On Our Terms Community Conversations Toolkit

Facilitation Guide & Circle Outlines for Continuing the Conversation in Community

Throughout the course of the On Our Terms participatory action research project, we had ten central themes emerge through which we can more deeply look into what building a restorative school community looks like. This toolkit provides guides for having community building circles about each of the ten themes from On Our Terms, so you can keep the conversation going in your schools, families, and communities. We hope that you'll use these as a starting point, but adapt them and make them your own!

What is this?

Each of these themes comes with recommendations for in-school implementation and policy shifts. But restorative justice practice teaches us that alongside any efforts to change institutions, we must also put effort into healing and deepening community relationships, and into building dialogue and shared understandings about the ideas raised by this project. While you may already be talking about some of these topics in your school, others might be new to your community. We created these circle outlines with the hope that they can help grow our movement; we offer them as a starting point and a guide for bringing more people into the conversation of what restorative culture can look like and how we can make it happen.

Who is this for?

These circles are intended as an intra-community tool for strengthening relationships and talking about the impacts of the themes and tensions within school-based restorative justice. Designed to be facilitated in the time it may take to teach a class in New York City schools, these circle outlines can be used with students, teachers, administrators, parents and families, and our communities at-large. For each theme, we have two sets of questions: one geared towards peer-to-peer discussions among young people, and one geared towards intergenerational discussions in and beyond the classroom (e.g., between students and school staff, young people and their families, or in organizing and other community spaces).

In both the peer-to-peer and intergenerational variations, there are three types of questions for every theme:

- **EXPLORE:** These are questions to build communal definitions and understandings around the topics at hand
- **SHARE EXPERIENCES:** These are questions to reflect on life experiences related to those topics and to share stories of impact or change
- **ENVISION:** These are questions that challenge us to use our understandings and experiences to think about action and the future

The purpose of these questions is to provide options for *beginning* these conversations, and we hope that you'll adapt them so they are most relevant and useful for you and your community. Especially in the context of a bell schedule, it is totally okay to just focus on one of these key questions! Our hope is that the dialogues these questions start around these questions aren't one-offs, but ongoing.

We also encourage you to use circle outlines and question sets that best meet your community's needs *right now*—and don't feel pressure to speed through all of these topics. For some, that might mean starting with the circle for Center Community & Healing, only with school staff; for others, that might mean intergenerational conversations about how we define safety with students, their families, and school staff. Not all of these questions are easy, and many require a sense of trust and vulnerability in order to engage with them. Take your time to build the relationships that will make these sorts of conversations possible.

How do I use it?

We hope that these conversations can take place through the framework of restorative justice circles, and recommend that they are held by people with experiences in keeping those circles (for more guidance on this, please check out our resources page!). For those unfamiliar with these community building processes, restorative justice circles build community through embodying restorative principles; they ask community members to come and share space to storytell, reflect, and dream together.

Each of these circles typically include a **TALKING PIECE**, or a token that can be passed around the circle to uplift and acknowledge each voice in the space and to amplify the roles of both speaker and listener, and a **CENTERING PIECE**, or a tangible symbol of why people have gathered that can be used to ground, and recenter throughout a conversation. These pieces can often be determined by the facilitator or circle keeper.

In each of the following circle outlines, you'll also find the following components:

- **GROUND AND CONNECT:** This is a way to settle into the space together through relationship building and a chance to both see and acknowledge one another in the space. These

responses can be shared out in pairs, in a circle round verbally, or by writing them down and placing them visibly or in the circle center.

- **COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS:** This is a way to build norms around how we want to treat one another in the space, specifically through thinking about what behaviors we can embody to build towards a more restorative world. If you already belong to a space that has made community agreements or guidelines together, feel free to use and return to those.
- **CRITICAL QUESTIONS:** These questions are to guide a conversation around each theme, through exploring what it is all about, what it might mean to people in the space, and how we can envision a future that embodies it. We encourage you to use the questions you feel can really cultivate dialogue among your community.
- **CLOSING:** This is a way to close out the space together, on a note of possibility and action. These responses can be shared through one word responses, silent reflections, or moments to write and journal.

1. Center Community & Healing: Circle Outlines

This circle outline is a part of a larger facilitation guide and community conversations toolkit from On Our Terms. Check out the full toolkit on onourterms.nyc if you want more background and guidance on how to use this tool.

