

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 educator 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 curiosity 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.