



Los Angeles Unified School District
STUDENT HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Moving Forward Together

A guide to supporting healing and resiliency for your school community.

The art of progress is to preserve order amid change and to preserve change amid order.

– Alfred North Whitehead

Letter from Executive Director Pia V. Escudero

Dear School Leader,

Thank you for your efforts in providing a stable, safe learning and working environment during these historic times of ambiguity and uncertainty. You are not only an instructional leader, you are also a leader of the broader school community. As a leader, you have been and continue to be, charged with a wide variety of responsibilities that draw upon your ability to lead through change.

Labor negotiations and other significant events stoke passion and anxiety. Some communities bond during such times; others can become fractured. Now that the work stoppage and other disruptions have passed, it is important to return to normal operations as soon as possible, which includes addressing school climate and dynamics of your team.

We have developed this guide to support your efforts to ensure healing and resiliency by promoting on-going communication among students, families and staff focusing on safe, healthy, and affirming school environment. The talking points, self-care, and restorative justice activities are designed to support students, families and staff. We encourage you to work with your school team and UTLA representatives to provide staff and students an opportunity to debrief and reengage while resuming normal school operations. May this be a year to promote healing and support strength among your school community.

Sincerely,

Pia V. Escudero, L.C.S.W.
Executive Director
Student Health & Human Services

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Tips and Suggestions for Principals

“We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.”

Letter From a Birmingham Jail, Martin Luther King, Jr.

Be positive and affirming. Focus on unifying your staff. Emphasize community and caring for one another. Below are some ideas and suggestions for a safe and nurturing return to school:

- Provide welcoming/collegial environment for all stakeholders.
- Be welcoming of the students and teachers as they return to school. Greet them personally as they arrive.
- Put personal “welcome back” notes in the teachers’ sign-in or mailbox. Coffee and pastries are always appreciated.
- Avoid debating the merits of the strike or the outcome of the negotiations.
- Recognize the sacrifices made by the teachers and families who engaged in the work stoppage.
- Recognize the dedication that all teachers show to this chosen profession.
- Do not talk about how difficult (or easy) it was to manage the school in the teachers’ absence.
- Expect respect. Do NOT allow people to be shamed or maligned for how they responded to the work action. This is a time to turn toward each other.
- Ways to support your school community:
 - resume normal routines as soon as possible,
 - continue with regular schedules and events,
 - provide opportunities to debrief the disruption to the school, and
 - facilitate activities to reengage staff (see handouts for sample activities).
- Offer counseling support to those in need. Anxiety may be high for those who sacrificed financially to support the job action and/or for those who crossed the picket lines.
- Distribute the Psychological First Aid Handout and Self-Care Activities for Youth and Adults (attached) so staff are better equipped to support the students.

Working with Staff

Principals may wish to collaborate with school leadership teams (UTLA chapter chair, department chairs, grade level leads, etc.) before meeting with staff as a whole to coordinate how to best facilitate moving forward as a learning community.

Recognize that staff members may have been emotionally and financially taxed during this time. There has been national strife for years about the challenges that educators face. Honor the dedication and sacrifices of those in education.

Passions run high during labor negotiations. Whatever happened at the negotiation table, our job is to give our children, all children, the education that they deserve. There can be residual hard feelings because of the perception of “taking sides.” Some people may make walking the picket line a litmus of loyalty. Of course, people’s lives are more complex than that. Focus on areas of agreement, including that we all value our teachers and students and we all believe that education is the key to the future.

It’s not the same. There are many reasons why a staff member or parent chooses to picket, stay home, or cross the line. A person can support teachers and choose not to strike. It may take time to restore a collegial working relationship after lines in the sand have been drawn and breached. Most importantly, do not take a person’s participation in the strike personally. Adults should extend the same kindness to their colleagues as we expect our students to extend to each other.

