

Sharing Circle (4 – 12)

Lesson Plan (1 hour)

Materials needed:

- Raven Talking stick
- No worksheet

If possible have students sit around in a circle.

Introduction:

1. Introduce yourself

- Introduce yourself (name, title, and where you are from)
- Ask who are Aboriginal people? (Answer: First nations, Metis and Inuit people)

2. Introduce the Presentation

- Today we will learn about and participate in a tradition sharing circle.
- Students will respond to grade appropriate topics.

***Before hand – talk to the teacher or (TA – if it is a smaller group) about any kids who have specific behaviours / anxiety about speaking aloud. Explain to the teacher that you welcome them into the circle with their class and you would like them to continue their management strategies.**

The Purpose of the Sharing Circle

- The circle shape is used because there is no head, not like a traditional “western meeting” with a chair in charge/ head of the circle.
- Shapes are important to Aboriginal people. A circle is important in Aboriginal Culture because it doesn’t have an end or a starting point.
- The circle represents sun, moon, seasons, life cycle, conical shape homes
- Spirituality.
- Clockwise (the way the earth turns, the way the clock hands turn)
- Sometimes called a healing circle.
- Learning about the similarities and differences of each other that we may not have known.
- Gives the members of the circle a sense of belonging.
- Traditionally the circle is used to come up with a decision about a problem.
- The sharing circle allows everyone the opportunity to speak.
- Is really the democratic model for decision making and problem solving.
- Contemporary uses of a sharing circle – counselling, educational groups
- Sharing circles are now used for many different reasons.

Expected Behaviours while in the Sharing Circle

- One person talking at a time – they have the talking stick
- If a student wants to reply or has an opinion to what was said he / she will have to wait until the talking stick comes to them again.
- No across the circle talking.
- You may hear something that someone else says that you may disagree with. In this circle you respond respectfully. “I respectfully disagree.”
- When you are finished talking respectfully pass the stick to the next person.

The Stick Represents:

- The talking stick is a raven = “authority” in Northwest Coast
- Who has the floor and who has the right to speak.
- If you don’t have the talking stick the expectation is that you use your ears (2 eyes, 2 ears, 1 mouth – look and listen twice as much as you speak).
- Listen with your heart as well



- When struggling to speak to the circle – look at the stick
- Speak to the topic we are talking about
- When you feel you are done saying what you want to say pass the stick on to the next person.

If I, the facilitator, need the floor for a purpose, I will get the stick – to talk, to clarify, to stop and interruption, or use a teachable moment.

Once the circle starts:

- The presenter is the Facilitator.
- The presenter has to keep parameters around how we use a talking circle.
- This sharing circle is NOT counselling. We want to keep emotions in a box and want to control what happens, your classroom management will help. Feel free to call the teacher in to manage as well.

Rules: Don't want to interrupt a person talking

Don't want to leave others with "open wounds"

- Having a variety of topics to talk about is important.
- Facilitator goes first to set the example or if the teacher is sitting beside, let the teacher go first and you are the facilitator.
- Explain that you expect everybody to participate and say something.
- If a student is nervous, get them to look at the stick when they talk.

Facilitator can acknowledge what a student said with a comment or they just let the thought absorb in.

Closing

Don't just say thank you and leave – the circle needs to be closed

- Leave it on a light note.
- Share one thing that you learned about sharing circles

Review the importance of the learning of the sharing circle.

Thank the students for sharing, offer up a smile around the room.

AGE RANGE TOPICS

Grade 4 – 5

1. Tell us your name
2. Tell us your family culture or Aboriginal culture
3. Tell us about a time that you did something that you were proud of.
 - a. Sports achievement
 - b. Academic achievement
 - c. Personal goal reached.
4. Tell us about a strength that you have
5. Tell us about something that is unique about you.
6. Tell us about a time that you felt that you had a sense of belonging in the school (where you felt included)
7. How did you feel about the sharing circle discussion format?

Thank you for your great ideas and discussion, we are going to go around the circle this time and end on a lighter note.

8. What are your plans for the weekend? Summer? Holidays?

Reminder: What is said in the circle stays in the circle, to ensure that what is said is not used against the students, because of the exposure to feelings that were shared.

9. If there is time you can do a question and answer about the sharing circle format or Aboriginal content.

Grade 6 – 10

1. Tell us your name
 2. Tell us your family culture or Aboriginal culture
 3. Tell us about a time that you did something that you were proud of.
 - a. Sports achievement
 - b. Academic achievement
 - c. Personal goal reached.
- } These questions can be altered for the specific group of students
4. Peer Pressure: Ask the kids for a definition of peer pressure.
 - a. Have students brainstorm examples of all general stereotypes (can be hands up to offer answers, answers can be voiced at random – you choose your management).
 - b. Using the sharing circle parameters.
 5. When have you been pressured by your peers? No names used.
 6. What effect does peer pressure have on your peers?
 7. How do you feel when you are pressured by your peers?
 8. How can you stop or prevent peer pressure?
 9. How did you feel about the sharing circle discussion format?

Thank you for your great ideas and discussion, we are going to go around the circle this time and end on a lighter note.

10. What are your plans for the weekend? Summer? Holidays?

Reminder: What is said in the circle stays in the circle, to ensure that what is said is not used against the students, because of the exposure to feelings that were shared.

11. If there is time you can do a question and answer about the sharing circle format or Aboriginal content.

Grade 11- 12

1. Tell us your name
 2. Tell us your family culture or Aboriginal culture
 3. Tell us about a time that you did something that you were proud of.
 4. Sports achievement
 5. Academic achievement
 6. Personal goal reached.
- } These questions can be altered for the specific group of students
7. Stereotypes: of people (A stereotype is a generalization that you think all people are that characteristic.) Ask the kids for a definition of stereotypes.
 8. Have students brainstorm examples of all general stereotypes. (Can be hands up to offer answers, answers can be voiced at random, you choose your management)
 9. Using the sharing circle parameters.
 10. When have you personally experienced being stereotyped?
 11. How did you feel when you were stereotyped?
 12. What effect does stereotyping have on people?
 13. What can we as a society do to decrease stereotyping?
 14. How can you stop or prevent stereotyping in class?
 15. How did you feel about the sharing circle discussion format?

Thank you for your great ideas and discussion, we are going to go around the circle this time and end on a lighter note.

16. What are your plans for the weekend? Summer? Holidays?

Reminder: What is said in the circle stays in the circle, to ensure that what is said is not used against the students, because of the exposure to feelings that were shared.

17. If there is time you can do a question and answer about the sharing circle format or Aboriginal content.