

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?