GROUND AND CONNECT

1. Share the following quote from the On Our Terms project:
   "...most people, when they show up to a place where they feel welcome, they show up more as themselves, even if they're not sure who that is yet. And I'm not just talking about kids, I'm talking about staff too.... it's all these different root connections happening at once, in all these different directions, and the hierarchy starts to peel away. Definitely power dynamics still exist, but we're able to act more as members of the community, instead of just roles in the community."
2. If you could glow a color at all times, which color would you glow and why?

COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS

1. What are agreements that you want to hold yourself and each other to? When we think of these agreements, we can think not only about agreements for this space, but the kinds of things you would like to see from the world behind you? Below are some starting agreements to kick us off (Note: If you are in a space that meets regularly and has agreements already established, feel free to you use those, and ask each participant to pick one to focus on that they are really strong at supporting the group through, and one they would like to tend to improving).
   a. One mic, and speak from a place of "I"/our own experience
   b. Active listening
   c. Confidentiality, or the stories stay here but the lessons leave
   d. If you say something that you think might have hurt somebody, say "Oops" and we can pause to address it; If you say something that you have been hurt by, say "Ouch," and we can pause to address it
   e. Passing is always an option

CRITICAL QUESTIONS

Peer-to-peer circle

1. **EXPLORE.** What messaging have you received about who needs to heal, or how that healing might happen?
2. **SHARE EXPERIENCES.** Can you share a time when you had a sense of belonging with others? How did it feel for you?
3. **ENVISION.** Describe your dream community. What does it look like and feel like? What are friendships and relationships like there?

Intergenerational circle

1. **EXPLORE.** What does healing mean to you?
2. **SHARE EXPERIENCES.** Can you think of a time when you felt yourself experiencing healing? Who was with you, and what role did they play? What did you need during that time?
3. **ENVISION.** What would your community look like if it was equipped with what people needed to heal?

CLOSING

1. Read the following recommendations around centering community and healing in schools:
    a. Integrate restorative circles and other opportunities for relationship building, sharing personal experiences, and reflection throughout school life, including in classrooms, advisory, staff meetings, and community-wide events.
    b. Create community-wide gatherings for reflection and celebration with students, their families, and staff, such as town halls, rallies, and family nights, with an emphasis on strengthening intergenerational bonds, storytelling, and sharing hopes and ideas for the future of the school.
    c. Ensure administrators support staff through regular meetings that focus on the changing needs of teaching and support staff. If an administration is able to hold the needs of their staff, it increases capacity for staff to hold the needs of their students.
2. After hearing these ideas, close out by writing down a place you would like to focus on making stronger relationships within. If there is a physical map of the community available, you can have people check out by marking where their space is on the map, and if not, simply sharing out.

2. Transform Culture: Circle Outlines

This circle outline is a part of a larger facilitation guide and community conversations toolkit from On Our Terms. Check out the full toolkit on onourterms.nyc if you want more background and guidance on how to use this tool.

GROUND AND CONNECT

1. Share the following quote from the On Our Terms project:
   "Leadership actually needs to be involved. But the members of the school community have to be stakeholders in the restorative justice process... Parents, students, caretakers, maybe even community members... someone who works at a restaurant in the area or someone who interacts with our young people on a daily basis. Because it all comes back to relationships with our young people. And so the big ideas sometimes come from leadership, but it takes a community of folks who are like, 'We are going to live and breathe and be restorative and transformative justice.' That's what I see in my context really, really pushing the work and moving us past those big ideas and actually doing it."
2. If you could be any container, what container would you be and why?

COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS

1. What are agreements that you want to hold yourself and each other to? When we think of these agreements, we can think not only about agreements for this space, but the kinds of things you would like to see from the world behind you? Below are some starting agreements to kick us off (Note: If you are in a space that meets regularly and has agreements already established, feel free to you use those, and ask each participant to pick one to focus on that they are really strong at supporting the group through, and one they would like to tend to improving).
   a. One mic, and speak from a place of "I"/our own experience
   b. Active listening
   c. Confidentiality, or the stories stay here but the lessons leave
   d. If you say something that you think might have hurt somebody, say "Oops" and we can pause to address it; If you say something that you have been hurt by, say "Ouch," and we can pause to address it
   e. Passing is always an option

CRITICAL QUESTIONS

Peer-to-peer circle

1. **EXPLORE.** What do you understand about punishment in society? Who do you see carrying out punishment?
2. **SHARE EXPERIENCES.** Can you think of a time that you were in conflict with somebody you cared about or loved? How did you treat them, or how were you treated?

