are the Children?](#) Relate to participants that Dr. Terry Harris is the Executive Director of Student Services, of the Rockwood School District in Missouri. In this role, he is responsible for school counselors, social workers, school safety, educational equity and diversity, residency and student health and well-being in the entire school district.

Then ask for some volunteers to share what stood out to them and what they have questions about.



### Talk Participants Through Today's Agenda

- Opening: Dr. Terry Harris, TED Talk video: And How Are the Children?
- Check Agenda
- SEL+RP+RE
- Three Adjectives and a Noun
- SEL Definition and History
- The Comer School Development Program
- Journaling & Discussion
- Closing: And How Are The Children?

## MSC Handout: SEL + RP + RE

Remind participants of the Morningside Center approach that combines

1. Social and Emotional Learning
2. Restorative Practices, and
3. Brave Conversations about Race

Explain that today you'll be focusing on part 1. Social and Emotional Learning.

### SEL: 3 Adjectives and a Noun

Hand out index cards and ask participants to write three adjectives and a noun that describe the kind of person they're seeking to cultivate and nurture through their work as educators.

Invite them to imagine their students as they come up from kindergarten through elementary school, middle and high school, into higher education or a job. Who do they want their students to become as their "best selves"?

Do they want their students to be kind, caring, generous, persevering, loving, strong, etc. And for the noun, maybe they want their students to become teachers, professionals, activists, leaders, "good troublemakers," team players, healers, warriors?

Give participants a few minutes to think and jot down their words.

Going around the room, ask participants to share their three adjectives and noun. No explanation is needed for now. Be sure to share your own.

Ask: "What do we notice about the words that were shared?" Invite the group to note similarities/ differences.

More likely than not, the vast majority of what was shared focused on social and emotional learning, not academics. If this is the case, be sure to name this for the group. The focus of school is often teaching (and learning) academics. Please know that educators are actually hired to nurture the intellectual, physical, emotional, social, and civic potential of each student. Individual states have Code of Ethics or Codes of Conduct that speak to some version of this ethical code, but this is the hired expectation for what needs to be further developed for us to really be able to speak to "And How Are The Children?"



## SEL Definition and History

Ask if someone would like to offer a definition or description of what they understand SEL to be. Also ask what, if anything, participants know about the history of SEL.

### A Definition of SEL

Define social and emotional learning as:

- a culturally affirming, equitable and ongoing process by which we (both adults and children) develop our capacity to affirm and reflect upon our multiple identities; understand our feelings and how they impact us and others; engage in advocacy and enact solidarity; nurture and navigate strong relationships; demonstrate empathy and seek to understand the lived experiences and perspectives of others from diverse backgrounds and cultures; and take responsibility for improving our communities – from the classroom to the world
- Comprised of five domains: self-awareness, agency and voice, social awareness, relationship nurturing and social responsibility
- Encompassing a genuine honoring and valuing of humanity on both the individual and collective level
- Serving as a guidepost in navigating life's complexities

### A Short History of SEL

Elicit and explain that social and emotional learning (SEL) has been intentionally and unintentionally, explicitly and implicitly, developed and nurtured throughout history, in societies and cultures across the globe. While SEL is often presented as a new and Western approach to education, it is neither. Distribute the "Short History of SEL" handout.

### Large Group Reflection

Invite participants to share their **I**mpressions, **F**eelings, **E**xperiences, or **T**houghts (IFET) on this short history of SEL.



## Journaling

**Introduction to Journaling** Introduce the idea of journaling, which we'll come back to again and again throughout this guide. Journaling is the practice of committing to paper one's thoughts, feelings, understandings, and possible explanations about ideas, concepts and/or experiences. We recommend providing staff with a physical notebook or inviting them to bring one of their own. According to research, **longhand "increases neural activity in part of the brain, that is similar to meditation. ... Writing is good for keeping one's gray matter sharp and may even influence how we think, as in 'more positively,' studies show. Apparently, sequential hand movements, like those used in handwriting, activate large regions of the brain responsible for thinking, language, healing and working memory.... Another often-overlooked benefit of writing by hand is that it just plain forces us to slow down and enjoy the moment — a novelty in today's world where immediacy reigns. Mindful writing rests the brain, potentially sparking creativity."**

### Video: The Comer School Development Program

Explain that you'll be showing a video that features Dr. Comer and The Comer Development Program.

Play the Yale School of Medicine video: [The Comer School Development Program](#) (5:22 min).



## Journaling

Invite participants to take out their journals. Say something about the power of journaling (see above) and explain that we'll be using this as a regular practice throughout the sessions in this guide. Invite participants to choose one of the following journaling prompts that most resonates with them and spend 5-7 minutes putting their thoughts, feelings and understandings to paper:

- Think about a teacher, or another adult in your life, who brought SEL into their relationships with you as a student or young person. Describe the relationships and how they brought SEL into it. How did SEL impact the relationship? How did the relationship impact you?
- Think about a student who may have helped you grow socially and emotionally. Describe the relationship and how they/you brought SEL into it? How did SEL impact the relationship? How did the relationship impact you?

As circle keeper, be sure to journal as well for your own personal reflection and healing.

## Large Group Reflection

Invite some volunteers to share journaling reflections. Connect what's shared to the "And How Are the Children?" video as you close today's session.

## Closing: And How Are the Children?

Invite participants to revisit today's opening ceremony: "And How Are the Children?" Based on what they've explored about SEL today, ask participants how they're feeling about what Dr. Terry Harris shared now.

## Book Suggestion:

*Emotional Intelligence: Why It Can Matter More Than IQ* by Daniel Goleman

Description: Everyone knows that high IQ is no guarantee of success, happiness, or virtue, but until Emotional Intelligence, we could only guess why. Daniel Goleman's brilliant report from the frontiers of psychology and neuroscience offers startling new insight into our “two minds”—the rational and the emotional—and how they together shape our destiny. Drawing on groundbreaking brain and behavioral research, Goleman shows the factors at work when people of high IQ flounder and those of modest IQ do surprisingly well. These factors, which include self-awareness, self-discipline, and empathy, add up to a different way of being smart—and they aren't fixed at birth. Although shaped by childhood experiences, emotional intelligence can be nurtured and strengthened throughout our adulthood—with immediate benefits to our health, our relationships, and our work. (352 pages)

## Next Session Prep:

Provide participants with the [emotional intelligence test](#) and ask them to please take the test and save their results prior to the next session as they will be reflecting upon and discussing their results.

## Additional Resources: Session 4

### Additional Written Resources:

["Who Drives Social-Emotional Learning?"](#) by Belinda Chiu, Ed.D. and Elizabeth Sumida Huaman, Ed. D

["What is Social and Emotional Learning."](#) GoGuardian

["Did You Know that SEL Emerged Because of A Black Man? The True History of SEL."](#)  
Blog post by Byron M. McClure

["Finding Your Place: The Current State of K-12 Social Emotional Learning,"](#) Bryant, G., Crowley, S., & Davidsen, C., for Tyton Partners (2020)

["Three Ways That Handwriting With A Pen Positively Affects Your Brain"](#) by Nancy Olson

### Additional Video Resources:

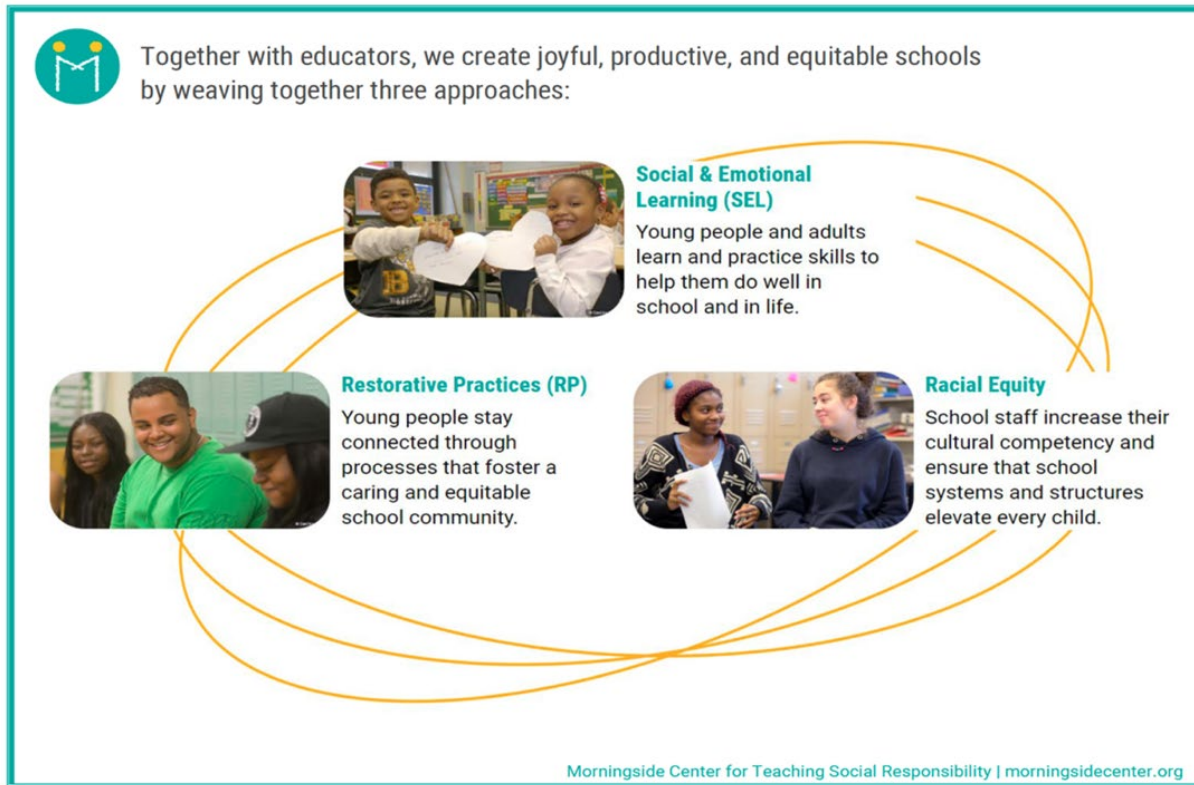
[The Comer School Development Program](#)

[Dr. Bettina Love on Cultural Memory in Youth Creativity and Hip Hop](#)

[Hip Hop, grit and academic success: Bettina at TEDxUGA](#)

[A Timeline of Social Emotional Learning](#)

## Handout: SEL + RP + RE



## Handout: History of SEL

[“Ideas of holistic education](#) that address the interplay of mind, body, and spirit, are not new. Aspects of SEL, including critical inquiry, mindfulness, compassion, and empathy, are part of learning systems in many world cultures. What is new in the greater scheme of human history is the industrial age shift to education for worker and civic development. In this sense, SEL is indeed a rethinking because it requires a return to globally diverse paradigms of learning and serves as an intervention towards correcting some of the damage done by education-for-hegemony or sameness.”

Researchers are coming to terms with what many cultures have always understood: The idea that there are different ways to define intelligence and that IQ only gets us so far. This knowledge existed long before Daniel Goleman popularized the idea of Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Howard Gardner introduced his theory of multiple intelligences, in the 1990s. And yet not surprisingly, they, as Western white male academics, are frequently credited with the conception and power of these ideas. This while [“for millennia,](#) Indigenous and other civilizations across the globe have developed their [more holistic] knowledge systems and thrived.”

Recent research has shown a strong correlation between school-based SEL programming, academic achievement, life-success and overall wellbeing. These important findings have fueled a movement in the West that seeks to standardize and embed SEL into existing programming and pedagogy. And where learning outcomes and assessments are important to ensure reliability of programming, we need to make sure we pay attention to who designs our curricula and who teaches SEL to the young people we work with. For it to benefit our children and their communities, SEL needs to be shaped according to local needs and purposes. It needs to be inclusive and collaborative.

This is something that Dr. James P. Comer recognized back in the 1960s. Dr. Comer, was the first African-American full professor at the Yale School of Medicine, where, in the late 1968, he began piloting a program as part of the Yale University Child Study Center, that came to be known as the [Comer School Development Program](#).

Using a pioneering teamwork approach, the school promoted the collaboration of parents, educators and community to improve student development. Already back then, Comer recognized that SEL infused into school programming, could mitigate the harmful racial trauma inflicted on Black youth. He understood that culturally responsive and

healing centered approaches were needed in education, long before those fields came into being, as well.

Comer's research paved the way for Social and Emotional Learning to be introduced into our schools more intentionally. And yet the lack of recognition of Comer's essential contributions to the field of SEL, until quite recently, serves as a reminder of whose voice and scholarship are spotlighted and whose are marginalized, in academia, and in our schools in general.



## Session 5 – A More Equitable Approach to SEL

### Materials:

- Agenda charted on the board or chart paper, or provided as a handout
- AV equipment to play video: [Sesame Street: Will.i.am Sings "What I Am"](#) (elementary)
- AV equipment to play video: [Diamond Studded Shoes](#) (secondary)
- Handout of current iteration of Morningside Center's SEL Wheel
- Handout of song lyrics
- Individual results from [Emotional Intelligence Test](#)
- Linked article: "Why Emotional Intelligence Is Important in the Workplace"

### Opening Ceremony: Diamond Studded Shoes

Play the 1:51 minute music video: [Sesame Street: Will.i.am Sings "What I Am"](#) and then the 3:21 minute music video ["Diamond Studded Shoes"](#) by Yola. Prior to playing, distribute the lyrics handout for each song. Invite participants to pay attention to how each song relates to SEL, humanity and equity.



### Talk Participants Through Today's Agenda

- Opening: Will.i.am and Yola Videos - Exploring SEL and Equity
- Check Agenda
- Emotional Intelligence: Small Group Discussion and Skit
- Emotional Intelligence: Large Group Share
- The Culturally Affirming SEL Wheel and Domains
- Stand Under Activity
- Closing: Diamond Studded Shoes, Take 2

### Emotional Intelligence: Small Group Discussion & Skit

In small groups of 3 -5, have participants read this [very brief article](#) independently: and then create a silent skit about why emotional intelligence is vital in the workplace. Have each group assign a narrator to articulate scene themes. Be sure that the need for emotional intelligence stands out *more* than any drama displayed.

## Emotional Intelligence: Skit Performance

Back in the large group, invite groups to perform their skits.

## The Culturally Affirming SEL Wheel

Distribute the current iteration of the Morningside Center SEL wheel. Give participants time to independently review. Then in pairs or small groups of three or four, have participants share 1) something about the wheel that is resonating with them and 2) a question they have about it. Consider having pairs and/or groups chart this information to share out with the larger group.

Then provide some additional framing, using the following talking points:

- **This SEL wheel and its accompanying holistic approach are continually in process.** The wheel is a living document subject to revision and change based on the learnings we continue to acquire. SEL is a life-long journey.
- **The intended audience of the wheel is *everyone*** (school leaders, staff, families, community members), not just students. SEL starts with us. As adults, we must develop our capacity to reflect upon our emotions, to continue to learn how to honor the dignity of others and understand their lived experiences, to develop a positive relationship with the land, to stand up for justice and work toward liberation for all. **We model for our students what we're learning.** We understand that our best learning happens when we come together as a community.
- **If SEL isn't culturally affirming and equitable, it isn't SEL.** SEL must be systemic. It must be woven into the fabric of school culture. It cannot exist in isolation or solely in classrooms. It must center the identities and lived experiences of all students, of all staff, of everyone. It must prioritize student voice and agency to advocate and take action for just communities. It must focus on strong and collaborative relationships between adults and children.
- **It's more about the "we" rather than the "me."** SEL is not about an individual's mastery of competencies or achievement of personal goals. Rather, culturally affirming SEL prioritizes the needs of the group and emphasizes the importance of community.
- **Competencies, skills and habits of mind are the elements that comprise the five domains of culturally affirming SEL are not acquired in a linear fashion.** We all have are strengths and challenges and therefore will be in different places in terms of our abilities to embody each of the domains and their accompanying elements. Our progress could vary from day to day, from moment to moment depending on the situation and context. And that's okay.

## Stand Under: Culturally Affirming SEL Domains

Post signs of each of the five domains (*self-awareness, social awareness, agency and voice, relationship nurturing and social responsibility*) in different spots in the room.

Invite participants to look back at the wheel, select the domain in which they feel most confident, and then move their bodies under that corresponding sign. Once all participants have selected a sign to stand under, invite them to share why they are standing where they are.

Now ask participants to look back at the wheel and decide what domain they think is most important. Again, they should move under that sign and share why they chose that domain as the most important.

Thank participants for reflecting on the wheel and engaging in conversation around it.



### Journaling

Invite participants to take out their journals and to write in response to the following journaling prompt, spending 5 minutes putting their thoughts, feelings and understandings to paper:

- Thinking about the lyrics of the two songs by the artists, Will I. Am & Yola, the results of your test and your group skit, and what connections you've begun to make to the culturally affirming SEL wheel.

As circle keeper, be sure to journal as well for your own personal reflection and healing.

## Closing: Diamond Studded Shoes, Take 2

Consider playing Yola's "Diamond Studded Shoes" again. Emphasize the closing lyrics as you wrap up today's session:

*We know it isn't, it ain't gonna turn out right  
.... We know it isn't, and that's why we gots to fight*

*For the life and soul of the world we know  
Fight, 'cause the promise is never gonna be enough*

**Ask participants:**

“What is one thing you want to fight for when it come to the soul of education?”

## Additional Resources: Session 5

### Additional Written Resources:

["Why We Can't Afford Whitewashed Social-Emotional Learning"](#) by Dena Simmons

["When SEL is Used as Another Form of Policing,"](#) Communities for Just School Fund (2020)

["Social, Emotional, and Academic Development Through an Equity Lens,"](#) Report by The Education Trust (2020)

["Reclaim Social-Emotional Learning: Centering Organizing Praxis for Holistically Safe Schools,"](#) Community for Just Schools Fund (2020)

## Handout: Will.i.am "What I Am" Lyrics

If what I am is what's in me

Then I'll stay strong - that's who I'll be

And I will always be the best

"Me" that I can be

Keep on reaching high (high!)

Never gonna quit

Just keep getting stronger

There's only one me, I am it

Have a dream I'll follow it

It's up to me to try

And nothing's gonna bring us down (no!)

Never give it up, gotta go

Because I know

I'll keep getting stronger

Oh! I'm a keep my head up high (high!)

Keep on reaching high (high!)

Never gonna quit

I'll be getting stronger

What I am is super

What I am is proud

What I am is friendly

What I am is grouchy

And nothing's gonna bring me down (no!)

Never gonna stop, gotta go

Because I know

I'll keep getting stronger

What you are is magical

What you are is special

There's nothing I can't achieve

Because in myself I believe in oh

And what I am is thoughtful

What I am is musical

What I am is smart

And what I am is brave

What I am is helpful

What I am is special

There's nothing I can't achieve

Because in myself I believe in oh

Gonna hold my head up high (high!)

Keep on reaching high (high!)

Never gonna stop

I'll be getting stronger

Nothing's gonna bring me down (no!)

Never give it up gotta go, oh... yeah

I'll keep getting stronger

Gonna keep our heads up high (high!)

## Handout: Yola "Diamond Studded Shoes" Lyrics

Everybody's saying  
That it's gonna be alright  
But I can't help but wonder  
If it's gonna be on my dime  
We are the powers  
Throwing up against the tide  
Burning our reserves of courage  
And working just to make it alright

When we know it isn't  
We know it isn't, we know it isn't  
We know it isn't, it ain't gonna turn out right  
We know it isn't, we know it isn't, oh no  
We know it isn't, that's why we gots to fight

You and I are trying  
But we don't get to decide  
When the man comes for our paychecks  
Don't you tell me it'll be alright  
We aren't the rich ones  
Some of us will barely get by  
They buy diamond studded shoes with our taxes  
Anything to keep us divided

You know it isn't  
We know it isn't, we know it isn't  
We know it isn't, it ain't gonna turn out right  
We know it isn't, we know it isn't, oh no  
We know it isn't, that's why we gots to fight

For the life and soul of the world we know  
Fight, 'cause the promise is never gonna be enough

Watching and waiting for answers  
Hoping we might see the light  
You beat it into us like a hammer  
So don't you tell me it'll be alright

When we know it isn't  
We know it isn't, we know it isn't

We know it isn't, it ain't gonna turn out right  
We know it isn't, we know it isn't, oh no  
We know it isn't, and that's why we gots to fight

For the life and soul of the world we know  
Fight, 'cause the promise is never gonna be enough ...



## Handout: A More Equitable Approach to SEL

Since its start in schools in the late 1960s, SEL as a field has been rapidly expanding. These days more than 90% of schools and districts, report that they are working to support the Social and Emotional Learning of their students.

And, of course, focusing on student development beyond academics can be a good thing in school, as Dr. James Comer first showed in his Comer School Development Program. Schools *should* play a role in helping students develop more holistically, if for no other reason than the studies that show that developing students' social and emotional competence is directly related to improved academic outcomes, life success and overall wellbeing.

We need to make sure, though, that developing student social and emotional competency is done with integrity, with an understanding of the children and young people in our schools, and the cultures and contexts they grow up in.

School is where students should have ample opportunity to learn about themselves, their emotions, their behaviors, how to manage them and how to interact with others, which has traditionally been a good starting point for SEL. In too many schools however, SEL stops there. It is too narrowly focused on changing individual student behaviors, perceived as upsetting or disruptive of the existing school expectations and culture.

