



The Circle Process: A restorative tool

Juvenile Justice Programme
Beyond Social Services



CIRCLE PROCESSES

- Dialogue on difficult issues and for community problem-solving.
- Circles provide an orderly and reflective process that reinforces positive values.



CIRCLE PROCESSES

Use of Circles are based on the premise that

- Each of us wants to be connected to others in a good way.
- Each of us is a valued member of the community and has a right to his or her beliefs.
- We all share some core values that indicate what connecting in a good way means (not easy but still present during difficult conversations or conflict).



Creating a Circle Space

- Careful preparation
- Hospitality when people arrive
- Thoughtful Opening
- Collective Creation of Guidelines
- Use of the Talking Piece



Focus on Relationship

- Start by helping participants connect with each other as human being
- Create ways for participants to talk about
 - who they are
 - what is important to them and
 - share significant life experience
- Vulnerability in speaking the truth: people need to trust and feel connected



Key Elements of Circles

- Ceremony
- Guidelines
- Talking Piece
- Circle Keepers
- Consensus Decision Making
- Storytelling
- Focus on Relationship



OPENING AND CLOSING CEREMONY

➤ Opening Ceremonies

- From ordinary life -> Circle
- Centering and grounding
- Acknowledge/Honor the presence of everyone in the circle

➤ Closing Ceremonies

- Acknowledge the efforts of the Circle
- Convey a sense of hope
- From Circle -> ordinary life



GUIDELINES OF CIRCLE PROCESSES

- Be respectful even though you may not always agree
- Speak only when you have the talking piece.
- Be honest and speak only for yourself
- Speak briefly so everyone who wants to has an opportunity to speak.
- Respect confidentiality
- There are no right or wrong answers in the circle



A TALKING PIECE

- Is an object of focus accepted and used by the group
- It is best if it has a symbolic meaning
- Provides greater opportunity for listening and reflection
- Prevents one-on-one debates
- Reinforces equality in the circle
- Provides more opportunity for those who are often silent to be heard



CIRCLE KEEPERS

- Do not control the circle but help participants uphold its integrity.
- Help to hold a space that is clear, open, respectful, and free.
- Are participants in the circle, **not observers or moderators**
- Is responsible to others to keep the values of the circle.



What is Consensus

- All participants are willing to live with the decision and support its implementation.
- It does not mean that everyone agrees with the decision personally. The wisdom of the community/group is respected by all participants.



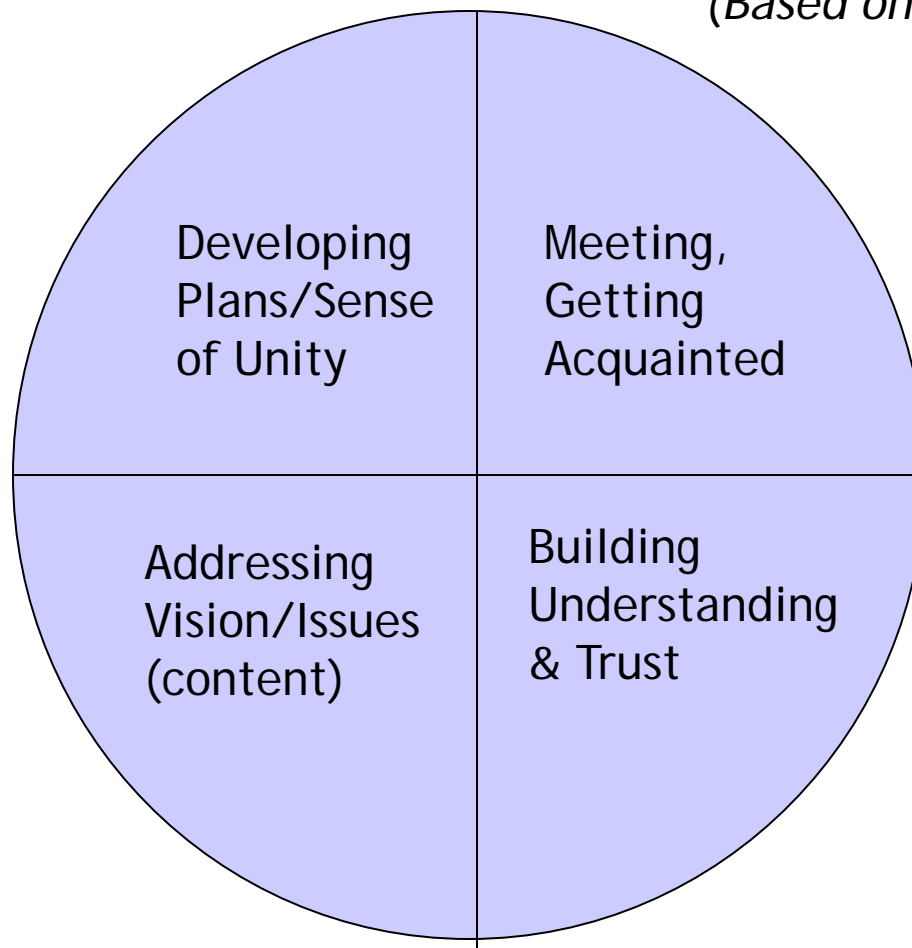
What If We Fail To Achieve Consensus

- A vote is taken or a leader or adult decides
- It does not mean that the circle was a failure. The views generated would have influenced decision making & would have been purposeful from a helping relationship point of view.



The Four Relational Elements of Circles

(Based on the Medicine Wheel)





DIFFERENT TYPES OF CIRCLE PROCESSES

- Talking
- Understanding
- Healing
- Sentencing
- Support
- Community-building
- Conflict
- Reintegration
- Celebration
- Farewell
- Beginning/End of the day
- School staff



Q & A