Facilitate activities to help build staff camaraderie. Timing is a critical element in the successful implementation of activities. Use your best judgement as to when staff would be most amenable to these activities. Instructions are included for facilitating the **Just Like Me**, the **We Are One**, and **Restorative Circle** activities. The **Self-Care Activities for Youth and Adults** (see attachments) offer easy strategies to manage stress for students and staff alike.

Working with Families

Welcome families back. All parents support quality education. There are a multitude of reasons why a parent may have sent their child to school or kept them home during the work stoppage. Some of those reasons may be completely unrelated to the labor negotiations. Parents whose children attended school during the work stoppage may fear that their child’s attendance will be misinterpreted as a lack of loyalty to their teacher. If their child stayed home, they may worry about the impact on their attendance record or academic standing.

Working with Students

Students will exhibit a wide range of reactions to a work stoppage. Some students may want to talk about it. This could be a teachable moment about the history of the labor movement or civic engagement. (Visit www.humanrelations.lausd.net for lessons on the labor movement.) However, normal instruction should be resumed as quickly as possible.

Students may have joined the picket line with their own family members or independently as an act of solidarity. Others may have come to school to preserve their perfect attendance record and may have not liked that the work stoppage disrupted their normal routines. Some students may have considered this to be extra vacation days. Yet other students may have felt distressed by their teachers' absences and by seeing their teachers picketing.

At the secondary level, principals may consider visiting the student leadership class to facilitate a conversation with school leaders, or open a room during lunch for student dialogues. It is important to allow the space and time for students to express their feelings with as little disruption to instruction as possible.

Distribute the attached principles of **Psychological First Aid: Listen, Connect, Protect, Model and Teach** and **Self-Care Activities for Youth and Adults** to staff so they may better be equipped to support the students.

Restorative Practices

Restorative practices focus on building a safe, inclusive, respectful school community. This approach recognizes the importance of strengthening connectedness through building relationships and building community. Restorative practice circles can be an effective tool when conversations are difficult and/or when people have strikingly different or

contrasting points of view. Guidelines for facilitating circles with elementary and secondary students, families, and staff are attached.

Additional Support and Resources

We sincerely hope that you find this toolkit valuable as you support your school community. Your leadership matters. Remain positive and continue to frame your school by its core principles of respect and caring. All students matter. All families matter. All staff matter.

Thank you for the transformational work you do on behalf of our students, families, staff and school communities of L.A. Unified. For additional support and resources, please contact:

Student Health and Human Services	(213) 241-3840
District Nursing Services	(213) 202-7580
Human Relations, Diversity & Equity	(213) 241-8719
Pupil Services	(213) 241-3844
Restorative Justice	(213) 241-8767
School Mental Health	(213) 241-3841
Student Medical Services	(213) 202-7584
Student Support Programs	(213) 241-0761
Wellness Programs	(213) 241-3850

Self-Care - Activities and Handouts for Youths and Adults

Psychological First Aid Handout

Supporting a Healthy and Supportive School Environment

In the event of a work stoppage, school administrators are called upon to provide coverage at schools and support for students. A work action may result in the disruption of students' routines and their school experiences. This disruption may cause fear, anxiety, uncertainty and/or anger. Adults on campus play an important role in supporting students and ensuring a healthy and supportive school environment.

Strikes may generate strong emotions among the adults involved. Students may feel distressed after observing unanticipated or atypical behaviors by/among the adults in their lives.

The following recommendations for supporting students align with the evidence-informed practices of Psychological First Aid:

LISTEN. Just listen and pay attention to the students. Observe non-verbal communication. Students may also show their feelings in nonverbal ways, such as increased behavioral problems or withdrawal.

PROTECT. Maintain daily routines, activities and structure with clear expectations and consistent rules. Monitor conversations that students may overhear.

CONNECT. Explain your duty to protect and keep students safe. Check in with students on a regular basis and explain in age-appropriate language what is happening, but do not offer false assurances.

MODEL. Be aware of your thoughts, feelings, and reactions about the event(s). Your verbal and nonverbal communications will influence how our students cope and behave. Modeling how to identify feelings in your body and to express emotions helps students to do the same.