In this way, SEL often seeks to control student behavior “[rather than implementing](#) practices that build relationships and create learning environments that support positive social and emotional growth. This is especially true in schools and districts that serve large populations of students of color and students from low-income backgrounds, exposing these students to environments that could do more harm than good.”

To make SEL more inclusive and relevant for all our students, then, we need to move away from it as a way to “fix our kids” and look, instead, at the underlying reasons for student behavior. We need to also address the environments within which our students learn.

To do so requires a shift in focus, away from our students, to critically examining adult beliefs, mindsets and competencies, while *fixing* educational policies and practices to help our schools become the kind of welcoming places where ALL students can feel a sense of belonging, care and support.

Many of the skills that have been prioritized in the SEL field to date, have assumed a white, middle class, normative lens, that does not consider the lived experience of many of our students.

So, we need to ask ourselves: How do we reformulate SEL so that it is culturally responsive and inclusive, so that it is trauma informed and healing centered? How can we make sure that we are not *only* holding space for a white, middle-class, straight normative approach in our classrooms? This requires the kind of collaborative approach Dr. Comer has been promoting, in which we listen to children and families and meet the needs that we know have resulted from ...

According to the recently published [EdTrust Report on Social, Emotional and Academic Development](#) “school and district leaders will need to continually assess whether their policies foster belonging, challenge students, and provide the supports students need to thrive.”

### **Discussion Questions:**

- Having read this handout, what's your IFET (Impression, Feeling, Experience, or Thought)?
- Is SEL already being implemented at your school? If so, how?
- Now consider *how* it's being implemented based on the handout you just read. Who is being served? What is (not) considered?

## Session 6 – Introduction to Restorative Circles

### Materials:

- Agenda charted on the board or chart paper, or provided as a handout
- A meaningful talking piece (see the description in “Key Elements of the Circle Process” handout)
- Handout of “Circles” by Black Elk
- AV equipment to play video: [Core Processes of Restorative Justice Circles](#)
- Handout: “Key Elements of a Circle”
- Handout: “Circles Tree”
- Handout: “The Structure of a Circle/Sitting in a Circle”

**Note for the Facilitator/Circle Keeper:** For today's session, which is facilitated as a restorative circle, arrange the chairs in such a way so that everyone will be seated *in a circle* facing each other, preferably without tables or other obstacles in between. If you haven't participated in, or facilitated circles before, you want to familiarize yourself with the “Key Elements of a Circle,” “Circles Tree” and “Structure of a Circle/Sitting in Circle” handouts ahead of time and watch the videos in today's session, as well as those in the next few sessions to get a better understanding of what circle practices are about. After reviewing the handouts and learning more about the talking piece, make sure you bring a meaningful talking piece of your own to facilitate today's circle.

### Introduce Restorative Circles

Referencing how the space is set up, explain that today's session will be facilitated as a restorative circle. Before moving further into the circle's practice, ask participants to share what, if anything, they know about restorative circles and their use in schools.

Build on people's existing knowledge as you introduce some of the key structural elements of restorative circles:

- Restorative circles start with an *opening ceremony* and end with a *closing ceremony* to create an intentional space where people can be more present with one another and show up as their best selves.

- *Sitting in a circle* is another important element, so that everyone can see and bear witness to each other. In circle, there is no one at the head. All are seated at the same level illustrating how circles upend some of the hierarchical ways of being in our lives.
- Taking turns sharing and listening, guided by a *meaningful talking piece* that is sent around from one person to the next, as an invitation to share or to pass is the next circle element.
- The facilitator in circles, known as *the keeper*, is both the host and participant and everyone is invited for what they bring—their full holistic experiences, knowledge, and wisdom. All are considered teachers. All are considered learners, including *the keeper* which is different from most other roles we as educators play in schools.

Ask participants if they have any questions or connection to the different elements of circles that they would like to share.

### Opening Ceremony: Black Elk on Circles

Explain to the group that, to date, we've been using different openings to start our sessions. Today, using restorative circle language and practice, we'll start the session with an *opening ceremony*:

For today's *opening ceremony* you'll be reading a poem by Black Elk called "Circles."

Distribute the "Circles" by Black Elk handout.

Explain that Black Elk was a Native American holy man, a member of the Oglala Lakota people, and he is known to millions around the world from his 1932 testimonial, *Black Elk Speaks*. Adapted by the poet, John Neihardt, from a series of interviews, it is one of the most widely read and admired works of American Indian literature. A Black Elk biography, written by Joe Jackson, *Black Elk: The Life of An American Visionary*, was a 2016 finalist for National Book Award.

The version of the "Circles" poem below includes specific references to "Indian," capturing the original language, intent, and context for the poem.

Ask participants to read the poem collaboratively, by inviting participants, one after the other, to read up to a line each. Go around the circle, reading the poem as many times as necessary for everyone to read at least one line.

Have people reflect on the poem for a bit as they decide on a line from the poem that resonates with them.

### **Go-Round: Circles**

Introduce your *talking piece* to the group by sharing a few words about the meaning the item has for you.

Now, as you initiate the go-round, share a line from the poem that resonates with you, including a short explanation about why.

Hand the talking piece to the person sitting to your right or left, inviting them to share while others in the circle listen from the heart. Remind participants of the Chinese character, Ting, from earlier. They will hand the talking piece to their neighbor when they're done sharing and so on, and so forth, around the circle until everyone has had the opportunity to share.

### **The Indigenous Roots of Circles**

When the talking piece returns to you, touch on what people shared as you make connections to the many people, around the world, who have gathered in purposeful circles throughout history. People have always used circles to share stories and experiences to learn, connect, celebrate, and sustain their communities through challenging times.

Read and internalize the information below. Relay key learnings about the Indigenous Roots of circles by communicating the bolded information to your group.

"Researchers have found much evidence that **societies were far more egalitarian in earlier human stages. .... [Today] many indigenous groups still gather in circles, for example, Native Americans, the Maasai tribe of Kenya, and [other people in] numerous countries throughout Mother Earth ....** These groups regularly gather in circle to confirm the identity of the community through ritual, story-telling, dance and music."

**"The Circle process that many non-Native people ... [use in schools] today is rooted in the tradition of talking Circles that Indigenous Peoples in North America use and have used for millennia. Different Native Peoples practice different forms of the Circle process. The form of Circles described in Living Justice Press books [that the Morningside Center Circle process draws on] most closely reflects the talking Circle process practiced by the Plains Peoples of North America. In these traditions, Circles are far more than a technique; they are a way of life. Circles embody a philosophy, principles, and values that apply whether people are sitting in Circle or not."**

In *Circle Forward: Building a Restorative School Community*, restorative circle keepers and practitioners Kay Pranis and Carolyn Boyes-Watson talk about the indigenous roots of circles and "the source of key teachings that are foundational to the process." Not surprisingly, they are very much connected to some of the themes touched on in the Black Elk "Circles" poem:

"These teachings often build on the Circle image as a metaphor for how the universe operates. For many Indigenous people, the circle is a symbolic expression of a world view – a way of understanding how the world works. **The following teachings are an integral part both of that worldview and of the space that circles create:**

- **Everything is interconnected.**
- **Though everything is interconnected, there are distinct parts and it's important for them to be in balance.**
- **Every part of the universe contributes to the whole and is equally valuable.**
- **In the cyclical nature of life, there's always another chance."**



### Talk Participants Through Today's Agenda

- Introduce Restorative Circles
- Opening Ceremony: Black Elk on Circles
- The Indigenous Roots of Circles
- Check Agenda
- Introduction to Restorative Circles in Schools
- Video: Introduction to Restorative Circle Processes
- Video: Key Elements of the Circle process
- Key Elements of the Circle Process
- Closing Ceremony: Wayinkan's Wisdom

## Introduction to Restorative Circles in Schools

Frame today's initial exploration of restorative circles by first acknowledging that our schools have been failing to meet the needs of our children and their families, and by extension our country as a whole. **We want to create schools that promote equity, joy, healing and belonging. Restorative circles are a way to align to this deeper purpose of public education.**

Through restorative circles, student voice and leadership are amplified, students' cultures and identities are affirmed, and all work toward collective healing. In restorative circles, we show up more fully as the holistic beings we are and engage in storytelling. Remind participants of what they learned in session 1 about storytelling and how the brain is wired for narratives.

It turns out our brain secretes the bonding hormone, oxytocin when we hear someone's story or are privileged to have them share personal information about themselves. The brains of the storyteller and the listener fire in unison and we begin to feel empathy and compassion toward one another.

## Video: Introduction to Restorative Circle Processes

Play the [Core Processes of Restorative Justice Circles](#) video from 0:00 to 3:32 minutes. In this 3-and-a-half-minute clip, educators outline how restorative circles can be used proactively and responsively in schools.

After watching the video, invite participants to take out their journals.

Invite participants to journal in response to one of the following reflection questions:

- What connections can you make between the video and the work that's already happening at your school?
- What aspects of circles shown in the video are you interested in exploring further? Why?
- What impressions, feelings, experiences or thoughts came up for you during this video, that you'd like to share with the larger group?

## Video: Key Elements of the Circle process

Play the [Core Processes of Restorative Justice Circles](#) video again, this time from 5:04 to 8:43 minutes to illustrate the key elements of a circle.

Reflections questions:

- What IFETs (Impressions, Feelings, Experiences or Thoughts) came up for you during this video, that you'd like to share with the larger group?
- What connections can you make to work that's already happening at your school?
- What aspects of circles presented in the video are you interested in exploring further?

## Key Elements of the Circle Process, Tier 1

Distribute the "Key Elements of a Circle" handout. As you review each of the key elements, ask participants to recall what they remember from the video you just watched, what resonated with them and/or what they already knew about these elements before watching the video. Build on what people share, using some, or all, of the following language:

### **The Structure of the Circle/Sitting in a Circle**

The seating arrangement is a key component of circles. It's why they're called circles. When we sit in a circle:

- a) We can see each other in an unobstructed way (no tables, chairs or other furniture in between)
- b) It encourages participants to fully engage with one another
- c) There is a clear focus on the issue at the center of the circle
- d) There is a certain amount of flattening of the hierarchies that traditionally exists in school, in that the facilitator (known as keeper) sits at the same level as their students, without being at the head (or front), as is often the case in other non-circle classroom structures.

### **The Centerpiece**

In circles, we gather around a centerpiece that serves as meaningful focal point for circle participants so they can be more fully present and bring their best self to the



circle. Centerpieces may contain values, objects that serve as talking pieces, or other meaningful objects contributed by the community that is gathered around it.

## **The Talking Piece**

The dialogue in circles is facilitated by a meaningful talking piece. The piece is passed around the circle in order, from one person to the next. The person who is holding the piece is invited to speak or pass. Everyone else in the circle practices mindful listening, knowing that their turn will come when the talking piece comes around. In this way, everyone in the circle has an opportunity to share without interruption what is on their mind and in their heart. Those without the talking piece can listen more fully knowing their turn will come. There's no need to prepare a response or rebuttal ahead of time. In this way, the talking piece also encourages more thoughtful reflection and unhurried expression. [L] [L] [L] [SEP] [SEP]

At Morningside Center, we often use a Hugg-a-Planet, a plush globe, as a talking piece. Teachers we've worked with have used stuffed animals, conch shells or handheld mirrors but, ultimately, we encourage circle keepers to choose a talking piece of their own that brings meaning to their circle practice. [L] [L] [SEP] [SEP]

The power of the talking piece ultimately lies in its democratic nature. It gives each participant equal opportunity to speak, with the idea that all have something valuable to contribute. As the piece moves from one participant to the next, every person in the group is acknowledged, whether they speak or not. Sometimes holding the piece for a moment of silence before passing it on, can be as powerful a contribution as sharing a story or perspective. It can help to let things sink in as the circle catches its breath, slowing things down in what can be an otherwise busy and hurried school experience.

## **Opening and Closing Ceremonies**

Every circle starts with an opening ceremony to mark the circle as a space apart from our normal ways of being together. In circles, we slow down the busy pace that dominates so many of our lives, focusing, as we do, on transformational relationships instead of the more transactional relationships, often favored in society. In circle, we seek to show up as our best selves and connect with others more fully, as holistic beings promoting empathy and listening deeply to understand.

Opening ceremonies can range from a mindfulness practice to a piece of music, from a poem or inspirational quote to an opening reflection.

And in the same way that we open up circles with an opening ceremony, we close them using a closing ceremony to close up the space before going back to our lives beyond the circle.

## Closing Ceremony

Consider the following quote from Oglala Lakota elder, warrior and spiritual advisor, Dave Yakima, known by his Lakota name of Wakinyan:

“The Circle has healing power

In the Circle we are all equal,

No one is in front. No one is behind.

No one is above. No one is below.

We are all related – the Circle creates unity”

Invite the group to share their reflections and connections to Wakinyan's wisdom as they think about their colleagues in this space, as well as their students, their families and their communities.

## **Handout: "Circles" by Black Elk**

You have heard that everything an Indian does is done in a circle.

And that is because the power of the world always works in circles,

And everything tries to be round.

Everything the power of the world does is done in a circle.

The sky is round like a ball, and so are all the stars.

The wind, in its greatest power, whirls.

Birds make their nests in circles,

For theirs is the same religion as ours.

The sun comes forth and goes down again in a circle.

The moon does the same, and both are round.

Even the seasons form a great circle in their changing,

And always come back again to where they were.

The life of an Indian is a circle from childhood to childhood,

And so it is in everything where power moves.

## Handout: Key Elements of a Circle



### Key Elements of a Circle

#### The structure of the circle



#### Centerpiece



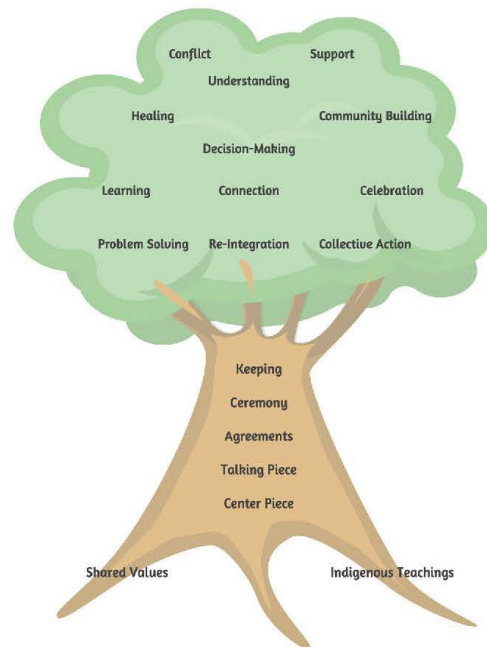
Talking piece (globe, figurine)

Opening and closing ceremonies

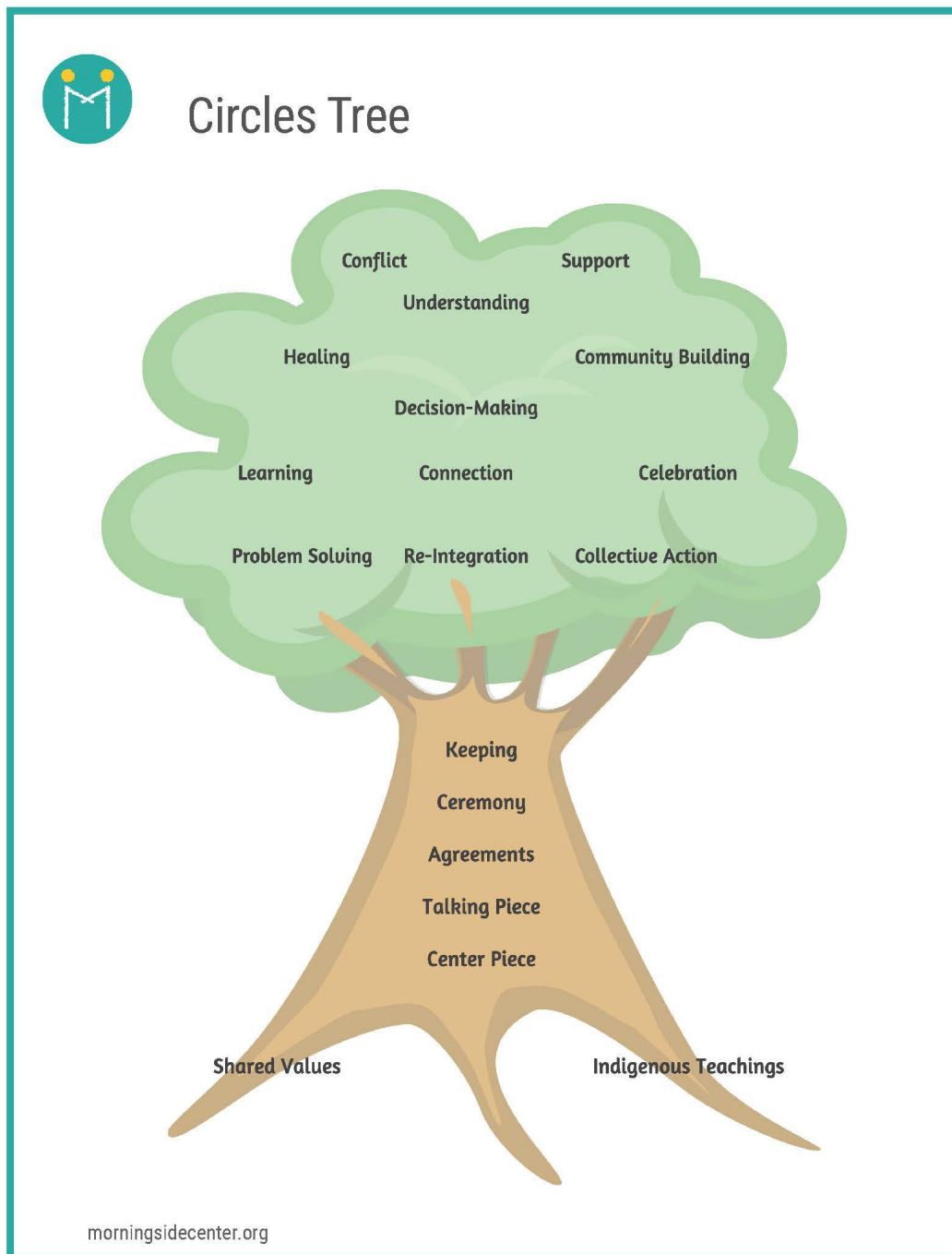
Values (see centerpiece image of index cards)

Community practices, guidelines, agreements

Role of the keeper



## Handout: Circles Tree



## Handout: The Structure of the Circle/Sitting in a Circle

The seating arrangement is a key component of circles. It's why they're called circles. When we sit in a circle:

- a) We can see each other in an unobstructed way (no tables, chairs or other furniture in between)
- b) It encourages participants to fully engage with one another
- c) There is a clear focus on the issue at the center of the circle
- d) There is a certain amount of flattening of the hierarchies that traditionally exists in school, in that the facilitator (known as keeper) sits at the same level as their students, without being at the head (or front), as is often the case in other non-circle classroom structures.

### The Centerpiece

In circles, we gather around a centerpiece that serves as meaningful focal point for circle participants so they can be more fully present and bring their best self to the circle. Centerpieces may contain values, objects that serve as talking pieces, or other meaningful objects contributed by the community that is gathered around it.

### The Talking Piece

The dialogue in circles is facilitated by a meaningful talking piece. The piece is passed around the circle in order, from one person to the next. The person who is holding the piece is invited to speak or pass. Everyone else in the circle practices mindful listening, knowing that their turn will come when the talking piece comes around. In this way, everyone in the circle has an opportunity to share without interruption what is on their mind and in their heart. Those without the talking piece can listen more fully knowing their turn will come. There's no need to prepare a response or rebuttal ahead of time. In this way, the talking piece also encourages more thoughtful reflection and unhurried expression. [SEP] [SEP]

At Morningside Center, we often use a Hugg-a-Planet, a plush globe, as a talking piece. Teachers we've worked with have used stuffed animals, conch shells or handheld mirrors but, ultimately, we encourage circle keepers to choose a talking piece of their own that brings meaning to their circle practice. [SEP] [SEP]

The power of the talking piece ultimately lies in its democratic nature. It gives each participant equal opportunity to speak, with the idea that all have something valuable to contribute. As the piece moves from one participant to the next, every person in the group is acknowledged, whether they speak or not. Sometimes holding the piece for a moment of silence before passing it on, can be as powerful a contribution as sharing a story or perspective. It can help to let things sink in as the circle catches its breath, slowing things down in what can be an otherwise busy and hurried school experience.

### **Opening and Closing Ceremonies**

Every circle starts with an opening ceremony to mark the circle as a space apart from our normal ways of being together. In circles, we slow down the busy pace that dominates so many of our lives, focusing, as we do, on transformational relationships instead of the more transactional relationships, often favored in society. In circle, we seek to show up as our best selves and connect with others more fully, as holistic beings promoting empathy and listening deeply to understand.

Opening ceremonies can range from a mindfulness practice to a piece of music, from a poem or inspirational quote to an opening reflection.

And in the same way that we open up circles with an opening ceremony, we close them using a closing ceremony to close up the space before going back to our lives beyond the circle.