3. **ENVISION.** If we all knew the experiences one another has been through, how do you think the way we respond to one another in moments of harm or hurt change?

Intergenerational circle

1. **EXPLORE.** When you think about your own culture, what comes to mind? What do those things mean to you?
2. **SHARE EXPERIENCES.** Can you remember a time where a community member supported you in a way that felt important or unique? What was that like?
3. **ENVISION.** What are the steps we need to take in order to better care for one another across the community? What parts of your culture are already contributing to that?

CLOSING

1. Read the following recommendations around transforming culture in schools:
    a. Institute a restorative justice action team of staff, students, and parents to guide the development and implementation of restorative justice in the school, ensuring there is a critical mass of people within the school pushing this work forward, rather than a single individual or an external group.
    b. Ensure that teaching staff and administrators actively participate in circles alongside students, breaking hierarchical norms within the community. By building buy-in with staff, it ensures the growth of restorative justice as a community wide practice that is also breaking traditional structural norms
    c. Leadership must build in time and settings to unpack ideas about discipline, learn about the school-to-prison pipeline, and look at relevant NYC and school-based data (e.g., on suspensions and disparities), and how it all connects to growing restorative justice in schools. While these conversations should begin with school staff, they should grow to include students and their families.
2. After hearing these, close out with asking people to fill in the blanks of the sentence, “My first day of school, I used to be _____, but now I am _____,” either in writing or out loud. If we have all experienced transformation and change in who we are within our schools, then surely we have the power to create that change as well.

3. Prioritize Racial Justice: Circle Outlines

This circle outline is a part of a larger facilitation guide and community conversations toolkit from On Our Terms. Check out the full toolkit on onourterms.nyc if you want more background and guidance on how to use this tool.

GROUND AND CONNECT

1. Share the following quote from the On Our Terms project:
   "When we had to talk about race and the problems, it was really awkward because I feel like a lot of people didn't want to offend somebody when we talk about privilege... and that's what made it really hard to get the truth out... Talking with other students about (racism)... they thought that all that stuff was like history, they didn't know that that stuff was still happening today... That's a privilege that you're not aware of the things that are happening"
2. Who is a leader from the past that inspires you? Have participants write down their responses and offer them to the circle as the Centering Piece.

COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS

1. What are agreements that you want to hold yourself and each other to? When we think of these agreements, we can think not only about agreements for this space, but the kinds of things you would like to see from the world behind you? Below are some starting agreements to kick us off (Note: If you are in a space that meets regularly and has agreements already established, feel free to you use those, and ask each participant to pick one to focus on that they are really strong at supporting the group through, and one they would like to tend to improving).
   a. One mic, and speak from a place of "I"/our own experience
   b. Active listening
   c. Confidentiality, or the stories stay here but the lessons leave
   d. If you say something that you think might have hurt somebody, say "Oops" and we can pause to address it; If you say something that you have been hurt by, say "Ouch," and we can pause to address it
   e. Passing is always an option

CRITICAL QUESTIONS

Peer-to-peer circle

1. **EXPLORE.** What are the ways you see race coming up in education, whether in schools at-large or in classrooms?
2. **SHARE EXPERIENCES.** Can you share a time where you remember seeing yourself represented, or not, in the classroom? What did you learn from those moments?

3. **ENVISION.** What does an anti-racist educatior look like? How might they teach, and how might they respond to or care for students?

Intergenerational circle

1. **EXPLORE.** Why is it important to you to know your own history? How does it change your day-to-day life?
2. **SHARE EXPERIENCES.** How has race impacted the way you experience community, or how you build relationships with others?
3. **ENVISION.** What would a society look like where everybody has an awareness of their own people's or culture's history? How would things change?

CLOSING

1. Read the following recommendations around prioritizing racial justice in schools:
    a. Implement culturally-sustaining curricula, with young people involved in the planning and teaching of lessons that reflect them and their experiences.
    b. Use community-building spaces (e.g., advisory, staff meeting) to process experiences of racism and other forms of oppression, and to help increase student and staff comfort in having these community conversations.
    c. Create student-directed opportunities to learn about systems of oppression (racism, misogyny, colonialism, etc.) and social justice issues that matter to students, including open conversations about their impacts alongside imagining what possibilities the future can hold if we address them. This may include student-led community building circles or town halls on these topics.
2. After hearing one another's responses, and these ideas for change in the community, what is a question or curiousity you are leaving with? Write it down on a piece of paper, and come back to it over the coming days, and see what you find.

