

Welcome Back after Suspension Circle



If a student has been out of school as a result of a disciplinary action, the student needs to reconnect with the school community in a positive way. This may include addressing any unresolved issues that caused the student to be excluded. Participants may include other students who were affected by the situation, parents, school staff, community volunteers, supporters for the student, as well as the student.

PURPOSE To reduce anxiety about the return of the student to the school by sharing perspectives or concerns; to affirm connections with multiple members of the school community for the student; to nurture a sense of unity toward success for everyone.

MATERIALS Talking piece, bell or sound maker, centerpiece items, paper plates, markers.

PREPARATION Arrange everyone in a circle of chairs with no other furniture.

Welcome to the space of the Circle.

MINDFULNESS MOMENT *Pause, breathe, and listen to the sound.*

OPENING See Appendix 2 or create your own.

INTRODUCE “ROUNDS” A round is a pass of the talking piece around the Circle. The keeper poses a question and, as a participant, usually answers first and then passes the talking piece to the person to their left or to their right. On the first round, participants are invited to say their name as well as respond to the question. Remember, it is always okay for a participant to pass.

MAIN ACTIVITY Reintegrating the Student in an Affirming Way That Also Addresses What Happened

ROUND *Introduce yourself and tell us how you know (name of student).*

ROUND *Please think of a value that is important for the well-being of (name of the student) and the school community. Write that value on the paper plate with the marker. When the talking piece comes to you, please share the value you wrote and why that value is important, and then place the paper plate in the center.*

Present basic guidelines for the Circle and check to make sure everyone can accept them.

ROUND *What are the strengths or capacities of (name of student) that s/he can bring to this school?*

ROUND *What strength or gift do each of you bring to support (name of student)'s success in school?*

ROUND *Are there lingering concerns about what happened before (name of student) was sent away that we need to talk about?*

Follow up with another round if concerns have been expressed.

ROUND *Is there any harm that needs to be repaired regarding this situation?*

ROUND *What steps are necessary for (name of student) and the school community to come together in the way that our values describe?*

Follow up with another round if that feels appropriate.

ROUND *What are your hopes or wishes for (name of student), and what can you do in the next two weeks to make those hopes a reality?*

CHECK-OUT ROUND *What are your last thoughts as we close this Circle?*

CLOSING Select a quote or reading from Appendix 2 or create your own.

Thank you to everyone!