## Session 7 – Restorative Circles: Community Values & Guidelines

### Material

- Agenda charted on the board or chart paper, or provided as a handout
- A meaningful talking piece
- Item(s) to start building a meaningful centerpiece
- AV equipment to play the video: [Turning to One Another](#)
- Multi-colored index cards
- Handout: "Key Elements of a Circle"
- Handout: "Circles Tree"

**Note for the Facilitator/Circle Keeper:** Today you'll start co-creating your centerpiece. Consider bringing a nice piece of cloth or other item(s) to mark the centerpiece you'll be working on today. Circle keepers have used scarves, necklaces, plants, (electronic) candles, and other meaningful items to mark the center of their circle. Today you'll be building the centerpiece by inviting participants to contribute their Values and Guidelines on index cards. Like last time, make sure you bring a meaningful talking piece to facilitate today's circle.

### Opening Ceremony: Turning to One Another

Explain that similar to last time, you'll open today's circle with a poem. Distribute the handout of the poem, "Turning to One Another" by Margaret Wheatley. Either invite people to read along as you:

- Play the video of Morningside Center's Senior Program Manager, Daniel Coles, reading the poem out loud at [Turning to One Another](#)
- Have participants read the poem out loud, collaboratively, by going around the circle and inviting participants to read up to a line each.

Having listened to and/or read the poem collaboratively, invite participants to review the poem for a minute or two and then pick a line that resonates with them.



### Go-Round:

Send a talking piece around, inviting participants to share the line they picked and why.



### Talk Participants Through Today's Agenda

- Opening Ceremony: "Turning to One Another"
- Check Agenda
- Review Circle Elements, Tier 1 and 2
- Values, Guidelines and Agreements
- Closing Ceremony: Reflections on Son of Baldwin Quote

### Review Circle Elements, Tier 1 and 2

Ask participants what we remember about the key elements of the circle process from last time. Referencing the "Circles Tree" handout, elicit and review the elements you covered last time, adding three more (highlighted below) that we'll be working on today:

- The Structure of the Circle/Sitting in a Circle
- Opening Ceremony
- The Centerpiece
- The Talking Piece
- Identifying Values
- Generating Guidelines
- Guiding Prompts/Questions for Storytelling
- Closing Ceremony

### Values & Guidelines

According to circle keeper, Kay Pranis:

"Peacemaking Circles use structure to create possibilities for freedom: freedom to speak our truth, freedom to drop masks and protections, freedom to be present as a whole human being, freedom to reveal our deepest longings, freedom to acknowledge mistakes and fears, freedom to act in accord with our core values."

We need to build this structure with intentionality, which is what we'll be working on today as we develop our collective values and guidelines and start building our centerpiece. As we reviewed the last time we came together:

In circles we gather around a centerpiece, that serves as meaningful focal point for circle participants so they can be more fully present and bring their best self to the circle. Centerpieces may contain values, objects that serve as talking pieces, or other meaningful objects contributed by the community that is gathered around it.

- b. Values:** Invite participants to take a moment to think about a value that they believe to be important, a value that grounds them in their practice as a parent coordinator, a paraprofessional, a teacher, an administrator, a school aid, counselor, etc. A value that helps them to show up as their best self. Invite participants to write that value on an index card.

### Go-Round

Send a talking piece around, inviting participants to share their value and explain why they chose that value

**Note to the Facilitator/Circle Keeper:** If no one contributes “confidentiality” as a circle value, make sure to do so. Agreeing to keep people’s personal experiences confidential can encourage people to show up and share of themselves more fully in circles.

### Circles Tree

Referencing the “Key Elements of a Circle” handout once more, touch on the fact that shared values are a key component of healthy communities. They help to ground us collectively. They are part of the root system that helps guide us in our social interactions. It is for this reason that when first establishing your circle practice in your school, it is critical to discuss values within your community and with the community you build with your students.

- b. Practices (Guidelines):** Next, invite participants to think about what their value looks like in practice. Write the practice(s) on the other side of the index card, as participants consider community practices (guidelines) that can support them, and others in the circle, to show up as their best selves in this space.

For instance, if their value is patience, the practice might be “slowing down and be being fully present with each other.” If their value is respect, their practice might be “listening

mindfully (wholeheartedly) when others are speaking” and “using invitational language.” If their value is equity, their practice might be “honoring and making space for all voices” or “stepping up and stepping back.” “Courage” might require me to “speak my truth,” “lean into my discomfort,” and “keep breathing,” while “staying present.”

### **Go-Round**

Send the talking piece around, inviting participants to share the practice (guideline) they'd like the group to abide by as they build their circle community. Having shared their practice (guideline), invite participants to contribute their index cards to the centerpiece.

Chart the practices (guidelines) as well, for all to see on chart paper. Introduce them as a work in progress. You may add that these practices (guidelines) are aspirational, in that they help guide us to work on being our best selves in circle (and in the community at large), recognizing that we are human and, like our students, we'll have good and bad days and we'll not always show up as our best selves.

### **Circle Agreements**

Before wrapping up this part of the process, ask if this set of practices (guidelines) is something participants can agree to work toward. If so, rename them to be your “Circle Agreements.” If there is no consensus, open up a dialogue. Discuss the practices that people don't agree on, inviting different voices and understandings into the space. Edit your practices (guidelines), as needed, to allow for consensus before moving on.

Explain that circle guidelines should be seen as a work in progress that we'll continue revisiting to make sure they remain relevant as we deepen our work in Circle together.

### **Large Group Discussion**

If time allows, facilitate a conversation about why it might be important to establish guidelines for classroom circle discussions collaboratively with students and staff.

### **Closing Ceremony**

Share the following [#SonofBaldwin tweet](#) as an addition to the guidelines created by your team:



**Son of Baldwin (Robert Jones, Jr.)**

@SonofBaldwin



We can disagree and still love each other unless your disagreement is rooted in my oppression and denial of my humanity and right to exist.

10:19 AM · Aug 18, 2015 · Twitter Web Client

---

**9,729** Retweets   **689** Quote Tweets   **17.5K** Likes

---



Ask how participants feels about this tweet as you close out today's session. Invite them to share any thoughts, feelings, or connections.

## Additional Resources: Session 7

### **Additional Written Resources:**

["Respect Differences?: Challenging the Common Guidelines in Social Justice Education"](#)  
by Özlem Sensoy and Robin DiAngelo

### **Additional Video Resources:**

["Revisiting Classroom Rules" from](#) *Responsive Classroom*

["Fostering Belonging With Classroom Norms"](#) from *Edutopia*

## Handout: Key Elements of a Circle



### Key Elements of a Circle

#### The structure of the circle



#### Centerpiece



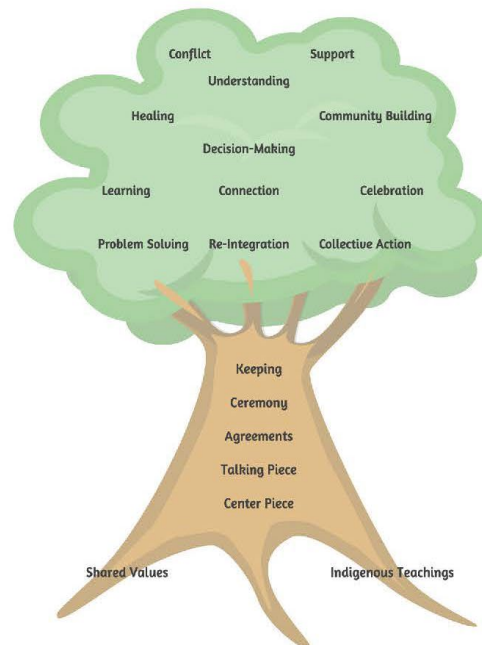
Talking piece (globe, figurine)

Opening and closing ceremonies

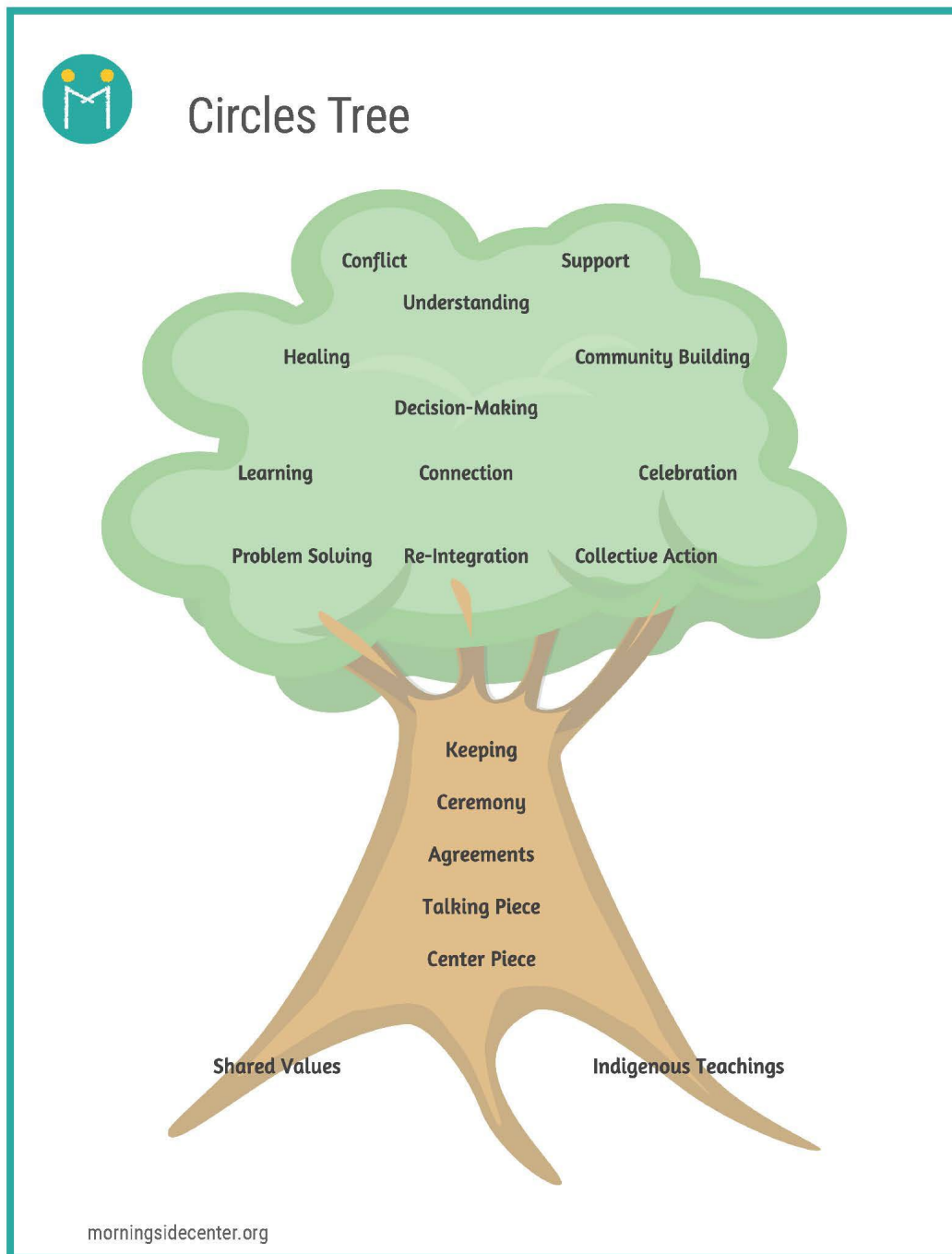
Values (see centerpiece image of index cards)

Community practices, guidelines, agreements

Role of the keeper



## Handout: Circles Tree



## Session 8 – Brave Space Tools, Part 1

### Community Makers, Silence Breakers

#### Materials

- Agenda charted on the board or chart paper, or provided as a handout
- A meaningful talking piece
- A meaningful centerpiece
- Chart paper containing Community Agreements from Session 7
- AV equipment to play the video: [Mindful Breathing: Progressive Muscle Relaxation](#)
- Handout: Brave Space Tool 3: “Community Makers, Silence Breakers”

#### Opening Ceremony: Progressive Muscle Relaxation



Explain that some circle keepers start each circle with a mindful, grounding activity that helps people transition into the circle space. With time this can become a practice that can help us slow down, take a moment to “land” and check in with ourselves. These kinds of practices can also help us become more aware, grounded and present in the moment.

In the earlier session on courage, we talked about building a practice that we can come back to when the going gets tough, when we get anxious, stressed or when we get triggered, so that we can stay (more) present and engaged. Deep multi-sensory breathing and progressive muscle relaxation are the kind of practices that can help us with this. Some of you might have a mindfulness practice of your own and, as a result, are (more) comfortable leading your colleagues in a mindful, grounding activity. That may, however, not be true for all, which is why sometimes using a video or audio can help introduce these practices in a way that allows you to participate alongside your colleagues, rather than lead.

For today's opening ceremony, therefore, consider playing the American Lung Association's video: [Mindful Breathing: Progressive Muscle Relaxation](#). Invite people if comfortable to close their eyes, or to watch the video on screen as Candace Alexander, Director of Health Promotions, talks us through the practice.



At the end of the video, having “come back into the room,” ask participants to check in with themselves.

### Go-Round

Send a talking piece around, inviting people to share how they are in this moment.



#### Talk Participants Through Today's Agenda

- Opening Ceremony: Progressive Muscle Relaxation
- Check agenda
- Maggie Kuhn Quote & Reflection
- What Gets in the Way?
- Brave Space Tool: Community Makers, Silence Breakers
- Closing Ceremony: Martin Luther King, Jr. on the “Silence of Our Friends”

### Even When Your Voice Shakes

Read the words of Maggie Kuhn, founder of the Gray Panthers, an organization that works on issues of concern to the elderly, such as pension rights and age discrimination, but also to concern itself with larger public issues. She said:

“Speak your mind, even if your voice shakes.”

### Go-Round

Invite participants to consider what Maggie Kuhn might be talking about. Then send a talking piece around inviting people to talk about a time in their lives that they spoke their mind even as their voices shook.

Share an experience of your own when the talking piece comes back to you, then summarize the themes raised in the go-round.

If relevant, touch on the fact that our voice shaking is part of the body's stress and survival response. We might feel uncomfortable speaking truth to power, not knowing how it'll be received. It is why the stress response might kick in. Countering that with deep breathing and intentionally tightening and relaxing our muscles, can help to steady our voice so we can be heard more clearly. Not that there's anything wrong, of course

with speaking in a shaking voice, as long as we find our voice to speak up against wrongs, harms, misuse of power, oppression and injustice.

### What Gets in the Way of Speaking Up/Raising Our Voice?

Suspend the talking piece as you brainstorm a list of reasons of what gets in the way of people speaking up/raising their voice against wrongs, harms, misuse of power, oppression and injustice? Consider things like:

- Not knowing what to say, or how to say it
- Concern about how it will be received or perceived
- Fear of getting it wrong
- Not understanding the situation
- Not recognizing that harm is being done
- Fear of repercussions, etc.

Chart the reasons people contribute.

### Brave Space Tool: Community Makers, Silence Breakers

Distribute Morningside Center's Brave Space Tool: "Community Makers, Silence Breakers." Touch on the fact that many of us need tools like these sentence starters and questions, and practice with those tools, to help us interrupt, disrupt and stand up for ourselves and others in our community when harm is done.

Invite participants to read the handout collaboratively, going around the circle from one person to the next, reading a bullet point each, until each of the bullet points has been read out loud. Consider continuing around the circle until everyone has had a chance to read a bullet point, even if it means bullet points are read more than once.

Next, give participants a few minutes to review the silence breakers independently.

Invite them to think of a time when something stopped them from speaking up to interrupt a harmful interaction. What happened and how did it make them feel? Ask them as they look at the list of "Community Makers, Silence Breakers," to consider what they could have said to interrupt the harm, to improve the situation, and why.

### **Pair Share Reflection**

Ask participants in the circle to count off by twos. Invite the *ones* to turn to their right and the *twos* to turn to their left. If there's an odd number, consider joining the remaining one or have them join a triad. In their pairs, allow partners a few minutes to each share out the situation they thought of and the silence breaker they might have used. How might things have turned out differently? How do they feel about that?

### **Large Group Discussion**

Invite some volunteers to share out what they discussed in their pairs, while still maintaining confidentiality. How do they feel about these silence breakers? Can they see using them in these sessions with colleagues? What about with their students?

### **Closing Ceremony**

Invite participants to reflect on these closing words by Dr. Martin Luther King:

"In the end, we remember not the words of our enemies but the silence of our friends."

## **Handout: Brave Space Tool: Community Makers, Silence Breakers**

### **Community Makers / Silence Breakers**

- Can you say what you mean by...?
- I'd like to share another perspective on that.
- I'm feeling uncomfortable with...
- Are you saying...? (paraphrase)
- Can you say more about that?
- I am afraid I may offend someone, and please let me know if I do...
- I just felt something shift in the room. I'm wondering if anyone else felt it?
- I have heard that [x]. What are your thoughts on that?
- The author is arguing that only [x]. Can you help me understand that?
- I am having a "yeah, but" moment. Can you help me work through it?
- I am really nervous / scared / uncomfortable to say [x], but...
- I am still formulating this or developing my thinking on this, and...
- From my experience / perspective as (identity)...
- I am not available for that conversation. (and I'm not available "...," right now.)
- I want to acknowledge the silence in the room. Is there anything that needs to be spoken or cleared?

*"Community Makers" adapted from the work of social justice educators*

*Robin DiAngelo and Ozlem Sensoy*

## Session 9 – Restorative Circles, Part 2

### Materials:

- Agenda charted on the board or chart paper, or provided as a handout
- A meaningful talking piece
- A meaningful centerpiece
- Chart paper containing Community Agreements from Session 7
- Handout: “The Key Elements a Circle”
- Handout: “The Role of the Keeper”
- AV equipment to play videos:
- [Evergreen First Grade Circle](#), and
- [GEDSB Talking Circle/GEDSB Indigenous Education](#)

### Opening Ceremony: Abdominal or Diaphragmatic Breathing (also known as Belly Breathing with younger children)



Talk people through a few abdominal breaths by inviting them first to sit up straight, as straight as is comfortable for them. Have them imagine an invisible thread attached to the top of their head gently pulling them up, aligning their heads with their spine. Invite them to allow their faces to soften, their shoulders to drop and place both feet on the floor as they feel the floor underneath supporting them. Place one hand on their upper chest and the other just below their rib cage. This will allow them to feel their diaphragm move as they breathe. Now invite everyone to slowly take a breath in through their nose so that their stomach pushes out against their hand. And pause for a moment, before breathing out through their mouth, as their stomach retracts towards the spine. Pause again before taking the next breath in through the nose. Repeat five times and give people a moment to check in with themselves.

### Go-Round

Sending a talking piece around, invite people to share how they're doing.



## Talk Participants Through Today's Agenda

- Opening Ceremony: Abdominal, Diaphragmatic or Belly Breathing
- Check Agenda
- Review Circle Value and Guidelines
- The Circle Structure
- The Role of the Keeper
- Putting It All Together: First Grade Appreciation Circle
- Putting It All Together: A Talking Circle in Middle School
- Closing Ceremony: An Appreciation Circle

## Review Circle Values and Guidelines (Agreements)

Review the circle values the group contributed and the community guidelines co-created during the previous session. We'll be doing this regularly to ensure the circle values and practices become a grounding force of our circle practice rather than an activity that's done once, early in the process. Ask participants how they feel about the Values they contributed last time to the centerpiece to ground your work together. How about the guidelines? Ask participants if there are any values or guidelines they'd like to emphasize as we continue our work together. Is anything missing?

## The Circle Structure

Remind participants of the idea that the structure of the circle is tight, so that the sharing and listening can flow. Referencing Derick McRae from the video we watched during Session 6:

"Once they got the rules of the circle, and why they sit in the circle, because a circle doesn't have a beginning or end, everybody in the circle is equal and everyone has an equal say, once they understood the ground rules, then it was able to just flow."

Like with any structures and routines in the classroom, a regular practice, repeated over time, helps to introduce predictability and consistency into the classroom environment. This can provide a sense of safety for young people, especially for those students who deal with uncertainty elsewhere in their lives; students who may come from precarious, unpredictable home environments and those who've been impacted by trauma. The need for routine, consistency and predictability is especially acute for students impacted by trauma and meeting that need can substantially reduce the likelihood that students will

become dysregulated because of anxiety and uncertainty about what comes next. Consistent structures and routines can also help create spaces where young people can take ownership of their own learning and become more accountable to themselves and each other.

"Fostering student voice [moreover] can have powerful effects on engagement as students who take ownership over their own learning are more likely to enjoy being in school. Including students' voices also can have democratizing effects on both schools and classrooms as diverse perspectives are folded into how problems are framed and what solutions are then proposed. Providing spaces for students to voice their opinions and address issues affecting their lives can empower students to effect positive change in their communities. Such opportunities are particularly crucial for students of color whose voices, resources, and knowledge have historically been marginalized in and outside of schools."

## The Role of the Keeper

Explain that in addition to the core elements of circles introduced in the previous sessions, the role of the facilitator, known as "the keeper" in circles, is another important piece that sets the circle process apart from the more hierarchical educational approaches in our schools. The role of the keeper is different from that of the teacher in traditional (public) education. It pushes back on hierarchy and ownership of the educational process, the idea that only adults in schools have knowledge and wisdom to teach young people. Instead, it promotes the idea that education is a two-way street in which we are all teachers and we are all students and together we co-create knowledge.

