

Making Meetings Matter: Bring Meaning, Passion, Humanity, and Effectiveness to Your Work

January 28, 2021, 10:00 AM

Today's Presenters:

Lori DeCarlo, *Superintendent, Randolph Academy UFSD*

Halley Eacker, *Measurement Incorporated*

Kelly Valmore, *Upstate PDRC*

Gina Gutierrez Karp, *Upstate PDRC*

Pat Walsh, *Broome-Tioga BOCES*

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Make your Meetings Matter!



Goals for this Session:

- Learn the **benefits** of using restorative circle process for meetings
- Provide an **overview** of restorative principles & practices
- View **sample** meeting “scripts”
- Share **testimonials** from professionals who use or participate in meetings that utilize circle process



What is Circle Process?

A structured interaction between people where participants:

- Circle-up
- Use a script
- Use a talking piece
- Honor group norms
- Maintain safe space

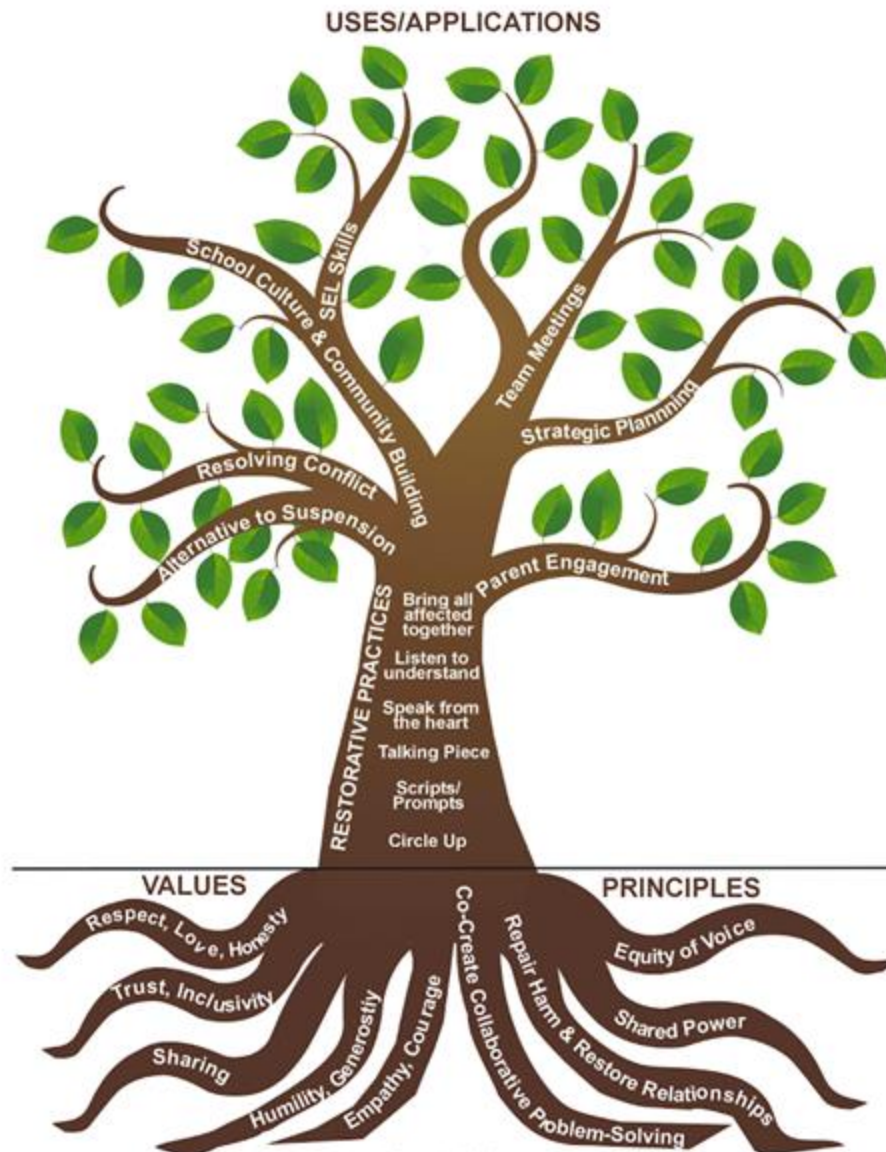


Virtual Circle Process:

