

## 8. Let Youth Lead: Circle Outlines

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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](https://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
  - 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 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?