

## 9. Build with Families & Neighbors: 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](http://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:  
*“Being able to incorporate families also really made it [RJ] feel like it was working... That it could extend to the larger community and not just happen within the confines of a school, but that it could reach community and family.... having families agree to come in and meet with the team and sit with their kids and unpack really difficult ideas. That they trusted people enough to come and say, yeah, I will do this... and not in a way that it felt like I'll do this because if I don't, my child is going to get suspended or something like that... It was just like we want you to come do this and they were like, We want to do it.”*
2. If you were an item in the kitchen, what would you be an why?

### 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 have you learned from your family or community about what it means to have each others’ backs or to support one another?
2. **SHARE EXPERIENCES.** Think about some of the places you go on a daily basis— Who are the people in those spaces who you look to for wisdom or advice? What have you learned from those people?

3. **ENVISION.** In what instances do you think would be helpful to include parents, families, and community members in what happens at school? Why?

### Intergenerational circle

1. **EXPLORE.** Can you think of places in your community where people interact across generations? What kind of experiences happen there?
2. **SHARE EXPERIENCES.** Can you remember a time where parents or families worked together to make something happen for the community? What did you learn from that?
3. **ENVISION.** In a time of need, who would you want to call on for help or care in your community? How do you think having that support system might impact yourself or others?

### CLOSING

1. Read the following recommendations around school communities building with families and neighbors:
  - a. Integrate parents and family members into community building and response to harm circles, including time outside of the school day that is accessible to parents. Making this possible requires taking into account family members' work schedules, the availability of translation services, the impact of community members coming into contact with and navigating interactions with school safety agents and metal detectors, and the nature of specific students' relationships with their family members.
  - b. Integrate restorative practices like community circles within non-disciplinary contexts such as PTA meetings and parent teacher conferences or parent-teacher reading groups, providing opportunities for parents to engage in storytelling and reflection on behalf of their own lived experiences.
  - c. Offer restorative justice and circle training to parents, and provide opportunities for parents to facilitate circles within the school community, with young people, staff, and other parents as co-facilitators.
2. After hearing one another's responses, what's a conversation you want to have with your family or neighborhood that you haven't been able to before?