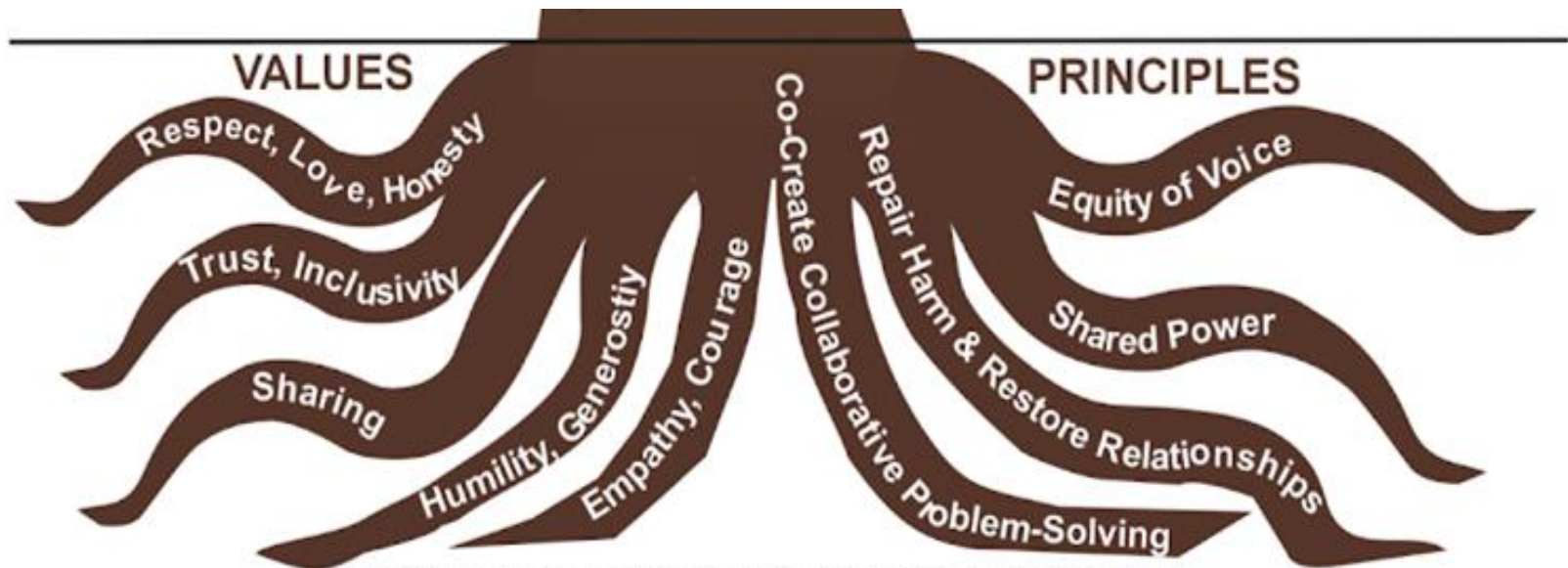


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Restorative Values & Principles:



Adapted from Living Justice Press (Lori DeCarlo and Halley Eacker, 2020)

Uses & Applications:



Restorative Practices:



Talking Piece



- A physical reminder that the person talking should receive the group's full attention
- Equalizes the voice of each participant
- Gives fidgety students something tactile to calm them when it's their turn to speak.
- Can be a common classroom object or something symbolic: small globe for geography class, Shakespeare figurine for English, etc...
- Online, individual talking pieces or a virtual pass

Circle Agreements



What Circle Process IS NOT:



- Group therapy
- Controlled dialogue
- Advice giving
- Authoritative

Sample Team Meeting Script:

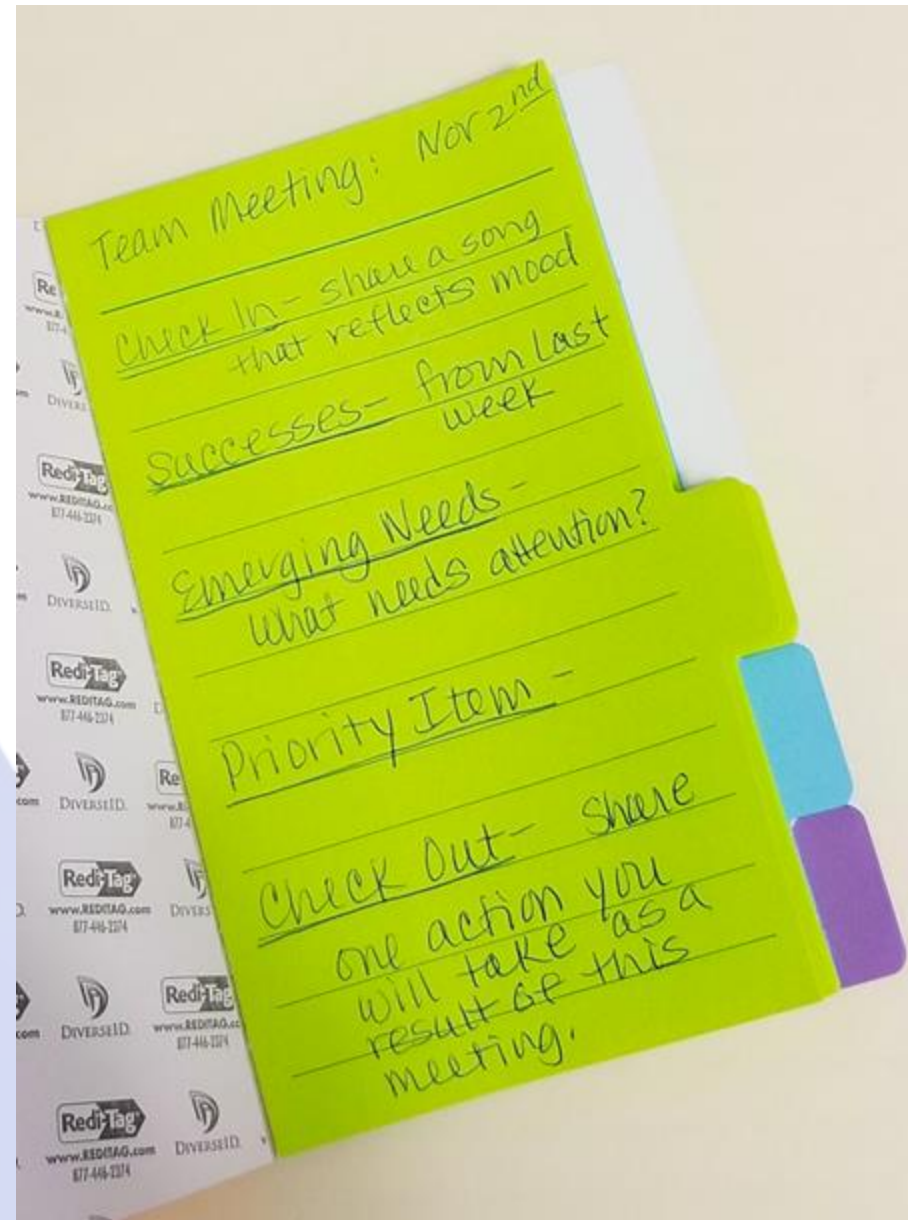
Check In: Share a song that reflects your mood.

Successes: from last week.

Emerging Needs: What is bubbling up that needs our attention?

Priority Item: (choose one topic to discuss in depth)

Check Out: Share one action you will take as a result of this meeting.



Sample Team Meeting Script:

Opening Inspiration: Share quote.