TEACH. Students will have different reactions to the same event. Encourage students to use positive coping and problem-solving strategies to help them process their experiences. Help students set small "doable" goals and share in these achievements as "wins."

See supplemental resources for relaxation techniques and goal setting activities.

10 Breaths - Activity

1. Close your eyes. Put your hand on your belly and begin to pay attention to your breath. Notice the rise and fall of your belly as you breathe. Take three deep breaths to settle and clear your mind.
2. When you feel ready, take a deep slow breath in and then out. That is “one.” You may open your eyes slightly or keep them closed while you focus on your breathing.
3. Continue counting each breath: “two,” “three,” “four.” If you are gazing at something in the room, just observe it as you count.
4. Become aware of your body and any sensations or emotions that may arise. Allow the experience to be as full as possible. Don’t hold back.
5. When you have reached “ten,” rest in the feeling of the moment. If you’d like, take ten more breaths the same way.

Doing the **10 Breaths - Activity** every day can help with stress and emotional regulation.

Box Breathing - Activity

Box breathing, also known as square breathing, is a technique used when taking slow, deep breaths. It can heighten performance and concentration while also being a powerful stress reliever. This technique can be beneficial to anyone, especially those who want to manage stress.

1. Make sure that you’re seated upright in a comfortable chair with your feet flat on the floor.
2. Keeping your hands relaxed in your lap with your palms facing up, focus on your posture. You should be sitting up straight. This will help you take deep breaths.
3. Slowly exhale. Sitting upright, slowly exhale through your mouth, getting all the oxygen out of your lungs. Focus on this intention and be conscious of what you’re doing.
4. Inhale slowly and deeply through your nose to the count of four, hold your breath for the count of four, then exhale to the count of four. If you’re new to box breathing, you may get dizzy at first. This is normal. As you practice more often, you’ll go longer without the dizziness. If you get dizzy, stay seated for a minute and resume normal breathing.

Ideally, repeat the **Box Breathing - Activity** four times in one sitting. Box breathing can be done several times a day as needed to calm your nerves and relieve stress.

What Do You Notice? - Activity

These activities can be done individually, facilitated with a group, or set up as stations around a room.

1. Take a sip of water. What sensations do you notice in your mouth, in your throat, in your stomach as the water goes down? Is it cold, warm, pleasant, unpleasant or neutral?
2. Name six colors or shapes you see around you. Had you noticed these colors or shapes before?
3. Look around, pay attention to anything that catches your eye. What do you notice?
4. Count backwards from 20 as you slowly walk around the room.
5. Place your hands on a surface that is close to you, such as your chair or piece of furniture. Notice the sensations on your fingertips. What are the textures you feel?
6. Notice the temperature in the room. Is it too cold, too hot, just right, comfortable, or uncomfortable? Are certain parts of your body warm or cold?
7. Notice the sounds around you. How many sounds can you identify? Had you noticed these sounds before?
8. Stand in front of a wall or door. Press your hands against the surface. Slowly push toward the wall/door, push away, then press in again. Focus on the sensations in your muscles.
9. Walk around the room. Feel the sensations in your body as you move. Feel your feet pressing into the ground.

SMART Goals - Activity

A journey toward healthy living happens one step at a time. Maximizing chances for making positive healthy changes include identifying the changes a person wants to make. Then break those changes into concrete steps. SMART goal setting brings structure and clear milestones of accomplishment.

Characteristics of a SMART Goal

S - Specific: For example: I will walk for 30 minutes three days this week vs. I need to start getting some exercise.

M - Measurable and observable: For example: Thirty minutes each time.

A - Achievable: For example: I will do this for two weeks and then evaluate vs. I will do this for a year.

R - Relevant: For example: Exercise is something I really care about and I feel strongly will make a difference in my life.

T - Time Sensitive: For example: It will start this on Friday.