4. Make Rituals & Relationships: Circle Outlines

This circle outline is a part of a larger facilitation guide and community conversations toolkit from On Our Terms. Check out the full toolkit on onourterms.nyc if you want more background and guidance on how to use this tool.

GROUND AND CONNECT

1. Share the following quote from the On Our Terms project:
   "Before students went to their classes [every morning], we spent 15 minutes just doing community building, led by students... with the support of their advisors. There was a lot of student empowerment, but also a space of joy and celebration. It became a community ritual... This was such an important part of our restorative community because it helps students think of even circles... not as something where you go when you've done something wrong, but as something that you also come together to... just build community... But also a place where, when there was community wide harm... we could address it."
2. Draw a small map of a place that is important to you, no smaller than a room and no bigger than a neighborhood. Choose three words to describe moments that have happened there.

COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS

1. What are agreements that you want to hold yourself and each other to? When we think of these agreements, we can think not only about agreements for this space, but the kinds of things you would like to see from the world behind you? Below are some starting agreements to kick us off (Note: If you are in a space that meets regularly and has agreements already established, feel free to you use those, and ask each participant to pick one to focus on that they are really strong at supporting the group through, and one they would like to tend to improving).
   a. One mic, and speak from a place of "I"/our own experience
   b. Active listening
   c. Confidentiality, or the stories stay here but the lessons leave
   d. If you say something that you think might have hurt somebody, say "Oops" and we can pause to address it; If you say something that you have been hurt by, say "Ouch," and we can pause to address it
   e. Passing is always an option

CRITICAL QUESTIONS

Peer-to-peer circle

1. **EXPLORE.** What are the things you feel you need to do on a daily basis? Why are they important parts of your schedule or routine?

2. **SHARE EXPERIENCES.** Is there somebody in your life you would want to communicate with more regularly? What is your relationship like with that person, or what would more time to communicate with them allow you to do?
3. **ENVISION.** If you were tasked with leading a weekly space for community members to come together and reflect, what ideas or topics would you want to talk about?

Intergenerational circle

1. **EXPLORE.** What do you think of when you hear the word "ritual"? What rituals have you seen in your community?
2. **SHARE EXPERIENCES.** Can you tell us about an experience you have had that could have benefitted from more time to build relationships or understandings?
3. **ENVISION.** Who in your community could benefit from time to regularly connect and communicate? Where and when could that take place?

CLOSING

1. Read the following recommendations around making rituals and relationships in school:
    a. Integrate community-building circles into the routine for all students, staff, and families (via student advisory, staff meetings, family events, etc.) to foster the development of relationships and familiarity with restorative justice practices in a non-conflict setting.
    b. Use advisory as a consistent space to center student needs and voices in the classroom, integrating student co-facilitation of community-building circles.
    c. Encourage staff to model vulnerability, talking about feelings, asking for help, and learning from mistakes in front of colleagues, students, and their families, in circles and other interactions.
2. After hearing one another's responses and these ideas for change in the community, who is somebody you want to continue this conversation with this week?

5. Reimagine Safety, Together: Circle Outlines

This circle outline is a part of a larger facilitation guide and community conversations toolkit from On Our Terms. Check out the full toolkit on onourterms.nyc if you want more background and guidance on how to use this tool.

GROUND AND CONNECT

1. Share the following quote from the On Our Terms project:
   "The connection between emotional and physical safety... A lot of physical altercations... stem from people not feeling emotionally safe. If you create a space where people feel emotionally safe, like the other types of safety are kind of already built in there.... I feel safe when I feel like people see me for my whole self... No one's going to come at me if I make a mistake or do something wrong, that they'll nurture me and help guide me through that. But I won't be chastised or excommunicated if I'm not doing everything right."
2. What's an object in your life that makes you feel safe? With a partner, share the story of how you came to have it.

COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS

1. What are agreements that you want to hold yourself and each other to? When we think of these agreements, we can think not only about agreements for this space, but the kinds of things you would like to see from the world behind you? Below are some starting agreements to kick us off (Note: If you are in a space that meets regularly and has agreements already established, feel free to you use those, and ask each participant to pick one to focus on that they are really strong at supporting the group through, and one they would like to tend to improving).
   a. One mic, and speak from a place of "I"/our own experience
   b. Active listening
   c. Confidentiality, or the stories stay here but the lessons leave
   d. If you say something that you think might have hurt somebody, say "Oops" and we can pause to address it; If you say something that you have been hurt by, say "Ouch," and we can pause to address it
   e. Passing is always an option

CRITICAL QUESTIONS

Peer-to-peer circle

1. **EXPLORE.** Who do you see currently defining safety in your community? What might their definition of safety be?
2. **SHARE EXPERIENCES.** What are the spaces in your life where you define your own rules and responsibilities? What does it feel like to be there?

3. **ENVISION.** In listening to what makes other people feel safe, how would you define what safety is? What does it feel like or look like?

Intergenerational circle

1. **EXPLORE.** Where are the places, or who are the people that you feel the safest with? What about them helps you to feel safe?
2. **SHARE EXPERIENCES.** Can you think of a moment where somebody responded to a situation in a way that was different than how you would have responded? What did it make you feel or think about?
3. **ENVISION.** What can a community look like where everybody has a role to keep one another safe? How would that change your day-to-day life?

CLOSING

1. Read the following recommendations around reimagining safety, together:
    a. Ensure that key community spaces, including school leadership meetings and student advisories, include regular discussions with parents, students, and educators about safety in the school community, including definitions of safety, current needs, personal experiences, and ideas for promoting safety in the school community.
    b. Incorporate safety and accountability into all job or role descriptions in the school community (not defined through means of policing), demonstrating how safety is created and maintained by the entire community.
    c. Develop and publicize a list of mental health resources and social supports in your school and neighborhood, with the participation of students, families, and local community partners.
2. After hearing these ideas for change, what's a place in your community that you think could benefit from a conversation about safety? Who do you think is best suited to lead that conversation? Is it you?

6. Respond to Harm as a Community: Circle Outlines

This circle outline is a part of a larger facilitation guide and community conversations toolkit from On Our Terms. Check out the full toolkit on onourterms.nyc if you want more background and guidance on how to use this tool.

GROUND AND CONNECT

1. Share the following quote from the On Our Terms project:
   "I'm thinking about normalizing conflict. The idea that restorative practice is absent of problems in a building is not true, we're humans and conflict does exist. So, thinking differently about what type of conflict is it. Is it physical conflict? Is it emotional conflict? Like just normalizing that it will happen and how are we deciding to deal with it so that everybody feels safe? With the understanding that you WILL be in conflict with others... and work from that understanding that conflict won't be erased, but that there are healthier ways of handling it."
2. If you had to get rid of one flavor of ice cream, which would you get rid of?

COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS

1. What are agreements that you want to hold yourself and each other to? When we think of these agreements, we can think not only about agreements for this space, but the kinds of things you would like to see from the world behind you? Below are some starting agreements to kick us off (Note: If you are in a space that meets regularly and has agreements already established, feel free to you use those, and ask each participant to pick one to focus on that they are really strong at supporting the group through, and one they would like to tend to improving).
   a. One mic, and speak from a place of "I"/our own experience
   b. Active listening
   c. Confidentiality, or the stories stay here but the lessons leave
   d. If you say something that you think might have hurt somebody, say "Oops" and we can pause to address it; If you say something that you have been hurt by, say "Ouch," and we can pause to address it
   e. Passing is always an option

CRITICAL QUESTIONS

Peer-to-peer circle

1. **EXPLORE.** Why do you think conflict might be an important part of any community? What can we potentially learn from it?
2. **SHARE EXPERIENCES.** In your life, what is something that you have learned through making mistakes? How have those things impacted you?

3. **ENVISION.** If you were to make another mistake, how would you want the people around you, or even yourself, to respond? How would you want to be treated at that moment?

Intergenerational circle

1. **EXPLORE.** What skills or resources exist in your community to understand or respond to conflict? What do they do?
2. **SHARE EXPERIENCES.** Can you remember a time when your community responded to conflict in ways that resulted in positive change or learning? What happened?
3. **ENVISION.** What do you think your community could do to change the way they respond to moments where others create harm or make mistakes? Is there something you want to keep in mind in the future when it might happen?