Check In: Reflect on the quote and share a time when you felt empathy.

Introduce the CASEL Framework: Share CASEL framework on screen or as a handout, providing a brief overview.

Response Round 1: How do we currently teach these SEL skills?

Response Round 2: How can we utilize the CASEL framework to further develop SEL skills?

Check Out: Share **one action** you will take as a result of this meeting.



What people are saying....



Dr. Mary Pauly
Principal
Grades K -12 School

3 years experience using Circle
Process for monthly faculty
meetings & parent meetings

The circle is a safe place. When we start with positives, it builds positive thoughts.

It takes the pressure off of one individual as each voice is heard and ideas are shared.

Parents feel comfortable sharing with all voices equal and valued. Everyone is involved- ***all voices are heard.***

We trust the circle to identify the things we need to talk about, give input on and provide feedback.

Circle process is easy to adopt- just do it!



Let's peek at one of Mary's recent agendas!

Agenda for All Staff Meeting (35 participants)

Check in: Give us one word to describe how your week is going.

Workshop Presentations: Celebrating Greatness- Melissa, Matt & Mike

Open Sharing from Volunteers! What is working for you?

Updates: Share announcements, reminders, etc.

Check out: Gratitude- share something you are grateful for.

What people are saying....



Katie Wissman
Team Leader
Grades K - 6

2 years experience using Circle Process for weekly team meetings.

I have found circle process to be **very beneficial** over the course of my years as the elementary team leader.

Circle process has helped **lessen the side conversations** that would occur during the previous meetings.

It has helped our meetings become more **efficient and ultimately more focused on what's important** in each meeting.

Circle process also provides an atmosphere where **we focus on the present moment and the speaker who holds the talking piece.** It has taught me to listen to each individual speaking and really hear what they are saying.

I have found circle process to be **extremely beneficial in running my meetings!**



Let's peek at one of Katie's recent agendas!



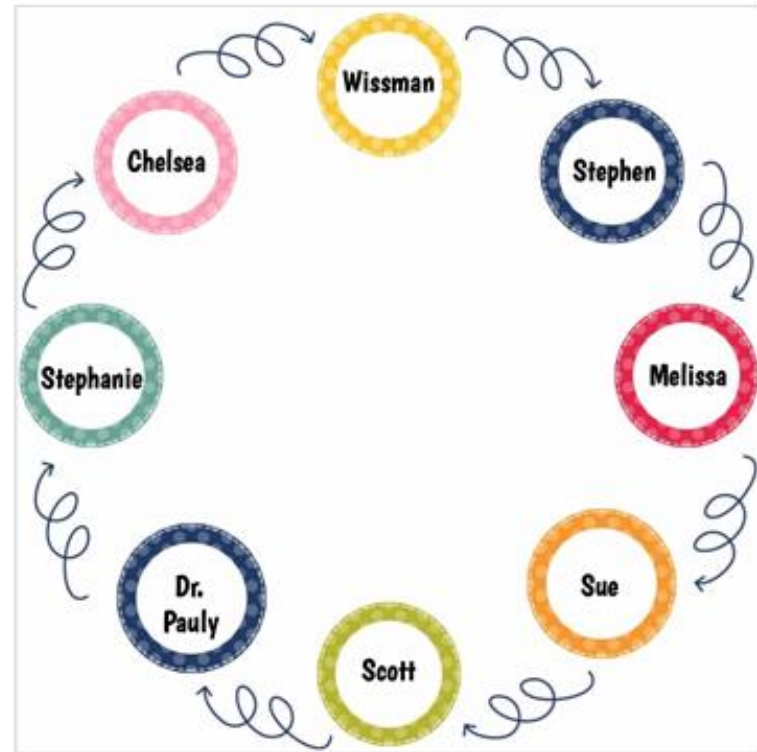
Team meeting

10/7/2020

Let's peek at one of Katie's recent agendas!

Fist to Five

- How was your week?



Let's peek at one of Katie's recent agendas!