Staff - Activities and Handouts

Just Like Me - Activity

“Realizing that the other person is also just like me is the basis on which you can develop compassion, not only towards those around you but also towards your enemy. Normally, when we think about our enemy, we think about harming him. Instead, try to remember that the enemy is also a human being, just like me.”

– HHDL

This **Just Like Me - Activity** is an effective way to promote reconciliation following a divisive incident. It increases the understanding that all others are “just like me.” Ideally, this would be conducted as a group activity. If that is not possible, consider putting a copy in each person’s mailbox.

Instructions: Ask participants to form two parallel lines or concentric circles facing each other. Read each prompt aloud. Pause between the prompts and direct each person to take one step to their right, so they are now facing a new person. Debrief the activity after it is complete.

- *Become aware that there is a person in front of you. A fellow human being, just like you. Softly repeat these phrases, while looking at your partner.*
- *This person has a body and a mind, just like me.*
- *This person has feelings, emotions and thoughts, just like me.*
- *This person has experienced physical and emotional pain and suffering, just like me.*
- *This person has at some point been sad, disappointed, angry, or hurt, just like me.*
- *This person has felt unworthy or inadequate, just like me.*
- *This person worries and is frightened sometimes, just like me.*
- *This person has longed for friendship, just like me.*
- *This person is learning about life, just like me.*
- *This person wants to be caring and kind to others, just like me.*
- *This person wants to be content with what life has given, just like me.*
- *This person wishes to be free from pain and suffering, just like me.*
- *This person wishes to be safe and healthy, just like me.*
- *This person wishes to be happy, just like me.*
- *This person wishes to be loved, just like me.*
- *This person cares about teachers, just like me.*
- *This person cares about children, just like me.*
- *Even if this person caused me inconvenience, they are just like me.*
- *Even if they don’t do what I think they should do, they are just like me.*
- *Even if they believe the same things that I believe, they are just like me.*
- *I wish this person the strength, resources, and support to navigate the difficulties of life with ease.*
- *I wish that this person be free from pain and suffering.*
- *I wish that this person be peaceful and happy.*
- *I wish that this person be loved.*
- *Because this person is a fellow human being, just like me.*

Now, thank your partner for participating in this activity.

We Are One - Activity

We Are One I'm All In We're In This Together

Distribute the *We are One. I'm All In. We're In This Together* worksheet for participants to complete individually.

Hang poster paper on the wall with the caption *"We Are One. I'm All In. We're In This Together."*

Invite participants to transcribe their comments from the worksheet onto the wall. When everyone is finished, have a gallery walk so everyone can read all the comments. Invite each participant to select one quote to read aloud.

Debrief as to the overall theme and tone of the response. Reflect on the overarching qualities of the school – such as unity, caring for students, rigorous education, professionalism, caring staff.

We Are One Activity - Worksheet

There is no 'them' and 'us'; There is only us.

– Father Greg Boyle

We Are One I'm All In We're In This Together

Passions are high. We've been through a significant event as a community. Now that we're back, we all have the capacity to make a difference. How do we remember that we are one, not two? When we're interacting with students, we are all on the same side.

Let's take a moment to focus on what we need to reconnect and reengage as a school community by reflecting on the following:

I contribute to my school community by...