CLOSING

1. Read the following recommendations around holding harm as a community:
    a. Create a simple, accessible process for anybody in the school community to request a circle, with designated people and time to respond to those requests.
    b. Develop clear steps for before, during, and after circles, to support transparency and follow-up. This may include, but is not limited to: sharing facilitation questions with participants before circles (get consent); asking about needs of those involved and map out potential supports (center healing); determining the best suited facilitator and support people (build on relationships); and designating accountability partners and key dates for follow-up on action steps after a circle is complete (seek transformation).
    c. Discuss privilege, oppression, and other relevant institutional or structural forces in preparing and facilitating restorative circles, considering the ways in which these structural forces and related personal experiences may be important to understanding the specific instance of harm, and for those involved to feel their experiences are being acknowledged and taken seriously.
2. As you listen to these recommendations, write down a way that you can better show up for your community in times of conflict. If time permits, share them out loud and create a list that can continue to grow in the community.

7. Democratize Schools: Circle Outlines

This circle outline is a part of a larger facilitation guide and community conversations toolkit from On Our Terms. Check out the full toolkit on onourterms.nyc if you want more background and guidance on how to use this tool.

GROUND AND CONNECT

1. Share the following quote from the On Our Terms project:
   "The problem with schools is that they are too hierarchical, and I'm a big advocate for seeing democratic schools... you need to have student voice. But it needs to be a process of involving everyone in the community to really shape their vision of the school. So I don't think it can be done in one day... [or] in just a conversation with a principal. I think it's from the ground up really shaping, creating, co-creating a school."
2. Take a moment to ground in your body by taking three deep breaths. With your eyes closed and without lifting your pen or pencil, draw a self-portrait.

COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS

1. What are agreements that you want to hold yourself and each other to? When we think of these agreements, we can think not only about agreements for this space, but the kinds of things you would like to see from the world behind you? Below are some starting agreements to kick us off (Note: If you are in a space that meets regularly and has agreements already established, feel free to you use those, and ask each participant to pick one to focus on that they are really strong at supporting the group through, and one they would like to tend to improving).
   a. One mic, and speak from a place of "I"/our own experience
   b. Active listening
   c. Confidentiality, or the stories stay here but the lessons leave
   d. If you say something that you think might have hurt somebody, say "Oops" and we can pause to address it; If you say something that you have been hurt by, say "Ouch," and we can pause to address it
   e. Passing is always an option

CRITICAL QUESTIONS

Peer-to-peer circle

1. Explore. When making a decision, what things do you typically think about? What is important to you in making choices?
2. Share Experiences. Can you think of a time where you were included in a decision making process by somebody else? What was that like for you?

3. Envision. If you had the responsibility to make choices for your school community, what kind of changes would you want to make? Who would you want to make those changes with?

Intergenerational circle

1. Explore. Can you think of a community where one person makes a decision? Where a group of people make decisions together? What similarities or differences do you see in those spaces?
2. Share Experiences. Can you think of a time where a decision was made that impacted you, but you weren't a part of the decision making process? What was that like?
3. Envision. What could happen to a community that makes decisions together? What possibilities might come?

CLOSING

1. Read the following recommendations around democratizing schools:
    a. Create opportunities for staff and students to jointly plan and facilitate Intergenerational circle community building circles (e.g., on community norms and agreements), co-facilitate responses to staff-student conflict, and provide training on restorative justice to youth and adult members of the student community.
    b. Ensure that teaching staff and administrators actively participate in circles alongside students, breaking hierarchical norms within the community and helping institute circles as a community-wide, democratic practice.
    c. Involve young people and their families at every decision-making space that impacts their experiences in the school community, such as the school leadership team, school safety meetings, grade team meetings, and restorative justice action team meetings.
2. As you think about these recommendations, if you were to lead a conversation in your school, what topics of concerns would you bring up? Let's take a couple minutes to brainstorm as many as we can, in closing.

8. Let Youth Lead: Circle Outlines

This circle outline is a part of a larger facilitation guide and community conversations toolkit from On Our Terms. Check out the full toolkit on onourterms.nyc if you want more background and guidance on how to use this tool.

GROUND AND CONNECT

1. Share the following quote from the On Our Terms project:
   "Our school definitely promoted students acknowledging and using their own voices to implement change rather than having somebody speak for us... Our school is guiding us to make our own decisions and healthy decisions that we can use after we leave high school."
2. What is something you really liked as a child? What is one thing you really like now?

COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS

1. What are agreements that you want to hold yourself and each other to? When we think of these agreements, we can think not only about agreements for this space, but the kinds of things you would like to see from the world behind you? Below are some starting agreements to kick us off (Note: If you are in a space that meets regularly and has agreements already established, feel free to you use those, and ask each participant to pick one to focus on that they are really strong at supporting the group through, and one they would like to tend to improving).
   a. One mic, and speak from a place of "I"/our own experience
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   c. Confidentiality, or the stories stay here but the lessons leave
   d. If you say something that you think might have hurt somebody, say "Oops" and we can pause to address it; If you say something that you have been hurt by, say "Ouch," and we can pause to address it
   e. Passing is always an option

CRITICAL QUESTIONS

Peer-to-peer circle

1. **EXPLORE.** What does it mean to you to be a leader? Where do you see leaders in your community?
2. **SHARING EXPERIENCES.** Can you think of a time when a decision was made in school that would have been different, had you been a part of the decision making process?
3. **ENVISION.** How do you think a student's experience in school would change if they had a role in making decisions for their school community? What would change?

Intergenerational circle

1. **EXPLORE.** Why is your voice important? What do you want to bring or give to the people around you?
2. **SHARING EXPERIENCES.** Can you tell us about a time that you felt like a leader. What were you doing? Who were you leading with?
3. **ENVISION.** Imagine if there were youth in every decision making space in a community... What do you think would change in your community?

CLOSING

1. Read the following recommendations around letting youth lead in schools:
    a. Integrate peer mentorship within the school culture generally and restorative justice specifically, with young people sharing skills, knowledge, and support with other young people.
    b. Support all students in learning to facilitate community building circles as a routine part of school culture (e.g., in advisory, or classroom discussions), growing leadership skills and relationships among students.
    c. Train interested students to facilitate restorative circles and provide other forms of support in response to harm, expanding capacity to respond to harm within schools, as well as fostering youth leadership in restorative justice beyond the school community. Some schools have structured these efforts as an elective class or internship.
2. Thinking about the thing you liked as a child and the thing you like now, what do you think is the relationship between those things? What might that say about who you are today as a leader?

9. Build with Families & Neighbors: Circle Outlines

This circle outline is a part of a larger facilitation guide and community conversations toolkit from On Our Terms. Check out the full toolkit on onourterms.nyc if you want more background and guidance on how to use this tool.

GROUND AND CONNECT

1. Share the following quote from the On Our Terms project:
   "Being able to incorporate families also really made it [RJ] feel like it was working... That it could extend to the larger community and not just happen within the confines of a school, but that it could reach community and family.... having families agree to come in and meet with the team and sit with their kids and unpack really difficult ideas. That they trusted people enough to come and say, yeah, I will do this... and not in a way that it felt like I'll do this because if I don't, my child is going to get suspended or something like that... It was just like we want you to come do this and they were like, We want to do it."
2. If you were an item in the kitchen, what would you be an why?

COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS

1. What are agreements that you want to hold yourself and each other to? When we think of these agreements, we can think not only about agreements for this space, but the kinds of things you would like to see from the world behind you? Below are some starting agreements to kick us off (Note: If you are in a space that meets regularly and has agreements already established, feel free to you use those, and ask each participant to pick one to focus on that they are really strong at supporting the group through, and one they would like to tend to improving).
   a. One mic, and speak from a place of "I"/our own experience
   b. Active listening
   c. Confidentiality, or the stories stay here but the lessons leave
   d. If you say something that you think might have hurt somebody, say "Oops" and we can pause to address it; If you say something that you have been hurt by, say "Ouch," and we can pause to address it
   e. Passing is always an option

CRITICAL QUESTIONS

Peer-to-peer circle

1. **EXPLORE.** What have you learned from your family or community about what it means to have each others' backs or to support one another?
2. **SHARE EXPERIENCES.** Think about some of the places you go on a daily basis— Who are the people in those spaces who you look to for wisdom or advice? What have you learned from those people?

3. **ENVISION.** In what instances do you think would be helpful to include parents, families, and community members in what happens at school? Why?

