

The Center for Dispute Resolution at the University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law (C-DRUM) advances conflict resolution processes to transform relationships, systems, and the world.

## **Restorative Approaches Lesson 3: Introduction to Circle: Sharing Who We Are**

### **Key Takeaways:**

By affirming or perfecting your Guidelines, your team is building their skills in collaboration and consensus. By sharing personal information about their names and about how they perceive respect, students will also gain experience with self-expression, empathy-building, and strengthen their connections with each other.

### **Participants' Learning Objectives:**

Students will develop an ability to share aspects of their identity and heritage with their peers and form deeper relationships and trust with their classroom community. They will also express their perceptions around giving and getting respect, which can help strengthen relationships and build empathy

### **Materials:**

1. Choose an object that fits in students' hands and can be easily passed from person to person. The object should have some meaning to you that you can imbue it with by telling a story or describing its value to you and why it has that value.

Examples:

- a. "This name tag is one I wore when I attended a C-DRUM training."
  - b. "I wrote my name on the inside cover of this notebook when I was in college/chairing a committee/etc."
2. A copy of the draft Guidelines your class developed in Lesson
  3. Pen or markers to make edits, if necessary, to that document.
  4. Pull up Lesson 3 PowerPoint on your computer and project it on your classroom screen so everyone can see it.

**Procedure:**

1. Have your students move their chairs or desks into one large circle so that everyone can see and hear each other when they are seated facing toward the center.
2. Bring your chosen object into circle so you can use it as the talking piece.
3. Share your story about why the talking piece is meaningful to you.
4. Follow the instructions on the PowerPoint slides as you take your students through the exercises.
5. Once you have completed the lesson, have students return their chairs to the regular configuration for your lesson.

**Approximate Time: about 20 minutes**

You should have plenty of time to share in circle unless your guidelines require a lengthy editing process or complete rework. The guidelines will be central to your future lessons, so invest enough time to make sure everyone considers them useful and complete.

**Pro Tips:**

It will be helpful for you to begin the name go-around by answering first and modeling how your students can respond. If you share something personal about the origin of your name (family, parents' favorite celebrity, etc.) your students gain insight into you as a person. This can open powerful pathways to connecting.

This lesson engages students in sharing on a deeper level than they have so far, which involves a bit of risk. If anyone behaves disrespectfully or makes fun of a fellow student, be sure to intervene by gently reminding them of the Guidelines they agreed to follow. No need to intervene if students laugh along WITH a student sharing a funny story about their name. Trust your knowledge of your students.

Whether or not your guidelines include a promise to treat each other with respect, you can explore this concept in the slide after the Power of Your Name slide. This provides an opportunity for deeper discussion about a fundamental aspect of participating in circles and defining respect. Once you have covered this in circle, consider exploring whether you should add a commitment to treat each other with respect to the guidelines.

**Extend the Learning:**

Of the billions of people who have lived, only a handful are remembered or recognized by name in our society. What makes someone a historical figure versus someone who is simply famous? Talk about or research the things some historical figures did, or are doing, to make their names a part of our history.

The Black Lives Matter movement has raised the importance of saying the names of those who have died at the hands of law enforcement. You could engage your students in an extended discussion about why it has been important to “Say Their Names” and what has resulted from that act.

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