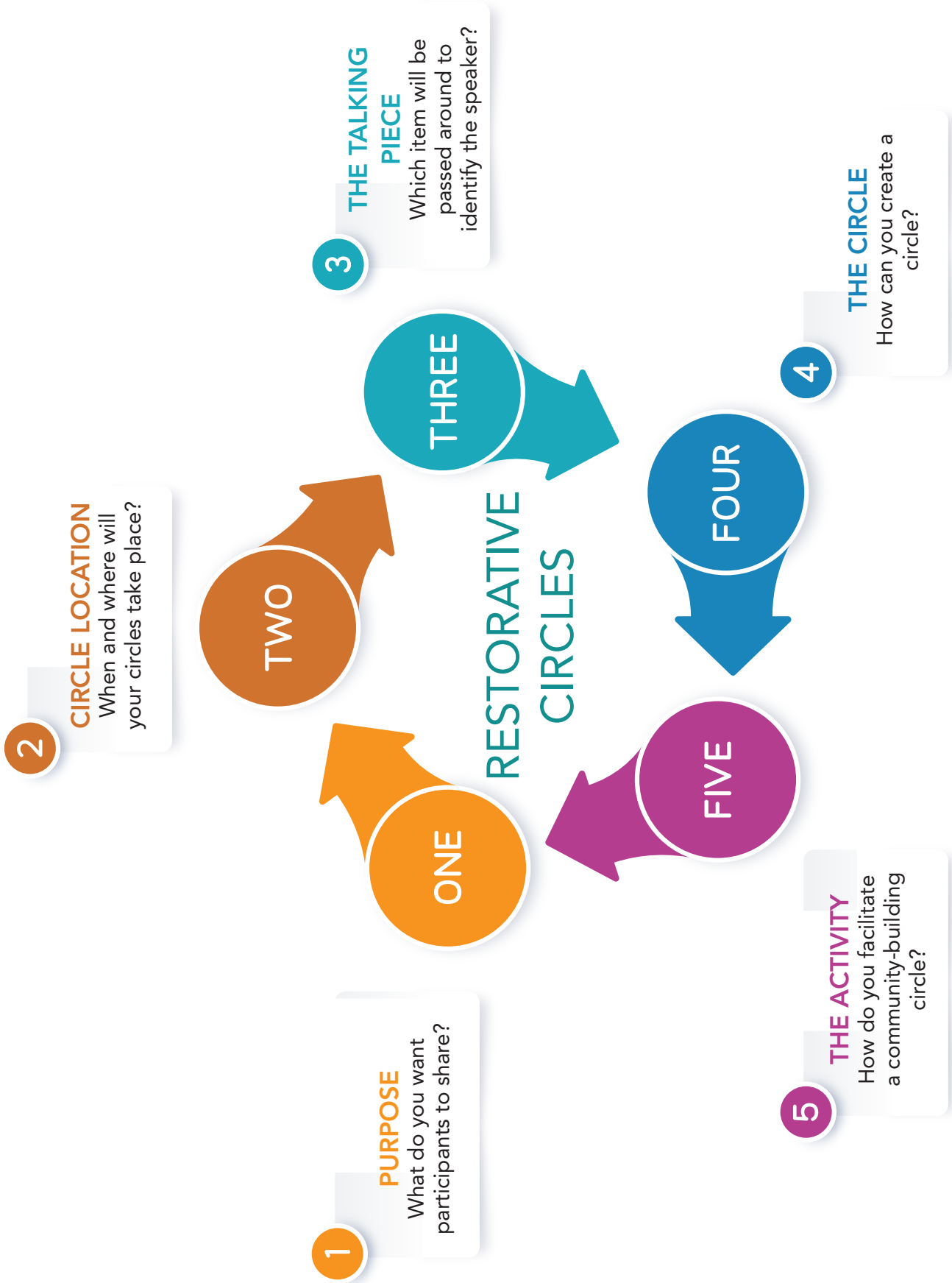
I honor my connections with my colleagues by...

I honor my connections with my students' families by...

I honor my connections with my students by...

Transcribe your thoughts on the We Are One. *I'm All In. We're In This Together* wall.

Restorative Justice - Student and Staff - Activities and Handouts



Facilitating Restorative Circles

Restorative Language

Restorative language can be helpful when conversations are difficult and/or when people potentially have strikingly different/contrasting points of view. In order to strengthen relationships, we need to speak from the heart, listen and speak with respect and express feelings using “I” statements. These words promote these ideas. Stress these words during the lessons.

Empathetic listening (active listening or reflective listening) – is paying attention to another person with empathy [emotional identification, compassion, feeling, insight]. One basic principle is to “seek to understand, before being understood.”

Neutrality – the state of not supporting or helping either side in a conflict, disagreement, etc.; impartiality.

Relationships – the way in which two or more people or groups regard and behave toward each other.

