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?