In circles, we turn some of the traditional structures and assumptions in education on their head. Going beyond most roles in education, the keeper is seen not as a neutral facilitator, but as a participant as well as a host. The keeper invites circle participants into the space, sets a welcoming tone for all, while focusing on people's inclusion and safety to the best of their abilities. The keeper introduces the circle process and teaches "by doing," in that they model how to be in circle, abiding by the circle process, guidelines and values as they share responsibility for maintaining the integrity of the circle with the rest of the group.

Ultimately, in the circle, everyone is both keeper and participant. Everyone is both teacher and student.

Distribute “The Role of the Keeper” handout and invite participants to read *Building a Strong Circle Foundation* and *Sharing the Space Responsibly and Maintaining the Integrity of a Circle: Part 1*.

### **Pair Share**

Invite participants to share with each other, taking turns speaking and listening:

- Share your impressions, feelings, experiences, and/or thoughts about what you just read.
- How is the role of the keeper different from other roles you've played at school?
- What excites you about this approach? What concerns you about this approach? Why?

### **Large Group Share**

Invite some participants to share their IFET on the role of the keeper and any other reflections they have as a result of the reading and pair share.

### **Putting It All Together: First Grade Appreciation Circle (2:07 min)**

Play the following video: [Evergreen First Grade Circle](#). The video shows a first-grade circle, in which students express their appreciations for one another. Invite participants to pay attention to the key elements of circles introduced so far.

Make a mental (or physical) note when you see or hear about these key elements in the video.

Also let participants know that you'll be closing today's session with an appreciations go-round in which each participant will be invited to appreciate the person sitting next to them, just like the first graders do in the video.

Explain that you'll go straight into showing another video in which you'll see students and adults participating in circles while also reflecting on the circle process and how it has enriched their classroom.

### **Putting It All Together: A Talking Circle In a Middle School Classroom (7:11 min)**

Play the following video: [GEDSB Talking Circle/GEDSB Indigenous Education](#), inviting participants to, once again, pay attention to the core elements of circles that have been



introduced so far. Also invite them to listen for some of the other characteristics of the circle practice that we've explored.

### **Reflection: Pair Share**

Invite participants to share with each other, taking turns speaking and listening:

- What are any impressions, feelings, experiences or thoughts that came up for you during these videos?
- Specifically: what *feelings* came up for you when watching these videos? How do you think the students in the circles felt?
- What core elements of the circle were present (as far as you could tell) in these circles?

### **Large Group Share**

Invite some participants to share their IFET on the restorative circle practice portrayed in the videos. Make sure to touch on the structure of the circle.

Before closing your circle today, let people know that for your next session, you invite them to bring a talking piece of their own to the circle. Have them think about a meaningful item that they might use with their students when they start facilitating their own circles in their classrooms.

### **Closing Ceremony: An Appreciation Circle**

Thinking back to the first-grade circle, invite participants to go around the circle, one after the other appreciating the person sitting next to them in the circle.

## Additional Resources: Session 9

### Additional Written Resources:

["Building Community with Restorative Circles"](#) by Marieke Van Woerkom, *Edutopia*

["Uplifting the Voices of Students of Color Through Restorative Practices and Civic Engagement"](#) by Jessie Tobin, Aaron Leo, & Kristen C. Wilcox for *NYKids*

### Additional Video Resources:

[Suzie Miller GEDSB Talking Circle](#), Suzie Miller of the Grand Erie District School Board, is a First Nations Instructional Coach who talks about the Talking Circles she introduces into classrooms

[Using Dialogue Circles to Support Classroom Management](#) in Elementary School (play through 3:10 min) - Note, what comes after the 3:10 minute mark is presented as a restorative intervention, but it's not. Name calling, shaming, blaming are antithetical to restorative practices.

[Restorative Practices | Community Building Circles](#) in Middle School (1:54 min)

## Handout: Key Elements of a Circle



### Key Elements of a Circle

#### The structure of the circle



#### Centerpiece



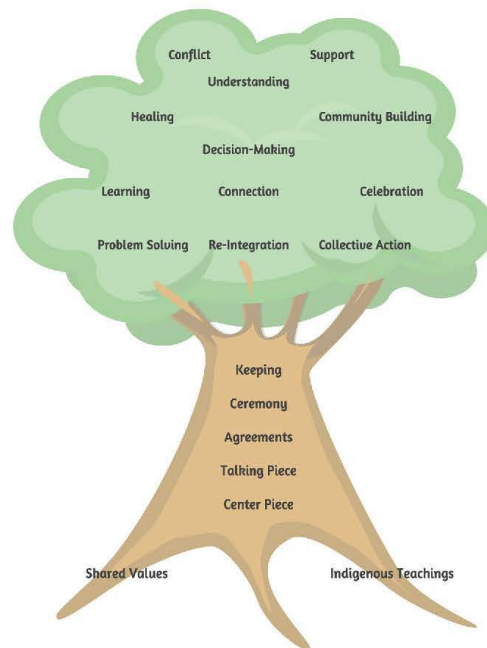
Talking piece (globe, figurine)

Opening and closing ceremonies

Values (see centerpiece image of index cards)

Community practices, guidelines, agreements

Role of the keeper



## **Handout: Role of the Keeper**

The role of the Keeper in a Circle is multifaceted. The Keeper plays the role of organizer, host, backstop, manager, troubleshooter and overall guide.

### **Building a Strong Circle Foundation**

As the Keeper, you are responsible for the Circle preparation and for arranging the space. You want to make sure to familiarize yourself with the people who are invited to the Circle so that you know what topics, questions and prompts may resonate. You also want to get *yourself* ready so that you can be fully present with the group. This means getting enough sleep and nutrition and whatever other practices allow you to transition into the Circle space with focus and awareness.

When the time comes, you are responsible for getting the process started and setting a welcoming and respectful tone. You may introduce yourself and provide participants with a quick overview of what Circles are about. But Circles are the ultimate in experiential learning, as far as giving voice to all, sharing the space, and learning by doing. So as soon as participants have a sense of the Circle process, you want to get started. This is NOT a presentation! An opening ceremony and an introductory round of the talking piece get people right into things.

Early on, invite participants to create their own Circle guidelines and discuss values that are important to them. In Circles the goal is to turn the "reigns" over to the participants as much as possible. Building the space collectively at the onset is one way to do this and can help when things get challenging down the road, when difficult conversations are introduced, strong feelings are shared, or conflict arises.

### **Sharing the Space and Responsibility**

Circles are about sharing the space and responsibility. Everyone in a Circle is invited to be both participant and Keeper. That includes you. As a Keeper you are not a neutral outsider. You are part of the process. This means you share of yourself just as you ask students to share of themselves. Being a Keeper means putting yourself out there. It requires trust in the process and in your students, even when things don't quite go as planned.

And though you collectively build and manage the Circle space with your students, as the Keeper you are also the backstop. You have the ultimate responsibility, especially when the going gets tough, when there is the potential for things to get dicey or unsafe.

The Circle can be a powerful vessel to hold and support difficult conversations, diverse points of view, conflicts and strong emotions, but it needs to be built and sustained. The Keeper is there to protect the integrity of the Circle process. This is especially important when people share difficult experiences or opinions, when intense feelings are voiced or displayed.

Circles can have profound emotional moments that draw everyone in and build empathy. They can be healing for some, but such moments can also be uncomfortable to the point that students may act out. Circles can trigger participants. They can become unstable if the foundation is shaky or if the Circle is not managed well. A strong and sensitive guide is needed to navigate groups through such experiences.

### **Maintaining the Integrity of a Circle: Part 1**

As a Keeper you can take different measures to maintain a Circle's integrity, depending on the issue at hand. Sometimes it suffices to acknowledge the feelings in the Circle, to recognize that things are tough, and to maybe ask participants what they need from the Circle at this time.

During a particularly difficult go-round, the Circle Keeper may ask participants to breathe and take a few seconds before or after someone speaks. This allows what was said to sink in, for some time to pass, emotions to settle, and thoughts to be collected, before the next person shares.

Another way to slow down the Circle process when things get tense or heated is to ask participants to first paraphrase what the person before them said, or what the person they'd like to respond to said. Only then, can they share themselves. You could even introduce prompts like, I'd like to (dis) agree with what x said when [paraphrase what x said]; I was triggered by what x said when [paraphrase what x said]; what I heard x say was [paraphrase what x said].

The Circle process inherently slows down any group dialogue by the mere fact of the talking piece going around in order from one person to the next. This can allow those who

might get triggered to calm down before speaking because they have to wait for the talking piece to come around.

Revisiting the Circle guidelines/agreements and values at the start of a challenging Circle can help students reflect on what they discussed and agreed to earlier (in the year). It can serve as a reminder of what it means to work toward being our best selves in Circles and put the responsibility of continuing to keep the space welcoming and safe on the participants as well as the Keeper. This invokes the idea of a Circle of co-Keepers and reminds students that this is *their* Circle.

You could also ask students to pick a value they think will be important as we talk about [challenging topic] or pick a value that might be challenging for them today as we reflect on e.g. what happened last week and try to come up with solutions going forward.

Of course, in Circles (as in class) we don't always know what will happen ahead of time. Sometimes, when students share authentically of themselves in especially deep ways, other students don't know how to handle what it brings up for them. They may feel uneasy and react by having side conversations or giggling. They may say things under their breath, and as such breach the Circle guidelines agreed to earlier in the year.

When possible, as the Keeper, try to address breaches when the talking piece comes back to you so as not to breach the Circle guidelines yourself. As the Keeper you constantly seek to model behavior aligned with Circle guidelines and values. Modeling is a powerful way to convey messages and teach. It may require you to sit with discomfort as the talking piece makes its way back to you, but it also gives students an opportunity to step in and say something.

In class we are often the ones responsible for running things. In Circles we look to share that responsibility as fully as people are ready to accept it. It's a great moment when students start to reinforce Circle guidelines themselves, when they call each other on disruptive or hurtful behavior, when they start taking responsibility for their Circle. For that to happen, we need to be able to leave space and hang back a bit. When students decide to step in and call their fellow students on disruptive or disrespectful behavior ("you don't have the talking piece," or "that wasn't very nice," or "yo, respect!") consider recognizing their support when the talking piece comes back to you. Point out that people are starting to take responsibility for the Circle and are stepping into the role of co-Keeper. You may want to express appreciation for their support in addressing behavior and say something about the respectful nature of such comments if needed.

So in the case of minor breaches that aren't mean spirited or intentionally unkind, consider continuing to model active listening and respecting the talking piece. This allows space for students to step in but if needed, you could also use body language—a look might work, a hand gesture, or a calming and quiet shhhhhhhh, as the talking piece continues around the Circle. These non-verbal cues can remind students of Circle guidelines as they are made aware of their behavior. And when the talking piece comes back to you, you can address the behavior verbally: acknowledge the giggling, the speaking out of turn, the breach of Circle guidelines.

Rather than the usual reprimands or telling students how you want them to behave, the power of Circles lies in speaking from our own experience and inviting people to reflect on theirs:

E.g., I understand that it might be difficult to listen to the stories we just heard. It can be uncomfortable. Some people express their discomfort through giggling or side conversations or other ways that detract from our Circle. I know that for me, if I were sharing, I might not want to continue if that were happening. I might not feel particularly comfortable sharing of myself when people are giggling or having side conversations, seemingly disinterested in what I have to say. I wonder if this is true for others in the Circle as well. So I'd just like you to reflect on your behavior and think about the impact it may have on others. Let's see if we can get back to the Circle guidelines we agreed to earlier in the year.

As a Keeper you can also check in with students individually after a particularly tense or emotional Circle. Acknowledging challenging feelings from the Circle would be one way to start any such conversation because it tends to help people calm down—"You appeared frustrated when ." or "I know you get anxious when .." Allow the student to respond and listen actively to what they have to say. When the student is calm you might invite them to paraphrase what they heard, share their perspective, reflect on their behavior, and ask them for help in working things through when you reconvene the Circle. These can be useful approaches to redirecting behavior and roles that people tend to take on in groups.

In the heat of the moment, because people are triggered or because of old habits, Circle guidelines may be breached to the point that the Circle is at risk of losing its integrity. Students may be interrupting the process, speaking out of turn, or using disrespectful or hurtful language in potentially explosive ways. If no one else in the Circle steps in to remind the group of the guidelines or values, it is up to the Keeper to do so.

A pause or short time out, asking students to take a few deep breaths, and/or asking them to regroup themselves by looking over the values at the center of the Circle, can allow students to calm back down and be ready to reengage in the Circle process. It's a reminder of what they agreed on needing from the Circle earlier in the process. You may even ask them to recommit to a value that is particularly challenging for them in this moment.

But this may not be sufficient when things escalate to the point of the Circle starting to unravel. Students themselves often don't feel comfortable stepping in when such escalation occurs either. It is at times like these that you need to step in to explain that the Circle is no longer working, it is no longer constructive or safe to continue. A time out or other way to help hit the reset button may be necessary. Acknowledge that you are temporarily suspending the talking piece and pausing the Circle so that we can reestablish a safety.

One way to do this would be to have students put back their desks and chairs to do a quiet reflection exercise. This can be done through journaling or by simply having students close their eyes while you talk them through a set of questions (see below). Have them consider the feelings and thoughts the Circle brought up for them. Why do they think this is? What did they hear? What do they think others in the Circle heard? Did other people in the Circle think/feel similarly? What do they think was underneath what was said? What might

people's needs have been? What were your needs? What were your contributions to the Circle? What was their impact on others, i.e. were they helpful/harmful to the dialogue? How and why? What is one thing you think you could do to help support the Circle in situations like these going forward? What is one thing you'd like to get out of the Circle next time we convene? What is one thing you might do to repair, restore or help support the integrity of the Circle when we reconvene?

### **Maintaining the Integrity of a Circle, Part 2**

When sexist, racist, or other derogatory and offensive language is used, students may not be triggered to respond in ways that explicitly breach Circle norms in the moment. Instead, they might end up silenced, feeling marginalized and unsafe to the point of no longer wanting to participate in the Circle. You may never hear about the impact unless you speak up as the Keeper, modeling how to address hurtful and oppressive behavior, trying to restore safety to the Circle.



As best you can, try to not to reprimand or chastise, as this may alienate the speaker and cause them to shut down without being able to learn from the experience. Try to speak from the "I" position about how such language negatively impacts you and the communities you are a part of. There's good reason to believe others in the Circle are impacted as well, especially those who are associated with the slurs. This then becomes a teachable moment because not all students are aware of the impact of their language, the weight behind their words, the histories of oppression and damage done over centuries. So if no one in the Circle speaks up, you need to take the lead, teaching how such language and behavior is a breach of Circle guidelines and will not be tolerated in this Circle.

Even harder to recognize is when students are being marginalized and silenced in what might appear to be more subtle ways, especially if you're not part of the marginalized group yourself. You may not be attuned to the language or behavior used to make a particular group of students feel unsafe or unwelcome. Sometimes our own implicit bias keeps us from being aware; sometimes we've been submerged in the oppressive culture too long to recognize our own role in it.

And then there are the times when things get said or done in a Circle that intentionally make the space unsafe. Things may be said, stories might be told to insinuate and intimidate.

Laughter and commenting, as was mentioned before, can be as a result of participants' own discomfort but similar behavior can be much less innocent when used to target and harass. As the Keeper it's important to be sensitive to such behavior and language, to distinguish between the innocent and more intentionally harmful behavior, so that you can pick up on the more serious Circle breaches when they occur. These too are teachable moments, to

show that it's important to use what power we have to stand up to bullying behavior and be allies to those who are targeted.

Intimidation and intentional harm, whether in Circles or other settings, needs to be stopped. And even if we're not sure of what's actually happening, it's always better to be safe than sorry. If you don't know exactly what to do or say, how to do or say it, it's still important to interrupt the behavior somehow. Do or say something. With everything you do, or don't do, you send a message about what's acceptable and what isn't. And if you

find out afterward, you were wrong about the intent and responded in a harsher way than may have been necessary you can always come back, admit your mistake and, if needed, apologize. The message you want to send is that you are vigilant when it comes to maintaining the integrity of the Circle and keeping the participants in it safe. The other message is that we all make mistakes and that we can learn from those mistakes and, if we are willing, repair and restore any harm we might have done.

We try in Circles, as best we can, to have students learn from their behavior and share from their experience. This can happen when we create a space that is safe, safe not only to stand up for ourselves, but safe also to make and own our mistakes. This allows us to learn from our behaviors, even when we inflict harm on others. Such learning is more likely to happen when there is a generous, forgiving tone in the Circle, one that doesn't make people feel any more defensive than they might already be feeling after making mistakes. One that doesn't make people feel afraid to make those mistakes in the first place. The Keeper sets this tone through her actions and behaviors.

### **Our Best Selves**

The role of the Keeper in a Circle is multifaceted. Not only does the Keeper play the role of organizer, host, backstop, manager, troubleshooter and overall guide; the Keeper also needs to model being their best self throughout it all. This means remaining grounded, fully present, and cultivating a keen awareness of one's own triggers and biases. It also requires developing a tolerance for emotionally difficult moments, being able to sit with discomfort and anxiety, and having the humility to reach out to others in the Circle when there are questions you are unsure of. Finally, the highly effective Keeper trusts that Circle participants can bring their best selves forward and work through difficult situations. It is in these moments that Circles can produce magic.

## Session 10 – Restorative Circles, Part 3

### Materials:

- A meaningful talking piece
- A meaningful centerpiece
- Personal talking piece that participants brought with them
- Chart paper containing Community Agreements from Session 7
- AV equipment & ability to play video: [Restorative Justice in Oakland Schools: Tier 1. Community Building Circle](#)
- Next Session Prep: [Glenn E. Singleton and Cyndie Hay's "Beginning Courageous Conversations About Race"](#)

### Opening Ceremony

Send a talking piece around, inviting participants to share a “rose,” “thorn” or “stem” in their lives right now. A “rose” represents something positive, a “thorn” something negative and a “stem,” something that helps to ground them.



### Talk Participants Through Today's Agenda

- Opening Ceremony: A Rose, Thorn or Stem
- Check Agenda
- Circle Practice
- The Talking Piece
- Putting It All Together: 9th Grade Circle on Being a Teenager
- Closing Ceremony: Two Word Check-Out

### Circle Practice

Having watched the Elementary and Middle School Circle videos in the previous session, explain that today we'll practice being in circle and then watch one more circle video (this one in high school).

### Go-Round: The Talking Piece

**Go-round 1:** Send a talking piece around, inviting participants one after the other, to share the talking piece they brought to the circle today and explain why it has meaning to them.

Invite them to think about how they might introduce the piece to their students in the context of classroom circles.

Before passing the talking piece on to the next person, invite participants to place their talking piece in the center of the circle as they continue building their centerpiece.

**Go-round 2:** Send the talking piece around a second time to ask for connections, reflections or additions based on what they heard from their colleagues.

Explain that a second go-round like this can be useful when facilitating circles for a variety of reasons. It can give those who may have passed on the first go-round (because they're shy, needed more time to think or formulate their thoughts, etc.) another chance to share. Sending a talking piece around again for the same prompt promotes ideas of "coming around again" and second chances. A second go-round like this can help to build and deepen connections in the circle. It can also provide those who are inspired to say more after listening to others, a chance to build on those ideas. In some cases, people have additional thoughts, separate from earlier, that they'd like to share on a second go-round. For different reasons, second (or third) go-rounds for the same prompt can be powerful in nature and deepen people's sharing.

### Putting It All Together: 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Circle on Being a Teenager (9:31 min)

Play the video: [Restorative Justice in Oakland Schools: Tier 1. Community Building Circle](#) inviting participants to, once again, pay attention to the core elements of circles introduced so far:

- The Structure of the Circle/Sitting in a Circle
- Opening Ceremony
- The Centerpiece
- The Talking Piece
- Identifying Values
- Generating Guidelines
- Guiding Prompts/Questions for Storytelling
- Closing Ceremony
- The Role of the Keeper

Have them pull up the "Key Elements of a Circle" handout as needed and make a mental (or physical) note when you see or hear them discussed in the video. What do the students and teacher say about these core elements? What do they say about the impact of circles?



## Journaling

Invite participants to take out their journals. Say something about the Invite participants to choose one of the following journaling prompts that most resonates with them and spend 5-7 minutes putting their thoughts, feelings and understandings to paper.

Jot down any impressions, feelings, experiences or thoughts that came up for you during this video.

- Specifically, what feelings came up for you watching this video? How do you think the students in the circle felt?
- What core elements of the circle were present—as far as you could tell—in this circle? What did the teacher and students say about these elements?

As circle keeper, be sure to journal as well for your own personal reflection and healing.

## Large Group Share

Invite some participants to share their IFET on the restorative circle practice portrayed in the videos or other parts of their journal entry. Make sure to touch on the structure of the circle.

## Closing Ceremony: Two Word Check-Out

If time allows, invite participants to share one word describing how they were feeling when they walked into the space and one word of how they're feeling right now. If time is brief, invite participants to send a fist bump around the circle instead.