Respect – regard for the feelings, wishes, rights, or traditions of others. Respect is a pattern of behavior that is found in healthy relationships. Respect should be given unconditionally.

Values – a person’s principles or standards of behavior; one’s judgment of what is important in life.

For additional resources on Restorative practices, visit the Restorative Justice website at <https://achieve.lausd.net/restorativejustice>.

Restorative Circle Guidelines

Purpose and Objectives

Circles have guidelines that are essential for them to function well. This lesson guide introduces those guidelines and begins the process by which participants become familiar with the process.

Objectives

- Understand reasons for being in circle.
- Learn the seven circle guidelines.
- Learn how to use a talking piece in the circle.

Preparation and Materials

Plan (in advance) how to arrange chairs into in a circle.

- The circle keeper will select a talking piece that is important to them. Examples include a small, soft toy, or a special stick or stone that can withstand being passed around multiple times.
- Choose something to put in the center of the circle; such as a piece of decorative fabric placed on the floor or a low table, with flowers, a bowl with water or stones, and other objects to serve as a focal point.

Room Configuration

Explain: After participants are seated, explain, “Besides the shape of the circle, we put something in the center. As we do more circles together we’ll decide as a group what we should put in the centerpiece to symbolize what we want our community to be.”

Set up Center

Build the focal point in the center of the circle with the selected items. The talking piece can rest in the center until it is used. Place the seven **Circle Guidelines** handout in the center (see handout page 16).

Welcome

Before you begin your circle, give a clear, simple and honest explanation about why the participants have been invited to a circle. If you are completely transparent about the purpose and goals the participants will be more likely to trust the circle.

“The purpose of today’s circle is to give the students an opportunity to share their thoughts, feelings, and concerns regarding the events over the past few weeks.”

Centering Activity

Explain: “This is the time when we prepare the participants for the circle. This is the opportunity to make sure the participants are calm and willing to share their thoughts and feelings with each other.”

Circle Guidelines

Explain: “Circles work best when we follow important guidelines. We will use the same guidelines every time we meet in circle. The more we use them, the more we will come to understand and appreciate how they support the time we spend together in the circle.” Have a copy of the seven **Circle Guidelines** in the center of the circle and review them with the participants (see handout page 16).

Talking Piece

Explain: “This activity teaches respect for the talking piece. It invites sharing from imagination. Everyone gets to practice silence, and they experience speaking toward the center of the circle.”

- “In our circles we will frequently use a talking piece. Show them the talking piece they will be using. Only the person who is holding the talking piece may speak. The person who is holding the talking piece has a responsibility of maintaining the integrity of the circle by speaking from the heart.”
- “It is sometimes important to be silent when holding the talking piece; this can help us to listen with our hearts and discover what is true for us.”
- “When we speak, we speak into the center of the circle, adding our voice and our wisdom to the voices and wisdom of everyone else.”
- “Pass the talking piece respectfully from one person to the next.”
- “Sometimes we won’t use the talking piece.”
- “Let’s practice passing the talking piece around the circle silently and respectfully.”
Demonstrate by passing the talking piece to the person sitting next to you and having them pass it back.

Check-in Round

Using the talking piece, the circle keeper will ask the participants to offer one word to describe how they feel about participating in today’s circle.

Values Round

The circle keeper will ask the participants to reflect on their principles or standards of behavior. They will be directed to write their values on the **My Values Handshape** (see handout page 17) then invited to share in the circle.

Discussion Rounds

Using the talking piece, the circle keeper will invite the participants to share their thoughts and options regarding today’s circle. The circle keeper will guide the participants through the prompts, and remind them to use affective statements when sharing their thoughts and opinions.

Quotes

The circle keeper will share the quote with the participants as they prepare to leave the circle.

Closing Round

“Share three words that describe your experience of the circle today.”

We Are All in This Together

Participants Elementary and Secondary Students, Staff and Families

Objective Participants will have an opportunity to share their thoughts, feelings and concerns following the strike.