Student Weekly Ratings

- Status Changes
- Aiden- Reached goal
- Zack- Challenging week
- All residential students had positive weeks



Let's peek at one of Katie's recent agendas!

Intervention Plans



Jessica

Zack

JAVON

Let's peek at one of Katie's recent agendas!

Reminders, questions, comments

- -Open House-October 8th, 5:00-6:30 & Extended day
- Scheduling virtual parent meetings during Open House on Oct. 8th
- Reminder to all teachers that this Friday, October 2 ends the 5-week marking period (progress report). You will have until the end of the day Wednesday, October 7 to enter your grades/comments.
- Halloween-Individual class celebrations
- Stephen may join your circles for Open house tomorrow



What Does Circle Process Provide for Meetings?



Structured, predictable

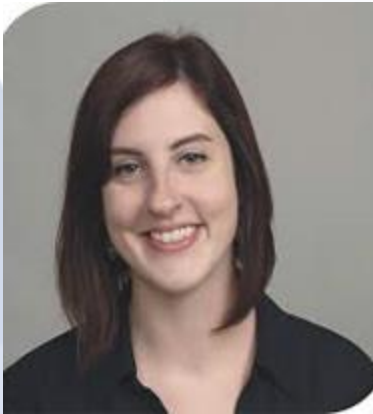
Equity of voice

Divergent & deeper thinking

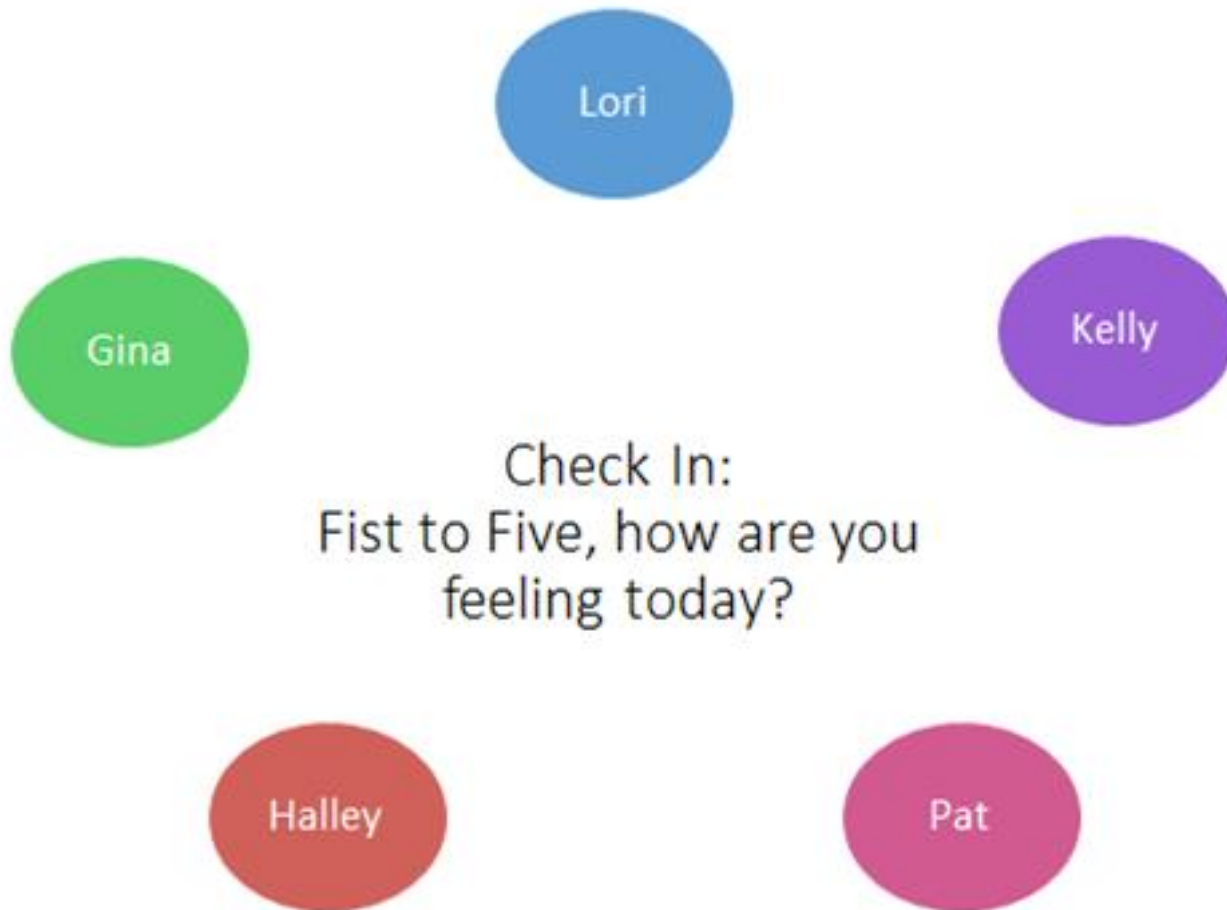
Balances people, process & productivity

All co-create = Strong buy in on follow up action

Let's hear from our practitioners!



Let's hear from our practitioners!



Let's hear from our practitioners!

Lori

Gina

Kelly

Round 1:
What first attracted you to
using circle process for
team meetings?

Halley

Pat

Let's hear from our practitioners!

Lori

Gina

Kelly

Check Out:
Share a closing thought or
tip on using circle process
for team meetings?

Halley

Pat

What people are saying....



Halley Eacker
Staff Development Specialist

**Participant in meetings that are
are conducted using Circle
Process for nearly 2 years.**

In my personal experience using circle process for planning and workplace collaboration, ***meetings feel different.***

The team seems to operate more as a cohesive unit, rather than being swayed by one or two strong voices. Likewise, I hear more from (and even learn more about) my colleagues.

I know we're used to a focus on getting the work done – which is important – but, **how well we do it will depend on how we're all utilizing our strengths** and, to a degree, feel supported by the team.

In this way, **circle process is a level up from the norm.**

What people are saying....



Kelly Valmore
Team Leader

Emerging user of circle process
with several month's experience
using for weekly team meetings