## Next Session Prep:

Like we explored in session 3, it takes courage to share our thoughts, feelings and reflections on the issues we're exploring together. Read "[Beginning Courageous Conversations About Race](#)" before the next session where we will discuss more about brave space tools.

## Session 11 – Brave Space Tools, Part 2

### Materials:

- Agenda charted on the board or chart paper, or provided as a handout
- Handout: Brave Space Tool 1: “Social Justice Understandings”
- Handout: Brave Space Tool 2: “Social Justice Guidelines”
- Chart paper containing Community Guidelines/Agreements from Session 7

### Opening Ceremony

Read the following quote out loud and invite participants to reflect on it:

“Creating a democratic atmosphere in which everyone participates means both putting ourselves forward and including others. To do this we must understand the dynamics rooted in issues of power and do things which counter them.” (Adair & Howell\*, 2001)

Invite a few volunteers to share out their reflections related to the quote. Drawing on what is shared, explain that today we’ll be building on the notion of circles as democratic spaces. We’ll be exploring and unpacking this notion of “dynamics rooted in issues of power” and introduce tools that will help us counter them.

**Note on Quote Sources:** Margo Adair & Sharon Howell offer organizational consulting and development for intentional communities and other organizations focusing on healing issues of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation.



### Talk Participants Through Today's Agenda

- Opening Ceremony: A Democratic Atmosphere
- Check Agenda
- Introduction to Brave Space Tools
- Closing Ceremony: Desmond Tutu on Oppression and Neutrality

## Introduction to Brave Space Tools

Frame today's learnings by reminding participants that it is important in our schools and classrooms to establish guidelines for classroom discussions collaboratively.

Social Justice educators and facilitators Robin DiAngelo and Özlem Sensoy have examined "[the limits of these guidelines](#) in achieving the goals of social justice education." They argue that too often, the guidelines agreed upon "are not responsive to power relations. Rather than creating a supportive space for dialogue, these guidelines actually can interfere with achieving social justice education goals." For this reason, the brave space tools that we'll explore in today's session, are based on their "efforts to engage alternative strategies for responding to power in the social justice classroom."

## Part 1: Social Justice Understandings

People who put their efforts into dismantling racism and other oppressions, have found that it is important to provide transparency about the assumptions, perspectives and practices underlying their work.

At Morningside Center, we have developed a set of what we call "brave space tools," that help us engage in topics where the words that are used often come with emotions and assumptions that are not always explicit or spoken. These brave space tools can help us to engage in these topics in more meaningful and productive ways.

Distribute the Social Justice Understandings handout, Morningside Center's Brave Space Tool 1, and touch on the fact that it might take some time to fully grasp these understandings, more time than we'll have today, but that just as with the agreements the group created earlier, this can be a document and tool to return to over time as we continue to learn about culture and race, discrimination and oppression.

Read the handout together, going around the circle, or have different volunteers read a bullet each, popcorn style, until each of the bullets has been read out loud. At that point, give participants a few minutes to review the understandings by themselves.

## Pair Share

In pairs, invite participants to take turns sharing their impressions, feelings, experiences and thoughts. Each partner will have two minutes to share while the other listens. After two minutes, ask partners to switch roles, so speakers become listeners, and listeners become speakers.

### **Large Group Share**

Back in the large group, invite a few volunteers to share an impression, feeling, experience or thought, reminding participants to maintain confidentiality.

## **Part 2: Social Justice Guidelines**

Distribute the Social Justice Guidelines hand out, Morningside Center's Brave Space Tool 2. Again, you may not have time to fully grasp these guidelines today, and you can come back to it, as we continue to introduce you to a variety of Brave Conversations in this guide.

Like with the Social Justice Understandings, read the handout collaboratively, going around the table, circle, or room and/or have different volunteers read a bullet each, till each of the bullets has been read out loud. At that point, give participants a few minutes to review the guidelines by themselves.

### **Pair Share**

In pairs, invite participants to share their impressions, feelings, experiences and thoughts, taking turns. Each partner will have 2 minutes to share, while the other listens. After two minutes, ask partners to switch roles, speakers become listeners and listeners become speakers.

### **Large Group Share**

Back in the large group, invite a few volunteers to share an impression, feeling, experience or thought, reminding participants to maintain confidentiality.

## **Part 3: Guidelines (Agreements) from Session 7**

Turn to the group's guidelines from Session 7 (again) and review them by reading them out loud one after the other. Ask participants to reflect on and discuss their guidelines in some of the following ways:

- Based on some of the work we've done in recent sessions, are you still good with the guidelines we came up with in Session 7? Do we need to add any new agreements? Does anything need editing?
- Consider the Social Justice Guidelines we just reviewed and discussed. Compare and contrast them to our guidelines from Session 7. Is anything missing that you'd like to add at this time?



- Which of the guidelines would you like to emphasize as we continue to build a brave space together where topics of discrimination and oppression, race and racism, power and privilege can be explored in (more) meaningful ways?

## Closing Ceremony

Read the following quote by South African anti-apartheid and human rights activist, cleric and theologian Desmond Tutu out loud and reflect on it in the context of today's session:

"If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has its foot on the tail of a mouse and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality."

## Additional Resources: Session 11

### **Additional Written Resources:**

["Respect Differences?: Challenging the Common Guidelines in Social Justice Education"](#)

by Özlem Sensoy and Robin DiAngelo

## Handout: Brave Space Tools: Social Justice Understandings

Social justice for us includes the recognition that:

- All people are individuals, but we are also members of socially constructed groups.
- Society is stratified, and social groups are valued unequally.
- Social groups that are valued more highly have greater access to resources and this access is structured into the institutions and cultural norms.
- Social injustice is real and exists today.
- Relations of unequal power are constantly being enacted at both the micro (individual) and macro (institutional) level.
- We are all socialized to comply in these areas. (Many of us who support social justice do not admit that we are taught to comply in systems of oppression and privilege. Indeed, being for social justice often seems to function as a disclaimer of any such compliance.)
- Those who claim to be for social justice must intentionally deepen their self-awareness and self-reflect.
- Those who claim to be for social justice must strategically act from that claim in ways that challenge social injustice.
- This action requires a commitment to an ongoing and life-long process.

From the writings of Robin DiAngelo and Ozlem Sensoy



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## Handout: Brave Space Tools: Social Justice Guidelines

### Guidelines for Our Time Together

- Make a goal of being open to and curious about new learnings. Be willing to grapple with new ideas.
- Acknowledge that there is a significant difference between an opinion and knowledge based on sound information. Everyone has an opinion. This is different from experience gained over time, studying a subject, practicing a discipline and/or scholarship.
- Know that you can always come back to your opinions, so you do not have to hold onto them tightly.
- Let go of personal anecdotal evidence and look at broader group-level patterns and experiences.
- If you feel defensive reactions to information or experiences, try to ask yourself: What am I able to learn in this moment about myself? Try to open up and resist shutting down or out.
- We are individuals AND we are members of socially constructed groups. These groups are unequally valued in society. Recognize how your social group identities inform your reactions to both the information presented and the presenters.
- There is a difference between “safety” and “comfort.” Being safe from violence and/or the threat of violence is an ongoing consideration for members of some racial groups.
- “Discomfort” is critical for growing racial equity.
- Keep focused on: “What does this mean for me and my life?”
- Identify your learning edge and push it. How can I take this deeper? How am I applying in practice what I already know?
- Be mindful of “taking space and making space” when making contributions.

*Adapted from the work of social justice educators Robin DiAngelo and Ozlem Sensoy*



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## Session 12 – My Students, My Community

### Materials:

- Agenda charted on the board or chart paper, or provided as a handout
- A meaningful talking piece
- A meaningful centerpiece
- Chart paper containing Community Agreements from Session 7
- Multi-colored index cards
- Journals and pens

### Opening Ceremony

Consider and reflect on the following anonymous quote:

“The kids that need the most love will often ask for it in the most unloving ways.”

Invite a few volunteers to share out their thoughts as they think about their students.



### Talk Participants Through Today's Agenda

- Opening Ceremony: Kids Needing Love
- Check Agenda
- Journaling: Reflecting on a Student
- Dedication Ceremony
- Closing Ceremony: A Takeaway



## Journaling

Invite participants to think about the students in their school, their families, their communities. Now think about one student in particular, who they would like to provide some extra care or support to. Write their name down, first name only. Now jot down some of the issue(s) or concern(s) you believe this student is facing. What are some things you could do to support this student? What are possible obstacles to implementing these supports and what might you do to overcome them? What supports do you need to be of support to (and with) this student (and others)?

As circle keeper, be sure to journal as well for your own personal reflection and healing.

## Go-Round: Dedication Ceremony

Distribute index cards and ask participants to write the name of student they'd like to provide extra care or support to on the index card. Then send a talking piece around, inviting participants to share:

- the name of the young person they wrote on their cards (if they feel comfortable)
- a few words about why they picked this young person
- something they have done, could do or will continue to do, to support this young person

Before passing the talking piece to their neighbor, invite participants to contribute their index card (their student's name) to the centerpiece, as you start to personalize your centerpiece. Consider inviting participants to take a beat and/or take a breath for each student who is named as the card gets placed in the centerpiece.

## Closing Ceremony

Send a talking piece around, inviting participants to share one thing they do to take care of themselves.

## Additional Resources: Session 12

### Additional Written Resources:

*My Grandmother's Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies* by Resmaa Menakem

*The Body Keeps the Score: Brain, Mind, and Body in the Healing of Trauma* by Bessel van der Kolk

"The Future of Healing: Shifting from Trauma Informed Care to Healing Centered Engagement" by Shawn Ginwright

*Hope and Healing in Urban Education: How Urban Activists and Teachers are Reclaiming Matters of the Heart* by Shawn Ginwright

### Additional Video Resources:

Dr. Bruce Perry created a series of videos for educators called Stress, Trauma and the Brain: Insights for Educators

- Episode 1: The Neurosequential Model
- Episode 2: How Stress Impacts Brain Function
- Episode 3: The Power of Connection
- Episode 4: Regulating Yourself and Your Classroom
- Episode 5: Educator Strategies for the Classroom

Jacob Ham explains the impact of trauma for educators in two videos:

1. Understanding what happens to a brain impacted by trauma: Trauma Brain versus Survival Brain
2. What we as educators can do to create trauma sensitive school and classroom environments Trauma Informed Starts with You

## Session 13 – Wheel of Holistic Health

### Materials:

- Agenda charted on the board or chart paper, or provided as a handout
- A meaningful talking piece
- A meaningful centerpiece
- Chart paper containing Community Agreements from Session 7
- Handout: "Wheel of Holistic Health"

### Opening Ceremony

Ask participants if they know who Audre Lorde is. Elicit and explain that Audre Lorde was a self-described lesbian, mother, warrior, and poet, who dedicated her life and creative talent to confronting racism, sexism, classism, heterosexism, homophobia and injustice overall. She said:

"Caring for myself is not self-indulgence, it is self-preservation, and that is an act of political warfare."

Send a talking piece around, inviting participants to share their reflections on this quote based on the work we've been doing so far, recognizing:

- a) Who Audre Lorde was and how Black people, women, and queer people are valued and cared for in this country, and/or
- b) How it relates to education in this country, public education, and public educators, in particular? How are they (we) valued and cared for in this country?



### Talk Participants Through Today's Agenda

- Opening Ceremony: Audre Lorde on Self-Care
- Check Agenda
- Wheel of Holistic Health
- Closing Ceremony: What Brings you Joy



## Wheel of Holistic Health: Independent Work

Distribute the “Wheel of Holistic Health” handout. Referencing earlier sessions in which we touched on the fact that, as human beings, we are holistic, explain that when we speak of educator self-care, it makes sense we look at self-care in all dimensions of our lives represented by the four quadrants in this wheel.

**Step 1:** Invite participants to write what they do to take care of themselves in each area of their lives: emotional, mental, spiritual and physical. Consider providing some examples of your own self-care practices for each of the quadrants. Give participants up to ten minutes to work on their wheels.

**Step 2:** Invite participants to look over their self-care practices for each of the quadrants of their Wheel of Holistic Health. Which of the quadrants contain more/fewer practices? Are there practices that fit in more than one quadrant?

**Step 3:** Invite participants to think about a possible practice for each of the quadrants that they'd like to add, going forward. Ask them to write that practice on the outside of the corresponding quadrant, as a goal. Provide an example of your own to illustrate this step.

## Wheel of Holistic Health: Pair Share

In their pairs, invite participants to reflect on their wheels of holistic health together by sharing out in response to the following prompts:

- Something you felt good about (1.5 min x 2)
- One thing that surprised you (1.5 min x 2)
- An area for growth, opportunity or concern (1.5 min x 2)

Remind them that they should take turns as listeners and speakers. Before they begin sharing, ask participants to decide who will speak first.

## Wheel of Holistic Health: Large Group Share Out

Invite participants to share what this process of reflecting on their self-care was like for them, as well as any insights they gained or newfound goals.

As Shawn Ginwright reminds us in his seminal 2018 article, [The Future of Healing: Shifting from Trauma Informed Care to Healing Centered Engagement](#):

"Adult providers need healing too! Healing centered engagement requires that we consider how to support adult providers in sustaining their own healing and well-being. We cannot presume that adulthood is a final, "trauma-free" destination. Much of our training and practice is directed at young peoples' healing but rarely focuses on the healing that is required of adults to be an effective youth practitioner. Healing is an ongoing process that we all need, not just young people who experience trauma. The well-being of the adult youth worker is also a critical factor in supporting young peoples' well-being. While we are learning more about the causes and effects of secondary [trauma] on adults, we know very little about the systems of support required to restore and sustain well-being for adults."

Suggest that participants display their wheel of holistic self-care in a place at work, or at home, where they'll see it regularly, reminding them of the various ways in which they might practice self-care.

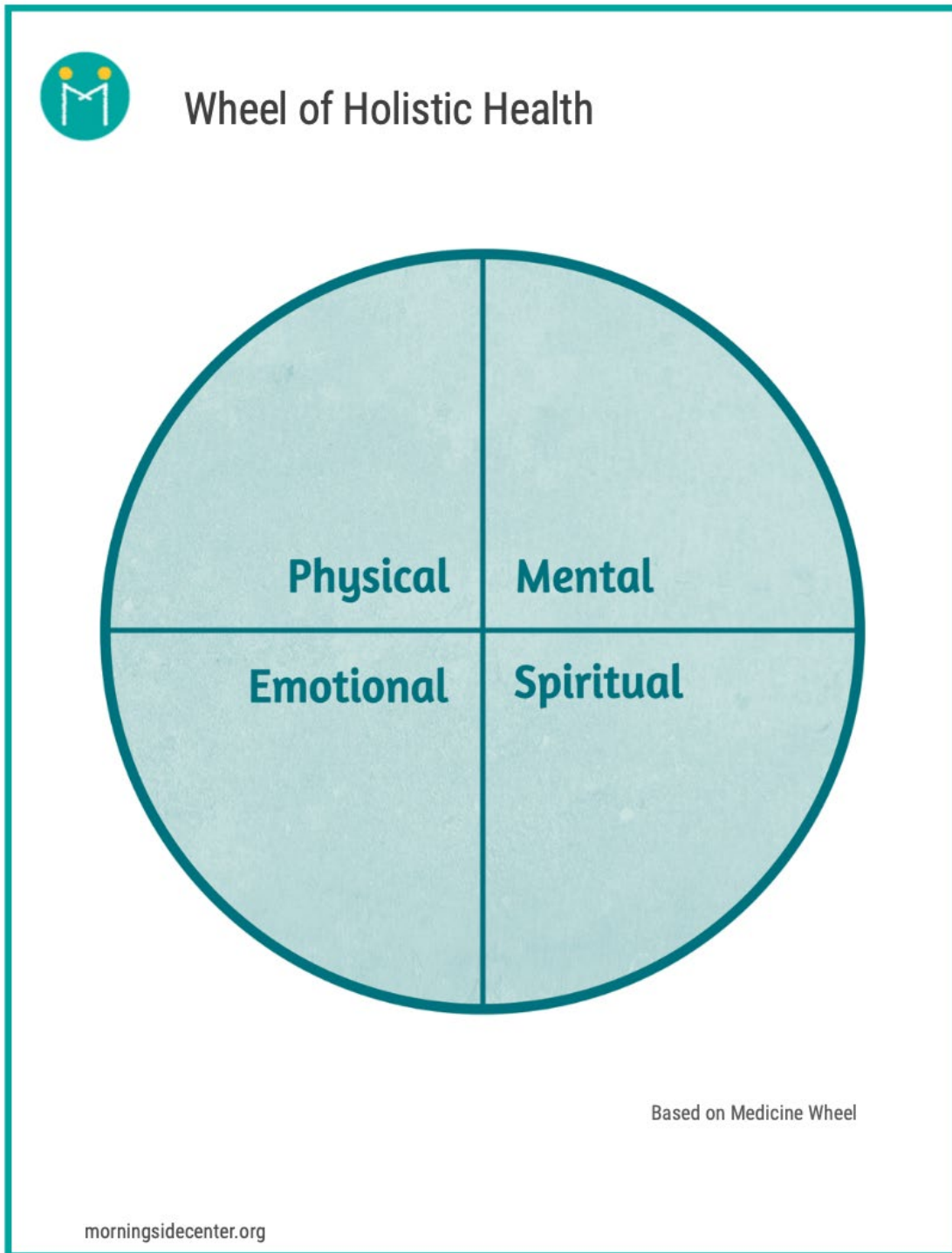
## Closing Ceremony

The Dutch have a saying:

"Shared sorrow is half the sorrow and shared joy is double the joy."

Invite participants to consider what this means in the context of today's session. Next, send a talking piece around inviting participants to share something recently that brought them joy.

## Handout: Wheel of Holistic Health



## Session 19 - Culture Share

### Materials:

- Agenda charted on the board or chart paper, or provided as a handout
- A meaningful talking piece
- A meaningful centerpiece
- A meaningful cultural item to share out
- Chart paper containing Community Agreements from Session 7
- Next Session Prep: Bobbie Harro's ["The Cycle of Socialization"](#)

**Facilitator/Circle Keeper Note:** Prior to holding this session, invite participants to find a tangible or intangible item that is significant or important to them, in that it represents or reflects an aspect of their personal, family, or social identity (think race, class, gender, religion, sexual orientation, age, and more). This "something" could be a tangible item or intangible. Examples include a photograph, a piece of art, an artifact, jewelry, fabric, a song, a recipe, etc. Invite participants to think deeply about the assignment and "bring" this item or artifact with them for this session. Explain that we'll share a brief story about what we bring, why we chose it, and why it is important to us.

### Opening Ceremony: Culture by Marcus Garvey

Invite participants to reflect on the following quote by Jamaican-born Black nationalist and leader of the pan-Africanism movement, Marcus Garvey:

"A people without the knowledge of their past history, origin and culture is like a tree without roots."

Invite some participants to share out their thoughts in connection to the meaning of this quote as well the other tree imagery we've been using in the context of community and culture in our sessions so far.



### Talk Participants Through Today's Agenda

- Opening Ceremony: Marcus Garvey on Culture
- Check Agenda
- Cultural Share Go-Rounds
- Closing Ceremony: Cesar Chavez on Cultural Diversity

### Cultural Share\*

Remind participants of the assignment you gave them prior to this session: to “bring” a meaningful cultural item or artifact to share with the rest of the group today.

This activity is best done in the full group, preferably as a restorative circle, with a talking piece going from one person to the next as an invitation to share while everyone else practices mindful listening.

**Go-Round 1:** Start by sharing *your* cultural artifact and explain its personal significance. Pass the talking piece to the person next to you, inviting them to share their artifact and its personal meaning. Continue to pass the talking piece from one person to the next in order, around the circle, giving everyone the opportunity to share.

**Go-Round 2:** If time allows, send the talking piece around a second time for any positive connections, reflections or additions, based on what people heard during the first round.

*\* This is a variation on an activity developed by Tanya O. Williams called [Culture Chest Activity](#) © Readings for Diversity and Social Justice, Second Edition, Routledge, 2010*

**Note:** As you close today's session, re-emphasize the importance of culture and the power it has when acknowledged, honored, valued and celebrated.

### Closing Ceremony

Invite participants to reflect on the following quote by Mexican-American labor and civil rights activist, Cesar Chavez:

“We need to help students and parents cherish and preserve the ethnic and cultural diversity that nourishes and strengthens this community.”

Send a talking piece around to invite people's closing reflection as you connect what Cesar Chavez said to the activity they participated in today.

### Next Session Prep:



Here is the next article for the group to read independently: [The Cycle of Socialization](#). Encourage the group to take notes and write any thoughts and reflections they have in the margins. Encourage them to reread.

