

# Peacebuilding Circle

## Step 1: pre-conferencing or circle preparation

Invite each person to meet.

Start with person who harmed, or person who was harmed, depending on the circumstances.

*Thanks for coming in. My name is \_\_\_\_\_. We've asked you here for a restorative process, which gives you a chance to talk about [the incident], think about how people have been impacted, and also about how to make things right.*

*If it feels right, we can bring together all the people who were impacted, but we are first meeting individually with folks to get a sense of where you're at. Is that ok with you?*

*So, tell me what happened.*

Gently prompt the person to give as detailed an account as possible, even if it takes some time.

Sample probing questions:

*You said you spoke to **(the person who was harmed)**, what exactly did you say?*

*Can you go back to the beginning of the night, when you first decided to...*

*What were you thinking about or feeling at the time?*

[As you're listening, you can be thinking about what kinds of support people might come to the conference].

**Sample questions, comments:**

*That sounds like a heavy burden for you to carry.*

*Do you have anyone to talk to about your feelings about **(this situation)**?*

*Who was impacted?*

*How do you think **[the people]** were impacted?*

A person may have a hard time thinking about who the other person was harmed.

Option: ask similar questions about the community, others.

*What are some things you might do to make things right with \_\_\_\_\_ **(the people who were harmed)**?*

Again, this might require your help and guidance.

**Step 2: Follow the same process with the others, using the restorative questions.**

**Step 3: Preparing for the Conference**

Based on what you've heard from the two parties, identify people who can be at the conference to support each party, appropriate resource people and community members who are impacted by the incident.

If there are large parties who will meet each other for the first time, consider taking extra time meeting with each group to practice discussing values, impacts and apology statements.

**Step 4: Restorative Conference.**

Option: Make agenda clear so people know what to expect

- Intro
- Check-in
- Guidelines
- Statements of Accountability/Apology and Impact Discussion
- Next steps
- Check-out

Intro to the circle (thank everyone for coming)

Introductions of the participants and check-ins.

Values/Guidelines (depending on time, at least say some basic guidelines).

Explain why we are here today (to discuss the incident of x date and time...)

Determine who will speak first. (Harmed parties decide—do they want to go first? Another option is to start with a statement of accountability from the responsible party.)

Statements of impact—ask the people who were harmed to explain how the incident has impacted them.

Community members are invited to speak.

Next rounds: How do you feel about everything you've heard here today?

Do you have something else you'd like to say?

What is needed to make things right?

Plan of Action (specific or general next steps)

Option: create categories for the plan (self/community/institution).

Option: Write down what people agree to do and have everyone sign it

Option: Make a large list of next steps based on everyone's ideas and then come back to it later.

Closing: reflect on today's experience/appreciate someone here today.