For me, **the benefits have been many but what really shines for me is slowing the work down and *giving my Team the permission to take care of themselves and each other.***

During COVID I think we were looking for something *extra* that would facilitate this. We all needed to slow down and connect and mitigate stress and feelings of fear, hopelessness and frustration. **By sharing and leaning into each other I think we found greater strength individually and as a Team.**

Our work is all about relationships and building trust, in our Team but also with those we serve, schools, leaders and teachers.

Circle Process brings a deep genuineness to our work while keeping us focused and positive in the face of many challenges.

The Circle process also provides a **structure and comfort that focuses the work which has been effective and efficient.**

What people are saying....



Pat Walsh
Staff Development Specialist

Uses circle process to facilitate strategic planning for teams of educators.

I facilitated the annual **reflection and strategic decision-making meeting** for our Regional Partnership Center Team.

All agreed that **circle process led to a more intentional, focused and equitable chance** for the team to chart their course for the upcoming year.

Tips for someone new to the circle process:

Pre-plan! actually had a “mini-meeting” with the team to introduce them to the Circle process and norms.

Use a script (slides) to facilitate the talking/thinking points for each round

A collaborative work product was produced by the team during the meeting so that each member had both a thinking space and a record of the team’s work.

Balancing Optimism with Reality:

What are the drawbacks or challenges?

- **Slower pace** to adapt to, but results in better outcomes, stronger buy in
- **Requires an expanded view of your team & meeting** to include the **health and wellness** of team members & sense of **shared community**
- **Initial reluctance** by some team members to participate until comfort with circle process grows
- Introducing shared power, equity of voice and co-creation may represent a **loss of power** for previously dominant team members





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1. Open your cell phone camera.
2. Aim the camera at the QR code (as if taking a picture).
3. Allow your phone to open the QR code link.
4. Respond to the survey.