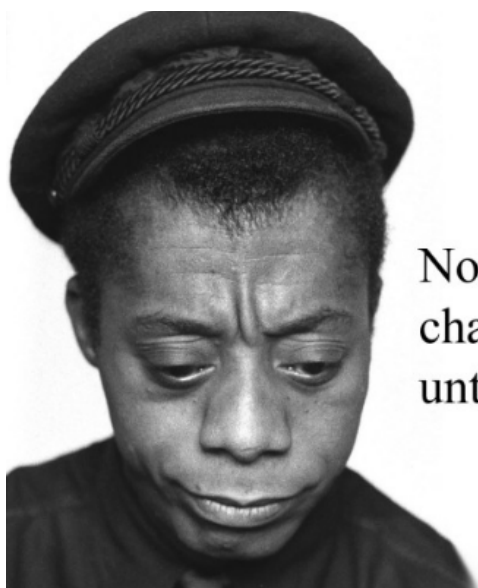
## Session 20 – The Cycle of Socialization

### Materials

- Agenda charted on the board or chart paper, or provided as a handout
- Chart paper containing Community Agreements from Session 7
- Video: [The Cycle of Socialization](#)
- Video: [Marya Hay's Cycle of Socialization](#)
- Handout: "The Cycle of Socialization"
- Next Session Prep: Beverly Daniel Tatum's ["Can We Talk?"](#)

### Opening Ceremony

Read the following James Baldwin quote out loud. Invite people to reflect on it, in the context of the work we've been doing around racial literacy so far.



Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced.

*James Baldwin*

**Note:** James Baldwin is a renowned novelist, essayist, playwright and an integral voice of the American civil rights movement. He is considered one of the greatest writers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.



### Talk Participants Through Today's Agenda

- Opening Ceremony: James Baldwin on Change
- Check Agenda
- Video: The Cycle of Socialization
- Marya Hay's Cycle
- Closing Ceremony: A Takeaway

### Video: The Cycle of Socialization

Explain that the “Cycle of Socialization” can help us understand the ways in which we are socialized to play certain roles. This video also helps us examine how we are affected by issues of power, privilege and oppression. It further illuminates how we all help sustain an oppressive system unless we become aware of it and intentionally decide to disrupt and dismantle it together.

### Large Group Discussion:

Facilitate a discussion with your group using the following questions:

- What were your IFETs (Impressions, Feelings, Experiences, or Thoughts) as you watched the video / were introduced to the cycle of socialization?
- In what ways does the cycle connect to you as an educator?
- In what ways does the cycle connect to how you see and treat your students?

### Video of Marya Hay's Cycle of Socialization

Distribute “Cycle of Socialization” handout for reference. Then explain that in this next video, we'll see a specific example of the Cycle of Socialization in action. Marya Hay is an instructional specialist in the Equity Initiatives Unit at the Montgomery, MD School District. She is a Montgomery County Public School (MCPS) graduate and daughter of immigrants.

Invite participants to watch the video to see how Marya's experiences and environments shaped (socialized) her as a young person into adulthood, according to the Cycle of Socialization.



## Small Group Reflection

In small groups of three or four, have participants discuss the following questions:

- What were your IFETs (Impressions, Feelings, Experiences, or Thoughts) as you watched the video?
- How is Marya Hay's cycle similar/different from yours?
- How is her cycle similar/different from that of your students?

## Large Group Discussion

Ask a few volunteers to share any meaningful insights from their small group discussion, ensuring, like always, that colleagues' personal stories remain confidential.

## Closing Ceremony

Prior to the closing ceremony, emphasize that we are all in the cycle of socialization. The experiences and individuals we encounter, as well as the institutions we're a part of, shape what we know and believe.

Invite participants to share one takeaway from today's session.

## Next Session Prep:



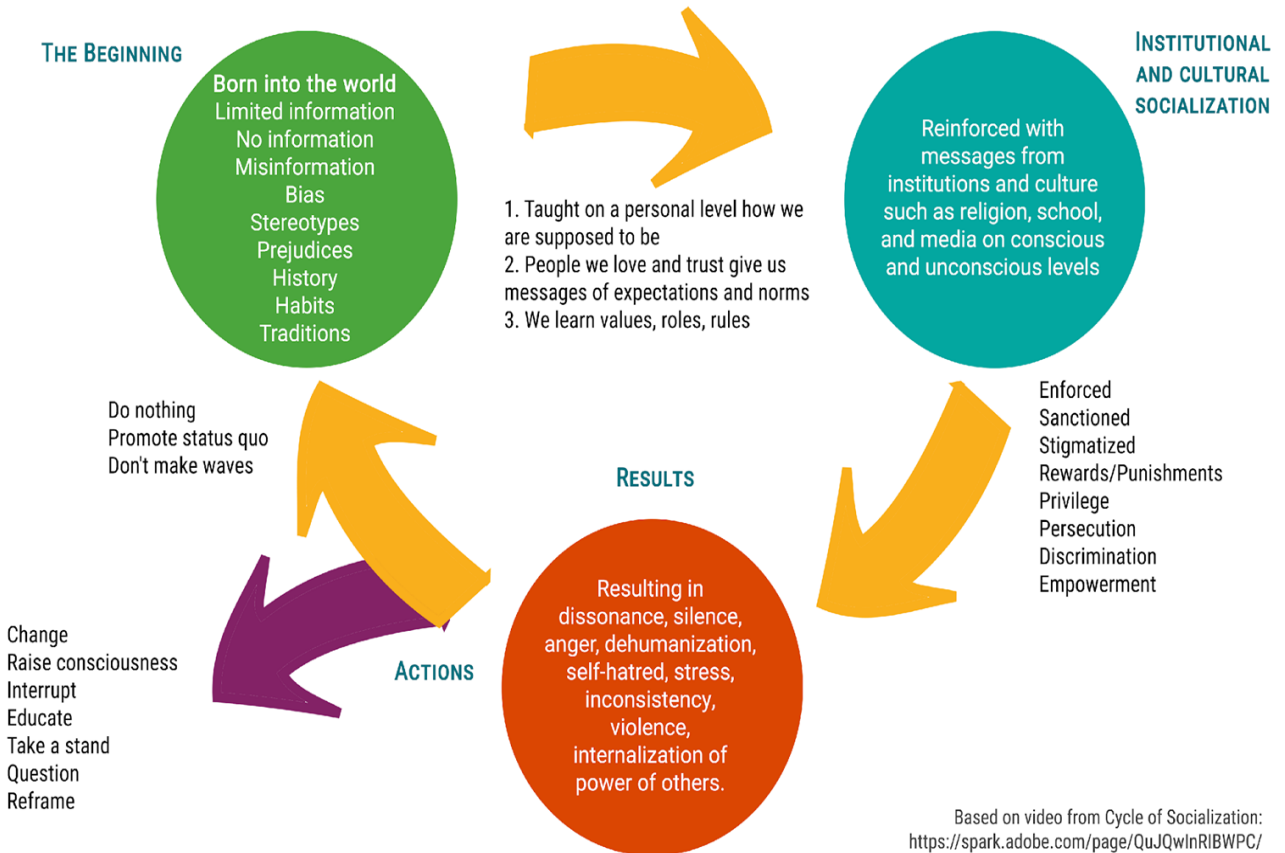
Here is an article for participants to read independently: [Beverly Daniel Tatum's "Can We Talk?"](#) Encourage the group to take notes and write any thoughts and reflections they have in the margins. Encourage them to reread.

## Additional Resources: Session 20

### Additional Written Resources:

["The Cycle of Liberation"](#) by Bobbie Harro

## Handout: The Cycle of Socialization



## Session 25 – Courageous Conversation about Race: Setting the Stage

### Materials

- Agenda charted on the board or chart paper, or provided as a handout
- Chart paper containing Community Agreements from Session 7
- Handout: “Why It Is So Hard to Talk About Race in the U.S.”
- Handout: “On Language”

### Opening Ceremony: Rainbow Breathing

Have people get as comfortable as possible in their seats, as you invite them to take some rainbow breaths with you. If it feels more comfortable for participants to stand, invite them to do so.

Have them bring their arms out by their side, and as they breathe in through their nose, have them slowly move their arms all the way up above their head by tracing an arc in the air around them (like a rainbow). Have them pause for just a moment as their hands meet at the top.

Then on the outbreath, have them slowly trace that same arc back down around them until their arms are back by their sides. Invite participants to pay attention to how the stretching feels in their body and let them know to stretch only to the extent that is possible and comfortable for them and their bodies.

Repeat five times, encouraging participants to continue paying attention to their bodies as they trace the arc up on the inhale, and down on the exhale, in the way Grace Cecilio models in the [Calm Corner: Rainbow Breath](#). In the video, Grace Cecilio whose intended audience is younger children, encourages her audience to imagine tracing colors and sparkles up and down around them, as part of the rainbow, for some added levity.

Invite people to check in with themselves after these five rainbow breaths. Ask a few volunteers to share out how they feel, using one word only. Then explain that today we'll start talking about race. Acknowledge that talking about race can be uncomfortable for

people. It can trigger a stress response for some because of the way we've been raised, what we've been taught and our life experiences.

Encourage participants to continue breathing throughout this session and ground themselves, as needed, so they can remain present and engaged. Invite them to use whatever practice works for them, and to lean into any possible discomfort or stress they might experience as this is what will help them learn and grow.



### Talk Participants Through Today's Agenda

- Opening Ceremony: Rainbow Breathing & Check-in
- Check Agenda
- Journaling: Courageous Conversations
- Why Is It So Hard to Talk About Race in the USA?
- Addressing the Challenges
- On Language
- Closing Ceremony: A Takeaway



### Journaling

Entering courageous conversations about any “-ism” can be challenging, especially when we are from different racialized groups with different experiences. Invite participants to take out their journals and spend some time reflecting on the following questions:

- Have you ever had an awkward or uncomfortable conversation about race with colleagues, with students, with family, with friends, or with anyone else?
- Who was part of the conversation? What was the specific topic?
- Why do you think it felt awkward or uncomfortable?
- Do you think there is anything that could have been done differently that would have helped make the conversation less awkward or uncomfortable?
- As circle keeper, be sure to journal as well for your own personal reflection and healing.

Invite a few participants to share out.

Explain that in this country, with its 400-year history of white supremacy and racism, there are multiple challenges to having productive conversations about race.

### Why It Is So Hard to Talk About Race in the USA?

Distribute the “Why It Is So Hard to Talk About Race in the USA?” handout contained at the end of this session. Discuss each challenge listed, explaining and checking for understanding along the way.

After reviewing each challenge, ask participants the following questions:

- Does this make sense?
- Does it connect in any way to your journaling reflections at the start of this session?
- Are there other reasons we can think of that make it hard to talk about race in cross racial groups in the U.S.?

Touch on the fact that it can be helpful to take these challenges into consideration when entering into conversations about race and racism. Also, there are ways that we can help address these challenges.

### Addressing the Challenges

Some ways to address these challenges are listed below:

- a) developing community agreements about how we will engage with each other
- b) sharing what we call brave space tools and have them guide us in our conversations
- c) looking at language and definitions and making sure we understand what's being said, recognizing that words can mean different things to different people
- d) introducing and using affinity spaces

Remind participants how you've already developed Community Agreements in Session 7 and you've explored Brave Space Tools in Session 8 and 11. Explain that in this session, you'll be exploring the complicated nature of language.

### On Language

Provide additional framing by sharing that, as we just discussed, for many people it can be, or is, difficult to talk about race and racism. These conversations touch on issues of

power and privilege. They can conjure up feelings of fear, guilt, anger, hurt, hope and disappointment.

We know that words can mean different things to different people. Sometimes language evolves to take on new meaning altogether. Encourage participants to be open and to listen to each other fully, seeking understanding.

As we have intentional conversations about race, we should find the words that work for us and our colleagues. Explore labels, definitions, and descriptions. Talk about different meanings and the impact of the words that people use.

Acknowledge that everyone is at a different place in developing their racial literacy. To that end, you'll be sharing some ideas that can be helpful in thinking about the language used to talk about race, racism and other oppressions.

Distribute the "On Language\*" handout contained at the end of this session. Invite two volunteers to read the two paragraphs aloud. Give participants two minutes to review the document independently after having heard it read out loud.

*\* Based on materials from Project Change and Everyday Democracy.*

### **Pair Share**

In pairs, invite participants to share in response to the following prompts:

- What is your IFET (Impression, Feeling, Experience or Thought) in response to the "On Language" excerpt?
- What resonates with you personally about this document?

### **Large Group Share**

Reconvene the group. Invite a few volunteers to share out on what was discussed in their pairs, keeping confidentiality in mind. Summarize what people share.

Consider touching on the updated definition of "racism" as an example of how language evolves over time. In 2020, Merriam-Webster—whose dictionaries are ubiquitous in U.S. classrooms, offices and libraries—announced that it would expand the definition of the word "racism" in its publications to include the concept of systemic oppression. The action followed a suggestion from recent college graduate, Kennedy Mitchum, who took issue with the publication's definition of racism. Mitchum, a Black woman, emailed

Merriam Webster to point out that racism is “prejudice combined with social and institutional power.” She argued for a definition that included systemic oppression, based on her frustration with people who used the dictionary definition to downplay her own experiences with racism.

## Closing Ceremony

Invite a few volunteers to share a takeaway from today's session.



## Additional Resources: Session 25

### **Additional Written Resources:**

*Mindful of Race: Transforming Racism from the Inside Out* by Ruth King

*White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk About Racism* by Robin DiAngelo

## **Handout: Why Is It So Hard to Talk About Race in the USA? Handout**

- There are power dynamics between colleagues, leaders, (and students). We are afraid there may be repercussions.
- Many of us have been told all our lives not to talk about certain issues with people from other backgrounds. Especially not at work or school.
- Some people are talking about their personal experiences while others are talking about the system. For example, if we were in a conversation about racism in the health care system, a doctor may feel attacked because the doctor feels they treats everyone fairly.
- Intent vs impact - Sometimes we say or do things that are hurtful to someone else. We didn't mean to hurt that person, but that was the result. Often, we stop at saying I didn't mean it, but the hurt is still there.
- Many people have had bad past experiences with talking about race, so they are hesitant about engaging again.
- We are afraid to be vulnerable and expose ourselves in front of other colleagues or students.
- For some of us, the issue hits home more than for others. The issue is painful.

## Handout: On Language



### On Language

Language can be used deliberately to engage and support community anti-racism coalitions and initiatives, or to inflame and divide them. Discussing definitions can engage and support coalitions, yet it is important for groups to decide the extent to which they must have consensus and where it is okay for people to disagree. It is important to keep in mind that the words people use to discuss power, privilege, racism and oppression hold different meanings for different people. People at different stages in developing an analysis tend to attach different meanings to words like discrimination, privilege and institutional racism. When people are talking about privilege or racism, the words they use often come with emotions and assumptions that are not spoken.

Many of these and other related terms have evolved over time. For example, given the changing demographic trends in the United States, the word “minority” no longer acceptable to some (non-white) racial/ethnic groups. The terms “emerging majority” and “people of color” have become popular substitutes. Also, the terms used to refer to members of each community of color have changed over time. Whether to use the terms African American or Black, Hispanic American or Latino/a or Latinx, Native American or American Indian or Indigenous, and Pacific Islander or Asian American depends on a variety of conditions, including geographic location, age, generation, and, sometimes, political orientation.

*Source: Project Change's "The Power of Words" and Everyday Democracy*

[morningsidecenter.org](http://morningsidecenter.org)

## Session 32 – Implicit Bias & the Power of Expectations

### Materials

- Agenda charted on the board or chart paper, or provided as a handout
- Chart paper containing Community Agreements from Session 7
- Multi-colored index cards
- AV equipment to play video: [Peanut butter, Jelly and Racism](#)
- AV equipment to play video: [The Power of Expectations](#)
- Handout: Excerpt from “Teachers’ Expectations Can Influence How Students Perform”
- Handout: Excerpt from “Harnessing the Power of Expectations”

### Opening Ceremony

Invite participants to think about food groups that go together for them. For example, many in American culture associate bacon with eggs or biscuits with gravy. What are food items that are paired in their minds or that they associate together? Invite them to think about foods specific to their cultural backgrounds. Allow participants some think time and then invite them to write down their food pairing on an index card.

Have participants share out their food pairings in small groups or in a pair share. Then have groups/pairs share out their thoughts and observations with the whole group.



### Talk Participants Through Today's Agenda

- Opening Ceremony: Food Pairing Activity
- Check Agenda
- What Is Implicit Bias?
- Peanut Butter, Jelly and Racism
- The Power of Expectations
- Closing Ceremony: Jennifer Eberhardt on Implicit Bias

## What Is Implicit Bias?

Ask participants if they're familiar with the concept of implicit bias. Elicit and explain that according to the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity at Ohio State University:

["Implicit bias"](#) refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. These biases, which encompass both favorable and unfavorable assessments, are activated involuntarily and without an individual's awareness or intentional control. Residing deep in the subconscious, these biases are different from known biases that individuals may choose to conceal for the purposes of social and/or political correctness. Rather, implicit biases are not accessible through introspection."

Consider sharing this definition with participants via chart paper or whiteboard as a visual reference.

## Peanut Butter, Jelly and Racism

Introduce the NY Times Video "Peanut Butter, Jelly and Racism" on the topic of implicit bias.

Before playing the video, explain that the researchers in the video talk about "peanut butter and jelly" as foods that go together. The idea that when (some) people in the U.S. think of peanut butter, they automatically think of jelly. Of course, depending on the country and culture people grew up in, this may or may not be true for them. Think back to the Lee Mun Wah video and the foods he grew up with. Have participants think of the foods they grew up with and the associations connected to them.

Now play the video: [Peanut butter, Jelly and Racism](#) (2.27 min) for people to watch.



## Journaling

Invite participants to spend some time journaling, as they consider their IFETs (Impressions, Feelings, Experiences and/or Thoughts) about this video.

As circle keeper, be sure to journal as well for your own personal reflection and healing.

## Pair Share

In pairs, invite participants to share their Impressions, Feelings, Experiences and/or Thoughts, taking turns. Each partner will have two minutes to share while the other practices mindful listening (think of the Chinese character, “TING” from earlier sessions). After two minutes, ask partners to switch roles. Speakers become listeners and listeners become speakers.

## Large Group Share

Back in the large group, invite a few volunteers to share an Impression, Feeling, Experience or Thought, reminding participants to maintain confidentiality.

Invite participants to go further by making additional connections to people's professional life, using the following questions:

- How does what you watched in the video connect to you as an educator?
- How does what you watched connect to how you see and treat your students?
- How does it connect to the moment we find ourselves in today in this country, in this state, at school?

Summarize what people share and add, as needed, from the Kirwan Institute once more:

[“The implicit associations](#) we harbor in our subconscious cause us to have feelings and attitudes about other people based on characteristics such as race, ethnicity, age, and appearance. These associations develop over the course of a lifetime beginning at a very early age through exposure to direct and indirect messages. In addition to early life experiences, the media and news programming are often-cited origins of implicit associations.”

Think back to Session 20 and the Cycle of Socialization. We all have implicit biases; no one is immune. It is not something we have a say in; it is not something we choose. We absorb these biases from the moment we are born, through osmosis. From the “Peanut Butter, Jelly and Racism” video: “it’s like the air we breathe.”

### Video: The Power of Expectations

Explain and/or reinforce that our implicit biased beliefs impact our expectations, which in turn impact our behaviors as Robert Rosenthal’s research proved in the 1960s. Play [The Power of Expectations](#) (3:12 min) video about Rosenthal’s research.

### Pair Share

In the same pairs as before, invite participants to take turns sharing their IFETs (Impressions, Feelings, Experiences and Thoughts). Each partner will have two minutes to share, while the other listens. After two minutes, ask partners to switch roles, so speakers become listeners and listeners become speakers.

### Rosenthal’s Research Study in the Classroom

Share the NPR transcript about [Rosenthal’s research study](#) in the classroom or the slightly shorter excerpt from *Harnessing the Power of High Expectations: Using Brain Science to Coach for Breakthrough Outcomes*, by Elizabeth D. Babcock. Both can be found at the end of this session. Allow participants 5-10 minutes to read one or the other.

### Pair Share

Back in the same pairs, invite participants to take turns sharing their IFETs (Impressions, Feelings, Experiences and Thoughts). Each partner will have two minutes to share while the other listens. After two minutes, ask partners to switch roles, so speakers become listeners and listeners become speakers.

### Large Group Share

Reconvene the group and invite a few volunteers to share an impression, feeling, experience or thought, reminding participants to maintain confidentiality.

**Facilitator Note:** If time is tight, consider playing “The Power of Expectations” video and having participants read the handout before having them reflect in pairs and sharing out in the large group. Alternatively, consider skipping reading about the research of expectations in the classroom altogether.

### Closing Ceremony:

As you close the session, have participants consider what Jennifer Eberhardt, author of *Bias: Uncovering the Hidden Prejudice That Shapes What We See, Think and Do*, says about implicit bias and read the following quote aloud:

“Without our permission or even awareness, stereotypes come to guide what we see, and in so doing seem to validate themselves. That makes them stronger, more pervasive, and resistant to change.” So “moving forward requires continued vigilance. It requires us to constantly attend to who we are, how we got that way, and all the selves we have the capacity to be.”

Invite a few volunteers to share out their closing thoughts.