Time 15 – 30 minutes

Purpose The purpose of today's circle is to give the participants an opportunity to share their thoughts, feelings, and concerns regarding the events over the past few weeks.

Materials Talking piece, Centerpiece, and Circle Guidelines

Other Preparation Prior to beginning the circle, arrange the chairs in a circle if possible. Participants should easily be able to see everyone else's face.

Activities

Welcome Give a clear, simple and honest explanation, using your own words, of why the group will be meeting in a circle.
"Over the next few minutes, we are going to take some time to discuss our thoughts and feelings about some of the things that have occurred over the past few weeks here at school."

Centering Activity Guide the participants through a grounding activity. Have the participants **PRETEND** to hold a rose in one hand and a candle in the other hand.
Ask participants to smell the rose and blow out the candle's flame.

Introduce Review the Seven Circle Guidelines Handout

1. Respect the talking piece.
2. Listen with your heart.
3. Speak with your heart.
4. Listen with respect.
5. Speak with respect.
6. Remain in the circle.
7. Honor privacy.

Talking Piece Introduce the talking piece, why you chose it and how to use it:
"Today our talking piece is the _____. I chose this talking piece because _____."

Check-In Round Ask participant to offer one word that describes how they feel about participating in today's circle.

Activities

Values Round

Distribute one copy of the My Values Handshape (attached) to each participant. Ask them to write one value they are bringing to the circle on the handshape, then share with the group.

Share Values

Participants will share their thoughts about their value word.

Discussion Rounds Prompts

Ask the participants to reflect about what they have experienced in the past two weeks.

Remind participants to respond to the prompts using affective statements. Read the examples below:

"I feel _____ because _____."

"As I reflect on the past few weeks, I am feeling _____ because _____."

Customize prompts based on the group and the presenting reason for the circle.

Quote

Good teams become great ones when the members trust each other enough to surrender the "me" for the "we".

Closing Round

Each participant shares up to three words about their experience in circle today.

Sample Prompts for Elementary Schools, Staff and Parents:

Question #1 – "What is one thing that you are happy about?"

Question #2 – "What is one thing that you are unhappy about?"

Question #3 – "What is one thing that you are willing to do so we can move forward together as a team?"

Sample Prompts for Secondary Schools, Staff and Parents:

Question #1 – "Provide one brief thought about the events of the past few weeks."

Question #2 – "What is one thing that you'd like to see happen, so that we can move forward together as a team?"

Question #3 – "What is one thing that you are willing to do to help our school move forward?"

Seven Circle Guidelines - Handout

Speak with your heart: This means speaking for yourself, talking about what is true for you based on your own experiences. When we speak from the heart we are aiming for eloquence, for choosing words that accurately communicate what we hold to be important.

Listen with your heart: We are accustomed to judging other people, often without even knowing anything about them. These assumptions can keep us from really hearing what they have to say... and what they have to say may be something important and helpful. Therefore, when we listen from the heart we are trying to set aside any assumptions and judgments we may hold about the person. This opens up the possibility of making wonderful discoveries about each other.

Respect the talking piece: Remind the participants to respect the talking piece in two ways. #1 – They should respect the actual object: do not throw it, drop it, or destroy it. #2 – Be respectful of the person who is in possession of the talking piece.