Intergenerational circle

1. **EXPLORE.** Can you think of places in your community where people interact across generations? What kind of experiences happen there?
2. **SHARE EXPERIENCES.** Can you remember a time where parents or families worked together to make something happen for the community? What did you learn from that?
3. **ENVISION.** In a time of need, who would you want to call on for help or care in your community? How do you think having that support system might impact yourself or others?

CLOSING

1. Read the following recommendations around school communities building with families and neighbors:
    a. Integrate parents and family members into community building and response to harm circles, including time outside of the school day that is accessible to parents. Making this possible requires taking into account family members' work schedules, the availability of translation services, the impact of community members coming into contact with and navigating interactions with school safety agents and metal detectors, and the nature of specific students' relationships with their family members.
    b. Integrate restorative practices like community circles within non-disciplinary contexts such as PTA meetings and parent teacher conferences or parent-teacher reading groups, providing opportunities for parents to engage in storytelling and reflection on behalf of their own lived experiences.
    c. Offer restorative justice and circle training to parents, and provide opportunities for parents to facilitate circles within the school community, with young people, staff, and other parents as co-facilitators.
2. After hearing one another's responses, what's a conversation you want to have with your family or neighborhood that you haven't been able to before?

10. Invest in Care, Divest from Harm: Circle Outlines

This circle outline is a part of a larger facilitation guide and community conversations toolkit from On Our Terms. Check out the full toolkit on onourterms.nyc if you want more background and guidance on how to use this tool.

GROUND AND CONNECT

1. Share the following quote from the On Our Terms project:
   "I would redirect a lot more funding towards that [restorative justice], like to pay adults and young people too. A lot of our students had to stop getting involved in after school restorative work because they had jobs that they felt were necessary. And I wish that we could pay them to do the restorative work that they want to do to build our community. That would be incredible. But we don't have those sorts of resources right now.. for better or worse in our society, the things that are funded, the message underneath is, 'These are the things that are important, these are the things that are valuable.' So I would like to see more resources go to building up student power in our schools around restorative things."
2. If there was a book written about how you feel when you wake up in the morning, what would it be called?

COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS

1. What are agreements that you want to hold yourself and each other to? When we think of these agreements, we can think not only about agreements for this space, but the kinds of things you would like to see from the world behind you? Below are some starting agreements to kick us off (Note: If you are in a space that meets regularly and has agreements already established, feel free to you use those, and ask each participant to pick one to focus on that they are really strong at supporting the group through, and one they would like to tend to improving).
   a. One mic, and speak from a place of "I"/our own experience
   b. Active listening
   c. Confidentiality, or the stories stay here but the lessons leave
   d. If you say something that you think might have hurt somebody, say "Oops" and we can pause to address it; If you say something that you have been hurt by, say "Ouch," and we can pause to address it
   e. Passing is always an option

CRITICAL QUESTIONS

Peer-to-peer circle

1. **EXPLORE.** What are things you see in schools and communities that impact a sense of trust? What are the things you see that build it?

2. **SHARE EXPERIENCES.** What practices in your community have prevented you from showing up as yourself?
3. **ENVISION.** If you were to create new jobs in your community to keep one another safe, what would those be? Who would you want to be in those roles?

Intergenerational circle

1. **EXPLORE.** What are the mental health resources that currently exist in your community? Who has access to those? How?
2. **SHARE EXPERIENCES.** Can you think back to your first time in your school building or school community? What were the things that surprised you, and how did you feel about them?
3. **ENVISION.** If you had to decide what resources went into your community, what would you make or create that does not exist now? How would it change life for people?

CLOSING

1. Read the following recommendations around investing in care and divesting from harm in school:
    a. Fund positions that develop community and restorative practices in every school, including restorative justice coordinators, social workers, guidance counselors, and other support staff (e.g., community assistant, paraprofessionals), ensuring that all students have access to mental health professionals and other supportive adults. These should be permanent positions with long-term funding sources to avoid frequent, disruptive staff turnover.
    b. Create community safety worker positions within schools, not employed by the NYPD and that do not have a policing role, who are responsible for violence prevention and responses in school communities; such a program might be modeled after community violence interrupters or credible messenger initiatives.
    c. Divest from the Department of Education's $425M contract with NYPD for metal detectors and NYPD-employed School Safety Agents in schools, and reallocate those funds towards the hiring needs described above.
2. What does it mean to you to "Invest in Care and Divest from Harm"? Fill in the following sentence with new words: "We need to invest in _____ and divest from _____."