

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 _____."