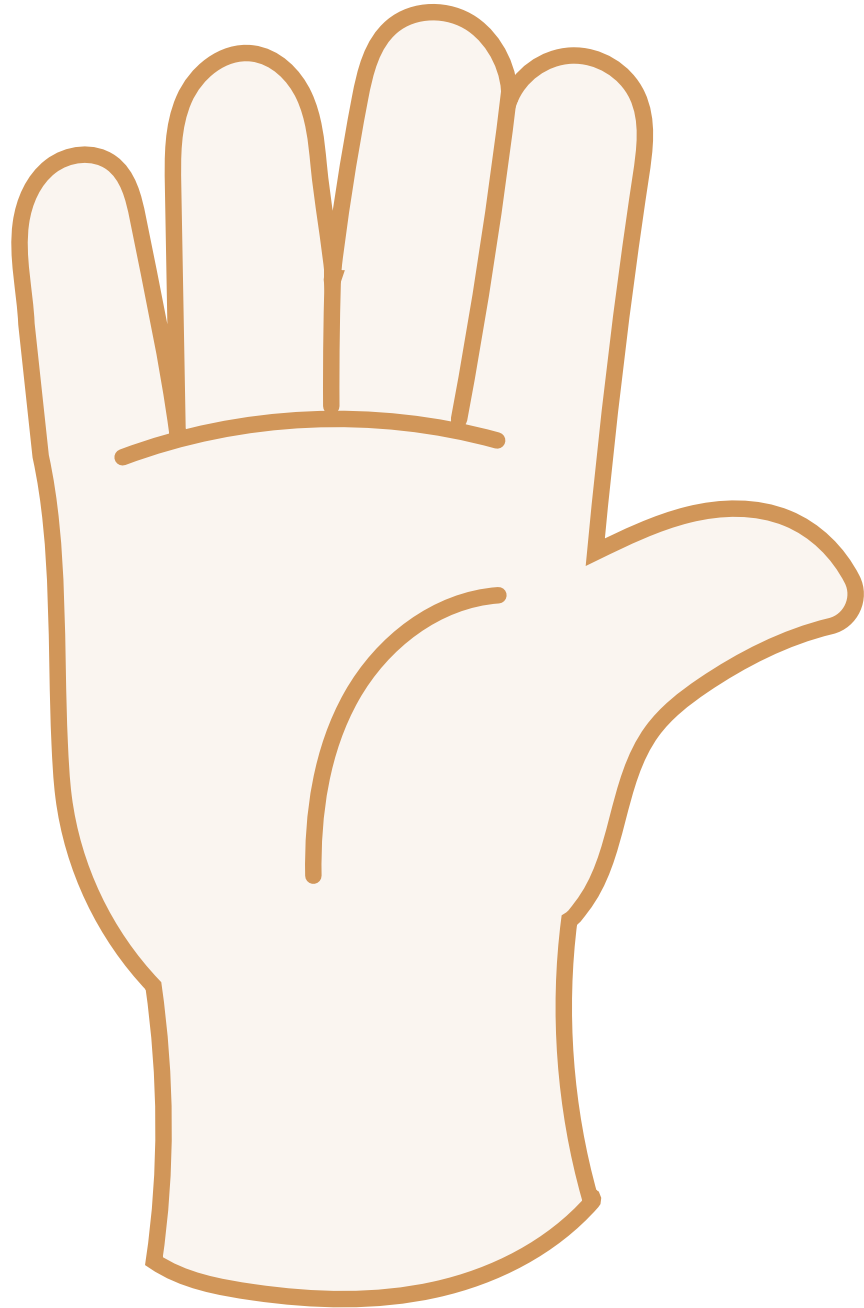
Listen with respect: This means to listen to what is being said, *without judgement*. This also means to make sure that one's body reflects being respectful: no slouching in the chair, no eye-rolling, and no distracting behavior.

Speak with respect: This means to be mindful of the words that one uses when sharing his/her thoughts. Profanity and hurtful words should never be used. It best to use affective statements ("I" statements) when speaking one's truths.

Remain in the circle: This means to be physically and mentally present when being in circle. It is important to bring our attention back to circle when our mind wanders.

Honor privacy: It is important to remind the participants that things shared in the circle should remain in the circle. Do however, disclose that you are a mandated reporter and will report suspicions of child abuse or neglect.

I Am All In



What values do you bring to circle today?



Human Relations, Diversity and Equity

District Nursing Services

School Mental Health

Pupil Services

Restorative Justice

Student Medical Services & Medi-Cal Programs

Student Support Programs

Wellness Programs

For a current administrator directory and additional program information, visit the SHHS website at

achieve.lausd.net/shhs