

# Peace Circles (Part 1)

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(Serve Fruit and Smoothies!)

**Purpose:** To introduce Peace Circles, why they are effective and to help people understand the differences between restorative and punitive justice.

**Time:**

1 hour and 20 minutes

**Materials**

- Butcher Paper and Markers
- Supplements: 1,2,3

**Activity: (5 Minutes)**

1. Prepare the room with 4 large pieces of butcher paper taped to the walls. Each paper has a different heading: Restore/Restorative, Punish/Punitive, Justice and Consequences.
2. The room is arranged so that the chairs are in a circle and everyone is facing toward each other.
3. The facilitator asks some questions to start a discussion:
  - Have you ever been accused of something?
  - Were you found guilty or innocent?
  - Did you feel that you were actually at fault?
  - What happened next? Did it help?
  - Were you ever a victim of something?
  - Who did you feel was at fault?
  - What happened? Did it help?

**Activity: (15 Minutes)**

1. Participants are asked to stand up, walk around the room and write on the butcher paper panels what they think the words mean to them. They are encouraged by telling them that there are no wrong answers.
2. Regroup as a circle and start discussing what has been written. Share with the participants some definitions of these terms. (Supplement 1)

**Activity: (15 Minutes)**

1. What form of justice are suspensions and detentions? (Punitive or Restorative)
2. Read: "Sent Down the Drain\*" in groups of 4 or 5. (Supplements 2A and 2B)
3. Discuss: "Sent Down the Drain\*" as a large group.
4. Will the suspensions in this example help the accused?
5. Will the suspensions in this example help the victims?

For further study see the Complete Discussion Questions for "Sent Down the Drain\*" by YWAT and Project NIA

**Activity: Peace Circles**

- **Defined: (15 Minutes)** While seated in large circle the facilitator asks if anyone has been part of a peace circle. Keep taking participant responses until exhausted. Then the youth facilitator briefly fills in any gaps describing how a peace circle works. (Supplement 3)
- **Vocabulary:** (Talking Peace, Peace Keeper.....)
- **4 Stages of a Peace Circle Activity: (15 Minutes)** Participants form small groups. Each groups is given 4 cards. (Supplement 4) On each card is 1 of the 4 stages of a peace circle. Without actually knowing the order of the 4 stages the group is challenged to work together to read the cards and place them in the proper order. The main group reforms and representatives from each group take turns telling what the correct order is and why they think so.
- **Guiding Principles or Commitments: (15 Minutes)** Participants form small groups. Each group is given 4 cards. (Supplement 5) On each card are the Guiding Principles or Commitments of a peace circle. The group is challenged to work together to read the cards and discuss them. The main group re-forms and, going around the circle, each member says which principle speaks to them the most and why. This is to learn about each other and learn about the Principles.

**Closer: Check in**

See how youth feel about what they have experienced so far.

\*The Suspension Stories Project and Billy Dee and Project NIA