### New York Times Video Series on Implicit Bias:

- Video 1: [Peanut Butter, Jelly and Racism](#) (2:27 min)
- Video 2: [Check Our Bias to Wreck Our Bias](#) (3:00 min)
- Video 3: [The Life-Changing Magic of Hanging Out](#) (2:09 min)
- Video 4: [Why We're Awkward](#) (2:41 min)
- Video 5: [Snacks and Punishment](#) (2:05 min)
- Video 6: [High Heels, Violins and a Warning](#) (1:22 min)



## Additional Resources: Session 32

### Written Resources:

Bias” by the Kirwan Institute

["MYTHBUSTERS: Implicit Bias Edition; Clearing Up the Confusion Surrounding Implicit Bias"](#) by the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity

["Implicit Bias in Education"](#) by the Kirwan Institute for the Study of Race and Ethnicity

### Book Suggestion:

*Caste: The Origins of Our Discontents* by Isabel Wilkerson

## Handout: Teachers' Expectations Can Influence How Students Perform

Alix Spiegel

[In my Morning Edition story today](#), I look at expectations — specifically, how teacher expectations can affect the performance of the children they teach. The first psychologist to systematically study this was a Harvard professor named Robert Rosenthal, who in 1964 did a wonderful experiment at an elementary school south of San Francisco.

The idea was to figure out what would happen if teachers were told that certain kids in their class were destined to succeed, so Rosenthal took a normal IQ test and dressed it up as a different test. "It was a standardized IQ test, Flanagan's Test of General Ability," he says. "But the cover we put on it, we had printed on every test booklet, said 'Harvard Test of Inflected Acquisition.' "

Rosenthal told the teachers that this very special test from Harvard had the very special ability to predict which kids were about to be very special — that is, which kids were about to experience a dramatic growth in their IQ.

After the kids took the test, he then chose from every class several children totally at random. There was nothing at all to distinguish these kids from the other kids, but he told their teachers that the test predicted the kids were on the verge of an intense intellectual bloom. As he followed the children over the next two years, Rosenthal discovered that the teachers' expectations of these kids really did affect the students. "If teachers had been led to expect greater gains in IQ, then increasingly, those kids gained more IQ," he says.

But just how do expectations influence IQ? As Rosenthal did more research, he found that expectations affect teachers' moment-to-moment interactions with the children they teach in a thousand almost invisible ways. Teachers give the students that they expect to succeed more time to answer questions, more specific feedback, and more approval: They consistently touch, nod and smile at those kids more. "It's not magic, it's not mental telepathy," Rosenthal says. "It's very likely these thousands of different ways of treating people in small ways every day." Instead, it's: " 'Johnny, tell me more about what you think is going on ... But also, I want you to sit down quietly now as you tell that to me,' " Pianta says. "Those two responses," he says, "are dictated almost entirely by two different interpretations of the same behavior that are driven by two different sets of beliefs." To see if teachers' beliefs would be changed by giving them a new set of teaching behaviors, Pianta and his colleagues recently did a study.

They took a group of teachers, assessed their beliefs about children, then gave a portion of them a standard pedagogy course, which included information about appropriate beliefs and expectations. Another portion got intense behavioral training, which taught them a whole new set of skills based on those appropriate beliefs and expectations. For this training, the teachers videotaped their classes over a period of months and worked with personal coaches who watched those videos, then gave them recommendations about different behaviors to try. After that intensive training, Pianta and his colleagues analyzed the beliefs of the teachers again. What he found was that the beliefs of the trained teachers had shifted way more than the beliefs of teachers given a standard informational course. This is why Pianta thinks that to change beliefs, the best thing to do is change behaviors. "It's far more powerful to work from the outside in than the inside out if you want to change expectations," he says. In other words, if you want to change a mind, simply talking to it might not be enough.

So, since expectations can change the performance of kids, how do we get teachers to have the right expectations? Is it possible to change bad expectations? That was the question that brought me to the Curry School of Education at the University of Virginia, where I met Robert Pianta. Pianta, dean of the Curry School, has studied teachers for years, and one of the first things he told me when we sat down together was that it is truly hard for teachers to control their expectations. "It's really tough for anybody to police their own beliefs," he said. "But think about being in a classroom with 25 kids. The demands on their thinking are so great."

Still, people have tried. The traditional way, Pianta says, has been to sit teachers down and try to change their expectations through talking to them. "For the most part, we've tried to convince them that the beliefs they have are wrong," he says. "And we've done most of that convincing using information." But Pianta has a different idea of how to go about changing teachers' expectations. He says it's not effective to try to change their thoughts; the key is to train teachers in an entirely new set of behaviors.

For years, Pianta and his colleagues at the Curry School have been collecting videotapes of teachers teaching. By analyzing these videos in minute ways, they've developed a good idea of which teaching behaviors are most effective. They can also see, Pianta tells me, how teacher expectations affect both their behaviors and classroom dynamics.

Pianta gives one very specific example: the belief that boys are disruptive and need to be managed. "Say I'm a teacher and I ask a question in class, and a boy jumps up, sort of vociferously ... 'I know the answer! I know the answer! I know the answer!' " Pianta says. "If I believe boys are disruptive and my job is control the classroom, then I'm going to

respond with, 'Johnny! You're out of line here! We need you to sit down right now.' "This, Pianta says, will likely make the boy frustrated and emotionally disengaged. He will then be likely to escalate his behavior, which will simply confirm the teacher's beliefs about him, and the teacher and kid are stuck in an unproductive loop. But if the teacher doesn't carry those beliefs into the classroom, then the teacher is unlikely to see that behavior as threatening. Instead it's: " 'Johnny, tell me more about what you think is going on ... But also, I want you to sit down quietly now as you tell that to me,' " Pianta says.

"Those two responses," he says, "are dictated almost entirely by two different interpretations of the same behavior that are driven by two different sets of beliefs."

To see if teachers' beliefs would be changed by giving them a new set of teaching behaviors, Pianta and his colleagues recently did a study. They took a group of teachers, assessed their beliefs about children, then gave a portion of them a standard pedagogy course, which included information about appropriate beliefs and expectations. Another portion got intense behavioral training, which taught them a whole new set of skills based on those appropriate beliefs and expectations.

For this training, the teachers videotaped their classes over a period of months and worked with personal coaches who watched those videos, then gave them recommendations about different behaviors to try. After that intensive training, Pianta and his colleagues analyzed the beliefs of the teachers again. What he found was that the beliefs of the trained teachers had shifted way more than the beliefs of teachers given a standard informational course.

This is why Pianta thinks that to change beliefs, the best thing to do is change behaviors. "It's far more powerful to work from the outside in than the inside out if you want to change expectations," he says. In other words, if you want to change a mind, simply talking to it might not be enough.

**Handout: Excerpt from *Harnessing the Power of High Expectations: Using Brain Science to Coach for Breakthrough Outcomes*, by Elizabeth D. Babcock, MCRP, PhD**

In the mid-1960s, Professor Robert Rosenthal of Harvard University conducted an experiment that laid the foundation for all subsequent research on the power of mentor expectations—a phenomenon now referred to as “**The Rosenthal Effect**” or “The Pygmalion Effect.” In the study, Rosenthal partnered with the South San Francisco School District to look at the impact of teacher expectations on student performance. He told teachers that children sometimes experience a process of “bloom,” in which they undergo a leap of intellectual growth within a short period of time. He told the teachers he planned to study blooming by administering intelligence tests to their students at the beginning and end of the school year. The test at the beginning of the year would predict which students were most likely to “bloom” and at the end of the year, the tests would measure the intellectual growth of all their students and validate the degree to which the “bloomers” had shown stronger than average gains.

In the fall, all students took the TOGA (Test of General Ability) standardized intelligence test and afterwards the teachers were given the names of their students who were likely to bloom during the year. At the end of the school year, the TOGA was again administered and the students who were predicted to bloom showed significantly higher gains on the TOGA than the other students.

But there was a catch: Rosenthal had rigged the study. The TOGA could not predict blooming, and the 20 percent of students labeled as bloomers at the beginning of the year had been selected entirely at random. By telling the teachers the names of the students, researchers had raised teachers’ expectations about the randomly selected students’ performance, and because the teachers expected the bloomers to be particularly successful, they were.

This study spurred widespread investigation into the impact of teacher expectations on student outcomes, which Rosenthal later synthesized in a meta-analysis of 464 of the most rigorous studies. What he found was that on average across all the studies, when all other factors were controlled for, **teacher expectations accounted for 30 percent of the changes (positive or negative) in student performance.** In other words, teachers held

personal beliefs about the ability of their students, and these beliefs helped or hindered student performance by an average of 30 percent.

The meta-analysis also showed that teachers' expectations influenced their own behavior in four key ways (ranked by order of impact on student performance):

1. Climate: Teachers created warmer socio-emotional climate for their "special" students (students for whom they had high expectations), through both verbal and non-verbal cues.
2. Input: Teachers taught more material and more difficult material to their "special" students.
3. Output: Teachers encouraged "special" students to respond more and gave more time for responses.
4. Feedback: Teachers gave "special" students more feedback, both verbally and non-verbally, on their performance.

## Session 34 – Addressing Implicit Bias

### Materials

- Agenda charted on the board or chart paper, or provided as a handout
- Chart paper containing Community Agreements from Session 7
- AV equipment to play video: [Check Our Bias to Wreck Our Bias](#)
- AV equipment to play video: [Snacks and Punishment](#)
- Handout: “Wheel of Holistic Health”
- Handout: “Implicit Bias, What to Do, Part 2: The Mindful Reflection Protocol”

### Opening Ceremony

Read aloud the quote by Sarah Fiarman, author of *Unconscious\* Bias: When Good Intentions Aren't Enough* and invite participants to reflect upon it.

“Deconstructing our unconscious bias takes consistent work. We can't address it once and be done. We need to recognize these unwanted, deep-rooted beliefs and limit their influence on us. Then our actions will match our intentions.”

Invite several volunteers to share any thoughts or reflections as well as connections to learnings during previous sessions.

**Facilitator Note:** Explain that “unconscious bias” is another way to talk about implicit bias



### Talk Participants Through Today's Agenda

- Opening Ceremony: Sarah Fiarman on Implicit Bias
- Check Agenda
- Implicit Bias, A Recap
- Implicit Bias, What to Do, Part 1
- Implicit Bias, What to Do, Part 2
- Wheel of Holistic Self-Care
- Implicit Bias, What to Do, Part 3
- Closing Ceremony: Slowing Down

## Implicit Bias, A Recap (the Kirwan Institute)

Ask participants what they remember about the notion of implicit bias from the previous session. Invite a volunteer or two to share a definition of implicit bias.

Summarize and remind people of the Kirwan Institute's definition, emphasizing the parts that are underlined. Consider charting or displaying the following quote on an interactive whiteboard:

"Implicit bias refers to the attitudes or stereotypes that affect our understanding, actions, and decisions in an unconscious manner. These biases, which encompass both favorable and unfavorable assessments, are activated involuntarily and without an individual's awareness or intentional control. Residing deep in the subconscious, these biases are different from known biases that individuals may choose to conceal for the purposes of social and/or political correctness. Rather, implicit biases are not accessible through introspection."

Explain that what is particularly troubling about implicit biases is that they may not align with our values, ethics and/or beliefs. Whereas we have an awareness of explicit biases and prejudices, implicit biases operate on a subconscious level, which makes them much harder to control and address. A person may even express explicit disapproval of a certain attitude or belief while harboring their own similar bias on a more unconscious level.

The good news is that when you become aware of the ways in which you've been socialized, and the fact that we all have implicit biases, there are ways we can push back on the ways in which we act on our biases.

## Implicit Bias, What to Do, Part 1: Check Our Bias to Wreck Our Bias

Play the [Check Our Bias to Wreck Our Bias](#) video (3:00 min).

### Pair Share

In pairs, invite participants to take turns sharing their IFETs (Impressions, Feelings, Experiences or Thoughts). Each partner will have two minutes to share while the other listens. After two minutes, ask partners to switch roles, so speakers become listeners and listeners become speakers.



## Large Group Share

Reconvene the group and invite a few volunteers to share an impression, feeling, experience or thought, reminding participants to maintain confidentiality.

## Brainstorm

Invite participants to brainstorm what behavioral patterns they, as educators, can take stock of to check against any implicit biases they might hold.

Examples to consider:

- Who do you wish a good morning when you get to school?
- Who do you greet/welcome at the start of class?
- Who do you call on in class?
- Who receives your follow-up questions?
- Who do you encourage, acknowledge and affirm?
- Who do you redirect, reprimand, and/or send out of class?
- Who do you give second (or third) chances?

Next, have the group consider who might be able to help, like the video recommends: “having a friend [or colleague] observe you in the real world,” “have people look at who you call on most in class.” Have teachers also consider involving their students in the assessment.

## Small Group Assignment

Invite participants to pick one of the examples from the chart. Between now and next session, have them do a self-audit, taking stock around how they treat and respond to different groups of students. Have participants team up with a colleague, group of colleagues, or maybe their grade team, as they commit to taking stock together and keeping each other focused on the assignment.

Provide groups with time to discuss what they'll work on and determine how they'll keep track of their assignment. Let them know that you'll be checking in on the assignment at the start of the next session.

## Implicit Bias, What to Do, Part 2: The Mindful Reflection Protocol

From Zaretta Hammond's interview in EdWeek:

[“A lot of school leaders](#) and instructional coaches are trying to figure out how to help teachers interrupt implicit bias, but they usually don't have a process to help teachers see how their negative interpretation of a student's behavior contributes to watering down the curriculum for that student or disproportionately disciplining students of color.

The Mindful Reflection Protocol is process that can help a teacher see their implicit bias in action. I have to give credit where credit is due. This protocol was developed teacher educators, Barbara J. Dray and Debora Basler Wisneski.

The protocol is simple. It asks teachers to look at an incident through three lenses: description, interpretation, and evaluation. Teachers are asked to just describe what is going on literally with no judgment. Then, they are asked to focus on interpreting the action. What does it mean to you when the child does that? Still with no judgment. Once you've interpreted, then try to reflect on how you judge the action or behavior - what value to you give to your interpretation.

I'd also ask teachers to notice how they interpret the same behavior from two students from different racial backgrounds. This process allows teachers to create some distance from thinking and actions that are sometimes on autopilot because things are happening so fast in the classroom.”

## Wheel of Holistic Self-Care

Before showing the next video, invite participants to return to their folders, or journals, to review their Wheel of Holistic Self-Care. If they do not have this handout, provide them with a copy. Have them consider where they're at with some of their self-care practices.

## Implicit Bias, What to Do, Part 3: Snacks and Punishment

Play the [Snacks and Punishment](#) video (2:05 min).

### Pair Share

In pairs, invite participants to take turns sharing their impressions, feelings, experiences and/or thoughts on this video. Each partner will have 2 minutes to share, while the other engages in mindful listening.

## **Large Group Share**

Reconvene the group and invite a few volunteers to share an impression, feeling, experience or thought, reminding participants to maintain confidentiality.

## **Closing Ceremony**

From the video:

“So slowing down seems to help. And slowing down and being more aware might help even more.”

Referencing their Wheel of Holistic Self-Care, and possibly adding to it, ask participants the following question:

- What are (other) practices that help you slow down, be more present and possibly become more aware?

Suggest that they might have partners, colleagues, or friends support them with this practice of slowing down. Remind them of self-care practices like taking a break for lunch, a few deep breaths before walking into their classrooms, a daily/regular gratitude practice with friends or with their students, etc.

## Additional Resources: Session 34

### Written Resources:

["The Mindful Reflection Protocol,"](#) Protocol for Checking Unconscious Bias

*The Inner Work of Racial Justice: Healing Ourselves and Transforming Our Communities Through Mindfulness* by Rhonda V. Magee

### Video Resources:

[Eye of the Storm Jane Elliot 1970,](#) an experiment in the anatomy of prejudice

## Handout: Implicit Bias, What to Do, Part 2: The Mindful Reflection Protocol

From Zaretta Hammond's interview in EdWeek:

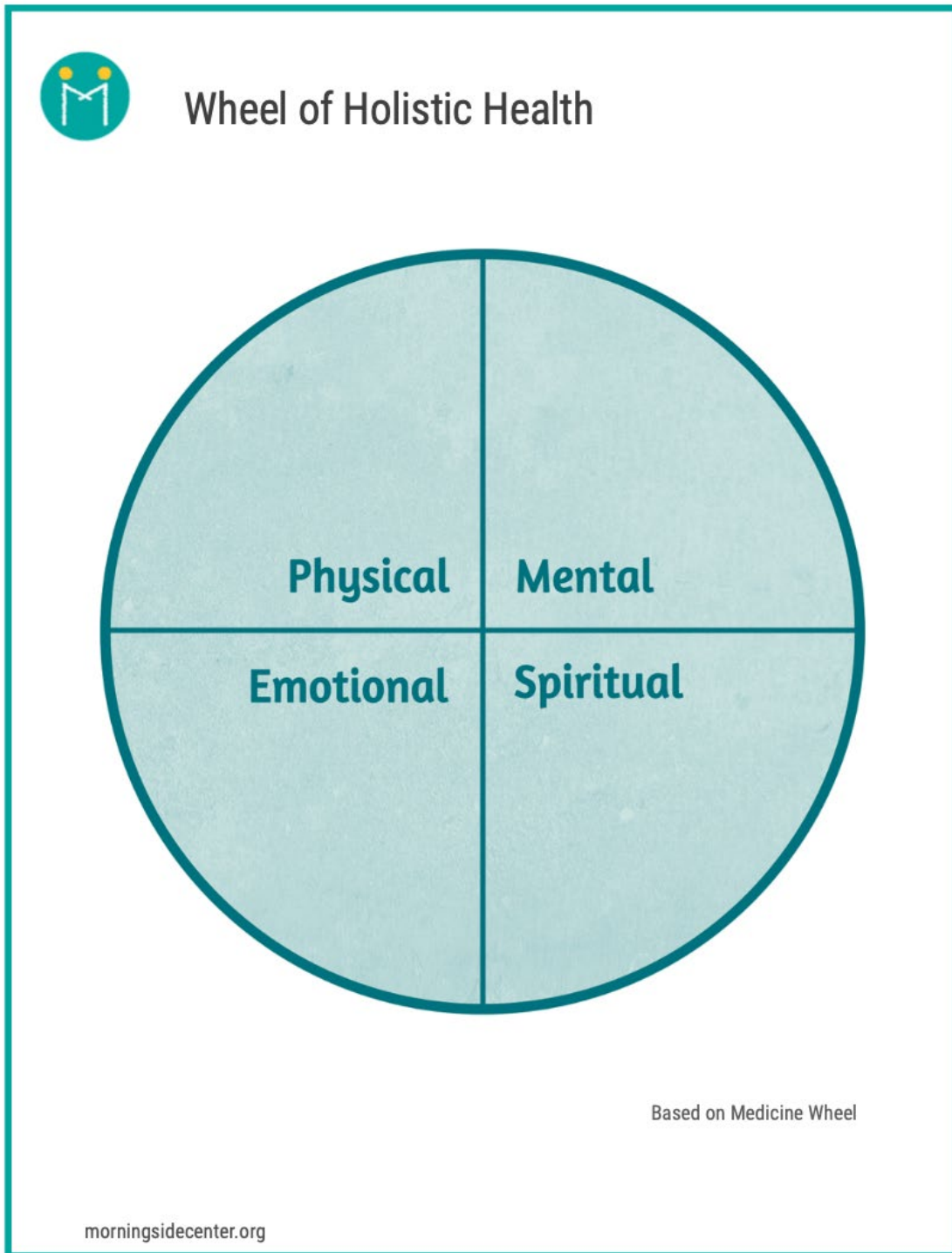
"[A lot of school leaders](#) and instructional coaches are trying to figure out how to help teachers interrupt implicit bias, but they usually don't have a process to help teachers see how their negative interpretation of a student's behavior contributes to watering down the curriculum for that student or disproportionately disciplining students of color.

The Mindful Reflection Protocol is process that can help a teacher see their implicit bias in action. I have to give credit where credit is due. This protocol was developed teacher educators, Barbara J. Dray and Debora Basler Wisneski.

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I'd also ask teachers to notice how they interpret the same behavior from two students from different racial backgrounds. This process allows teachers to create some distance from thinking and actions that are sometimes on autopilot because things are happening so fast in the classroom."

## Handout: Wheel of Holistic Health



## Session 40 – Restorative Practices Throughout the School Day

### Materials

- Agenda charted on the board or chart paper, or provided as a handout
- Chart paper containing Community Agreements from Session 7
  - AV equipment and access to the 9:25 min video: [Restorative Practices in Crew at Brooklyn Collaborative](#)
  - Handout: "Quotes from Restorative Practices in Crew at BCS"

### Opening Ceremony

In our session on bias, in the "Growing Fairness" video, Tyrone Sinclair, Organizer of the Youth Justice Coalition, said:

"Where are our priorities at? What are we giving back to the youth? Where are we looking out for their safety, where are we looking out to better people and not to lock them up? We're not animals. We're the next generation."

Invite participants to consider this quote in the context of implicit bias as it relates to our school, classrooms and practices. *Where are our priorities at? Where are we looking to better people—staff as well as students? Today we'll focus not just on where we're looking to better people but how to do so as well.*



### Talk Participants Through Today's Agenda

- Opening Ceremony: Tyrone Sinclair on Bettering People
- Check Agenda
- Define Restorative Practices
- The Pyramid of Restorative Practices
- Restorative Practices Throughout the School Day
- Closing Ceremony: Bryan Stevenson on Bettering Our Schools and Ourselves

## Define Restorative Practices

Invite participants to share what they've learned so far in our sessions about restorative practices.

Invite them to think back to Sessions 6-8, when restorative circles were introduced and we watched a video that presented restorative circles as both proactive and responsive. In Session 7, we developed our own circle values and guidelines. Encourage participants to think about the circle practice they've experienced so far, drawing on core elements of circles, throughout their time together.

Based on all this, as well as the "Growing Fairness" video shown in the previous session, ask if anyone can define "restorative practices."

Compare and contrast what participants share with MSC's definition:

"Restorative practices are a set of processes and tools that help us create a caring school community and keep that community whole. The premise is that people and relationships are valued first and foremost. When people make mistakes or cause harm, restorative practices can help them to understand the impact of their actions, heal the harm, and restore the community."

## Pyramid of Restorative Practices\*

Distribute the "Pyramid of Restorative Practices" handout at the end of this session. Invite people to review the pyramid independently before the group reviews together with your input, emphasizing that restorative practices in schools are more successful when they are seen as not simply a reactive response to extreme and/or harmful behavior, but rather as principles and practices in place and regularly implemented throughout the school day.

All this starts with, as we've been discussing throughout our time together, the foundation of the pyramid. **It is what we've been focused on so far in our sessions – the building of a strong, supportive, caring, equitable school community where students feel seen, and experience a sense of belonging.** This is where most of our effort and attention throughout the school year should be. Touch on how the practices further up the pyramid need the foundation of healthy relationships to lean and draw on to be effective. Explain that the next video will show what that the pyramid fully implemented can look like at a school.



**\* Note:** There is a pyramid for elementary school and one for secondary school. Pick the one that's suitable for your group.

## Restorative Practices at BCS

Introduce Brooklyn School for Collaborative Studies, a.k.a. Brooklyn Collaborative or BCS for short. Explain that BCS was an early adopter of Restorative Practices in New York City. The school was one of the original Morningside Center i3 schools and has been implementing Restorative Practices for over a decade. The school started by getting their staff trained in circles practice and having everyone in the school participate in weekly circles during Crew (advisory) and during staff Crew several times a year. Circles were used during school tours for prospective parents and students, and counseling staff used circles for some of their groups as well. The school made sure the foundation of the pyramid was in place while building the mindset, practices and procedures needed for the kind of responsive practices that wouldn't feed the school-to-prison pipeline.

Explain that, in this next video, we'll hear from BCS staff and students about whole school implementation of Restorative Practices at their school, according to the Pyramid of Restorative Practices we just reviewed. Note that the deans at BCS are known as Restorative Practice Coordinators (or RPCs).

Play the video [Restorative Practices in Crew at Brooklyn Collaborative](#) (9:25 min).

In the video, staff and students talk about the three different levels of the pyramid. Ask participants to pay attention to how the people featured in the video talk about the interconnected nature of the different levels of the pyramid.

### Pair Share

Invite participants to share their IFETs (Impressions, Feelings, Experiences, and/or Thoughts) about the video, taking turns sharing and listening.

### Large Group Discussion

Ask a few volunteers to share out their IFET with the large group. Next, review some of the quotes from the video, connecting them back to our earlier sessions:

**RPC, Jose Rivera:** “Restorative Practices to me is a lifestyle. Restorative Practices means community, it means building relationships, it means healing, receiving the support and having the high expectations. It means managing, fostering and building relationships that are constructive and then the healing process, understanding everyone’s differences and the impact and the choices that they make.”

Ask the group:

- What do you think Jose is trying to convey about the nature of Restorative Practices? What are your thoughts and feelings about this?
- How does this relate back to our earlier sessions and the pyramid of Restorative Practices introduced at the start of this session?

**RPC, Taron Williams:** Concerning the foundation of the pyramid: “to me, that’s ... the heart [of BCS], where we build this relationship with each other, where we can have those conversations. ... Because you can’t restore what you haven’t built.”

Ask the group:

- What conversations do you think Taron is referencing here? What are your thoughts and feelings about this?
- How does this relate back to our earlier sessions and the conversations we’ve had? How does it relate back to the pyramid of Restorative Practices introduced at the start of this session?

**Junior Kyah:** “It gives us more of a second chance, cause ... detention is just like you’re being punished, you don’t really have time to reflect on what you did and how we can move forward.” Restorative Practices “gives us a chance to reflect, see where we went wrong, know where we went wrong and know how to fix it and what relationships can be built to fix the thing we did wrong.”

Ask the group:

- What is Kyah trying to convey about the impact of punitive versus restorative practices? How does this relate back to our earlier sessions and the pyramid of Restorative Practices introduced at the start of this session?

## Closing Ceremony

Bryan Stevenson is an American lawyer, social justice activist, and the founder and Executive Director of the Equal Justice Initiative. He implores us to:

"I believe that each person is more than the worst thing they've ever done." That's my mission. I really want to get in the heads and hearts of kids and persuade them that they can believe things they haven't seen, they can do things that maybe others haven't done before them, that they are more than their worst acts."

Invite participants to consider Bryan Stevenson's mission in the context of the U.S. education system and all of us who are part of it: administrators, staff, students, their families and communities. Invite them to think back to our opening ceremony:

- "Where *are* our priorities at?"
- "Where *are* we looking to better people, staff as well as students?"

## Additional Resources: Session 40

### Video Resources:

[Learning Module 4: Reducing Punishment Practical Tools](#)

## Handout: Quotes from Restorative Practices in Crew at BCS

**Jose Rivera, BCS Restorative Practice Coordinator (RPC):** “Restorative Practices to me is a lifestyle. Restorative Practices means community, it means building relationships, it means healing. Receiving the support and having the high expectations. It means managing, fostering and building relationships that are constructive and then the healing process, understanding everyone’s differences and the impact and the choices that they make.”

**Taron Williams BCS Restorative Practice Coordinator (RPC):** The foundation of the pyramid “to me, that’s ... that’s the heart [of BCS], where we build this relationship with each other, where we can have those conversations.” “Because you can’t restore what you haven’t built.”

### Level 1/Foundation of the Pyramid:

**Jose Rivera:** “Crew is a group of students with an advisor that meets daily for about 30 minutes and they do a lot of the foundational work of the community building aspect of Restorative Practices so they are learning who they are.” “Students who feel safe will take on more risk and that’s where the area of growth really tends to happen when student feel more vulnerable and have that support behind them in case they need an extra crutch.”

**Students:** Crew is a place where we learn a lot about each other. ... With that you also learn what not to say to them and what gets them mad.” “Empathy just goes a long way in general.” “People say for boys that they need to be tough, that they can’t really talk about their feelings. I feel like I’m allowed to at this school, cause they encourage during crew to talk about your feelings, like during circle. So I think that makes it a peaceful school.”

**Taron Williams:** “When you see students talking and using a talking piece or having a center piece, they are building relationships, they are building empathy for the person that is next to them. They are listening from their heart .... That’s what makes Restorative Practices so important and key is that it builds the whole student.”

## Level 1 & 2 of the Pyramid:

**Taron Williams:** "That middle layer is key ... because it really can like change the trajectory of where a conflict can go. If you are doing the work at those two levels, we'll have very little moments where there are larger like conflict circles where there may be a fight." "There are moments where we move into the second level of our Restorative Practices like in the event that something happens, where there's a little tiff or issue."

**Jose Rivera:** "As adults as we can model that kind of behavior. Now that student will take some of that modeling and apply it to their own lifestyle and it will then have a resonating effect in their immediate circle and ultimately an impact on the larger community."

**Student:** "It gives us more of a second chance, cause ... detention is just like you're being punished, you don't really have time to reflect on what you did and how we can move forward." Restorative Practices "gives us a chance to reflect, see where we went wrong, know where we went wrong and know how to fix it and what relationships can be built to fix the thing we did wrong."

## Level 3, Top of the Pyramid:

**Taron Williams:** "At any school that's practicing Restorative Practices, it should be a very small percentage of that (level 3 interventions) happening, if you are really trying to institute this culture into your school." "If we were in a school where we used a punitive lens, all four of those boys would have received suspensions."

**Students:** "We barely get suspended. If anything, that would get us more mad at each other." "If anything, we'll probably have more conflict." "You might think it's the other person's fault and the other person might think it's your fault, so, you just get more made at each other." "And then more conflict will happen but because of this [Restorative Practices] now everything is good." "We just talk about it and then solve it"

**Jose:** "I think as students learn to value the principles of Restorative Practices which is again building the positive relationships, which is healing, now we start to grow, as a unit as a collective, as a building, as a community."

**Taron:** "It's a shift in culture, almost like a wonderful song, like everything just works well."

## Session 41 – Restorative Practices Throughout the School Day, Part 2

### Materials

- Agenda charted on the board or chart paper, or provided as a handout
- Chart paper containing Community Agreements from Session 7
- AV equipment to play video: “Restorative Approaches to School Conflict Management” (elementary school)
- AV equipment to play video: “Restorative Justice at Oakland’s Fremont High” (secondary school)
- AV equipment to play video: “Talking It Out”
- Handout: “Restorative Conversations”

### Opening Ceremony

Read the following quote by former educator, now Senator, Jane Nelson:

“When our children make mistakes, how often are we criticizing them, scolding them, or yelling at them?... Where did we ever get the ... idea that in order to make children do better, first we have to make them feel worse? Think of the last time you felt humiliated or treated unfairly. Did you feel like cooperating or doing better?”

Have participants reflect on this quote as you introduce today’s session on Restorative Practices.



### Talk Participants Through Today’s Agenda

- Opening Ceremony: Senator Jane Nelson on When Our Children Make Mistakes
- Check agenda
- Restorative Approaches
- Journaling: A Student Who Disrupts Class
- Restorative Conversations
- Closing Ceremony: “They Need Us to Bring Them In”

## Restorative Approaches

Show one or both of the following videos, depending on the grade level(s) represented at your school:

- [Restorative Approaches to School Conflict Management](#) (elementary school)
- [Restorative Justice at Oakland's Fremont High](#) (secondary school)

The videos illustrate (once more) the pyramid of restorative practices and emphasize the importance of the foundation of the pyramid needing to be in place so that the practices higher up on the pyramid can be effective. Invite participants to pay attention to what additional points are made about restorative practices, in these videos:

Process the video using some or all of the following questions:

- What impressions, feelings, experiences or thoughts came up for you when watching the video?
- How do the educators in the video talk about restorative practices (proactive versus responsive practices, process over time, life skills)?
- What do the educators and/or students in the video say about school culture and belonging?
- What did the educators and students say about the restorative process?
- What is being said about being accountable and/or taking responsibility for our actions?
- How do you see this relating to the work you're doing at your school?
- How is your school culture the same/different from the culture at Callaway and/or Oakland Fremont High?

## Restorative Conversation: Language

Explain that for the rest of today we'll be exploring a scenario of a student who disrupts class. Set the stage for participants:

Imagine a student who you find out, early in the year, doesn't like you. The student is with you for a double period of a subject that isn't his favorite either. He complains that things in class are too quiet for him. This student is frequently late for class. He tends to create a bit of a scene as he walks into class, often loudly, right as you and the other students have settled in, ready for learning. Disrupting the quiet, he appears to aim for distracting his fellow students, some of whom really struggle with the academic content and need to be able to focus. You've asked him over, and over again, to please join and find his seat



quietly. But even when he does, it doesn't take long for him to start conversations with his neighbors.

Imagine this student walking into your class today. He is loud, trying to be the center of attention, disrupting the lesson you just got started on after spending the first few minutes of class transitioning and getting students' attention.

Ask participants to think about how they might handle a situation like this? For those who aren't classroom teachers, image how a similar situation might be handled in different settings in your school?



### Journaling

Invite participants to spend some time journaling, as they consider some of the following questions: What happened? Why? How might you handle the situation? What would you say? What language (if any) would you use to address the situation in the moment? What language (if any) would you use to address the situation at a different point?

As circle keeper, be sure to journal as well for your own personal reflection and healing.

### Restorative Conversations Handout

Distribute the Restorative Conversations Handout. Give participants some time to compare and contrast it what they wrote in their journals.

### Pair Share

Invite participants to turn to a partner to discuss the handout. What Impressions, Feelings, Experiences and/or Thoughts do they associate with the Restorative Conversation Handout?

### Large Group Discussion

Back in the main group, facilitate a short conversation, asking participants to share their Impressions, Feelings, Experiences and/or Thoughts about the scenario, what they wrote about it and the handout they discussed.

## Restorative Conversation Video

Explain that the following video filmed at Brooklyn School for Collaborative Studies in Brooklyn, NYC, where Morningside Center worked for many years to support the school's implementation of Restorative Practices. The video shows a teacher facilitating a restorative conversation with one of her 6<sup>th</sup> grade students, after a situation very much like the one we described earlier.

Show the Morningside Center video [Talking It Out](#)

After watching the video, facilitate a conversation with the group that touches on some or all of the following questions:

- What are your thoughts and feelings about this video?
- What did the teacher do that stood out for you?
- What did the student do that stood out for you?
- What was the student asked to do (reflect on his behavior)? How did that work out?
- How is it the same/different from some of the conversations happening at your school?

Explain that, depending on the behavior and/or incident you're trying to address, sometimes it's important to have conversations like this with two or more students separately, before bringing them together for a mediation, or other restorative intervention to problem solve or address a conflict.

**Note:** Situations of bullying and abuse are different in nature, and more serious. As a result, they require a different kind of intervention. For more information about this, and support, please contact Morningside Center for Teaching Social Responsibility.

## Restorative Conversation Role Play

Explain that we'll now be using a role play to practice a restorative conversation. Ask participants to find a partner they've not yet worked with today. In their pairs, partners will decide who will play the student in this situation and who the adult (dean, counselor, teacher, para, AP, etc.).

Explain that the power of role plays lies in the fact that it places the learner in a situation that closely resembles real life conditions, allowing them to practice and strengthen

(new) skills and approaches. Like with any skills in life, practice helps us to get better. We may not always know what to say or do in the moment, given the situation. Placing the learner in as realistic a situation as possible, increases on the job recall, knowledge transfer and reinforcement of particular skills and approaches.

In this way, role-plays can help us build our capacity and comfort with new ways of doing things. Habits take time to change and practice is an important part of such change.

There are clear steps to facilitating a role-play effectively, and participants should be introduced of the following guidelines:

- Participants should not use their own names or the name of anyone in their school
- Participants should conduct the role-play in a serious manner and not to use stereotypes or exaggerate any character in the role-play. The role play is a learning experience
- If participants state or display discomfort in participating in a particular role, they should be given the opportunity to take another role or to pass and be an observer who can give feedback on the role play instead
- The discussion at the end of a role-play is a vital component to bringing the role-play to closure and to ensure that participants learn from the experience.

Check if partners have decided who will take on what role. Provide each with their role and give them some time to read it over and consider how their character might be feeling right now.

Explain that in this case, the adult and the young person have met before and have a trusting relationship overall. Also, let's assume that the adult has already had some time with the student to connect with them if needed, has helped them de-escalate so that they can be centered and present as they start the restorative conversation. Tell participants that you'll give them 7-10 minutes for the conversation. At that point you'll check in with them to see where they're at and if they might need more time. The goal is not necessarily to wrap up the conversation or resolve the issue, but to try it out, both as the adult and the young person, to see what it's like engaging students in restorative ways.

Check in after 7-10 minutes. Give participants another 3-5 minutes depending on how engaged the participants are and how far along in the process. Stop the role plays so that time remains to debrief and process the activity. Let participants know that it's okay if they didn't resolve things fully. The assumption is that they all had a taste of what a

restorative conversation is like. Spend some time processing the experience, using some or all of the following questions:

- What was that like? For the adult? For the student?
- How is this the same/different from how these conversations are conducted between adults and young people at your school currently?
- How is this the same/different from how you usually conduct these conversations?
- Can you see this working at your school? Explain.
- Can you see this working with your students? Explain.
- Additional thoughts?

## Closing Ceremony

Read out loud this quote from the Oakland High School video earlier in the session:

“When they are in conflict, they need help. They don’t need us to push them out. They need us to bring them in.”

Invite participants to consider their Impressions, Feelings, Experiences, and/or Thoughts associated with this quote. Invite them to consider their experience as a student and/or their experience as educators. Ask some volunteers to share out as you close today’s session.

## Handout: Brave Space Tools: Social Justice Guidelines

### Guidelines for Our Time Together

- Make a goal of being open to and curious about new learnings. Be willing to grapple with new ideas.
- Acknowledge that there is a significant difference between an opinion and knowledge based on sound information. Everyone has an opinion. This is different from experience gained over time, studying a subject, practicing a discipline and/or scholarship.
- Know that you can always come back to your opinions, so you do not have to hold onto them tightly.
- Let go of personal anecdotal evidence and look at broader group-level patterns and experiences.
- If you feel defensive reactions to information or experiences, try to ask yourself: What am I able to learn in this moment about myself? Try to open up and resist shutting down or out.
- We are individuals AND we are members of socially constructed groups. These groups are unequally valued in society. Recognize how your social group identities inform your reactions to both the information presented and the presenters.
- There is a difference between “safety” and “comfort.” Being safe from violence and/or the threat of violence is an ongoing consideration for members of some racial groups.
- “Discomfort” is critical for growing racial equity.
- Keep focused on: “What does this mean for me and my life?”
- Identify your learning edge and push it. How can I take this deeper? How am I applying in practice what I already know?
- Be mindful of “taking space and making space” when making contributions.

*Adapted from the work of social justice educators Robin DiAngelo and Ozlem Sensoy*



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## Handout: Restorative Interventions Compare and Contrast



### Restorative Interventions Compare and Contrast

Conferences	Circles
Facilitator directs the dialogue – particularly early on	Talking piece regulates the dialogue
No discussion of values	Explicit discussion of values before discussing issues
Facilitator provides ground rules and asks group for additions	Group creation of guidelines
Process goes directly to the participants identify the issues	Do not jump directly into issues
No use of ceremony but rather opening and closing consistent with pre-meetings	Deliberate marking of space as a space apart through opening and closing ceremony
Facilitator does not participate as a stakeholder	Facilitator is also a participant

[morningsidecenter.org](http://morningsidecenter.org)

## Handout: Quotes from Restorative Practices in Crew at BCS

### Handout: Quotes from Restorative Practices in Crew at BCS

**Jose Rivera, BCS Restorative Practice Coordinator (RPC):** "Restorative Practices to me is a lifestyle. Restorative Practices means community, it means building relationships, it means healing. Receiving the support and having the high expectations. It means managing, fostering and building relationships that are constructive and then the healing process, understanding everyone's differences and the impact and the choices that they make."

#### Level 1/Foundation of the Pyramid:

**Taron Williams BCS Restorative Practice Coordinator (RPC):** The foundation of the pyramid "to me, that's the meat of Brooklyn Collaborative, like that's the heart, where we build this relationship with each other, where we can have those conversations." "Because you can't restore what you haven't built."

**Jose Rivera:** "Crew is a group of students with an advisor that meets daily for about 30 minutes and they do a lot of the foundational work of the community building aspect of Restorative Practices so they are learning who they are." "Students who feel safe will take on more risk and that's where the area of growth really tends to happen when student feel more vulnerable and have that support behind them in case they need an extra crutch."

**Students:** Crew is a place where we learn a lot about each other. ... With that you also learn what not to say to them and what gets them mad." "Empathy just goes a long way in general." "People say for boys that they need to be tough, that they can't really talk about their feelings. I feel like I'm allowed to at this school, cause they encourage during crew to talk about your feelings, like during circle. So I think that makes it a peaceful school."

**Taron Williams:** "When you see students talking and using a talking piece or having a center piece, they are building relationships, they are building empathy for the person that is next to them. They are listening from their heart .... That's what makes Restorative Practices so important and key is that it builds the whole student."

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### Level 1 & 2 of the Pyramid:

**Taron Williams:** "That middle layer is key ... because it really can like change the trajectory of where a conflict can go. If you are doing the work at those two levels we'll have very little moments where there are larger like conflict circles where there may be a fight." "There are moments where we move into the second level of our Restorative Practices like in the event that something happens, where there's a little tiff or issue."

**Jose Rivera:** "As adults as we can model that kind of behavior. Now that student will take some of that modeling and apply it to their own lifestyle and it will then have a resonating effect in their immediate circle and ultimately an impact on the larger community."

**Student:** "It gives us more of a second chance, cause ... detention is just like you're being punished, you don't really have time to reflect on what you did and how we can move forward." Restorative Practices "gives us a chance to reflect, see where we went wrong, know where we went wrong and know how to fix it and what relationships can be built to fix the thing we did wrong."

### Level 3, Top of the Pyramid:

**Taron Williams:** "At any school that's practicing Restorative Practices, it should be a very small percentage of that (level 3 interventions) happening, if you are really trying to institute this culture into your school." "If we were in a school where we used a punitive lens, all four of those boys would have received suspensions."

**Students:** "We barely get suspended. If anything that would get us more mad at each other." "If anything we'll probably have more conflict." "You might think it's the other person's fault and the other person might think it's your fault, so, you just get more made at each other." "And then more conflict will happen but because of this [Restorative Practices] now everything is good." "We just talk about it and then solve it"

**Jose:** "I think as students learn to value the principles of Restorative Practices which is again building the positive relationships, which is healing, now we start to grow, as a unit as a collective, as a building, as a community."

**Taron:** "It's a shift in culture, almost like a wonderful song, like everything just works well."

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