

Appendix A. Sharing Circle Sample Lesson Plan

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| Subject/Course: N/A | Grade Level: K-12 |
| Topic: Talking Circles | Length of Lesson: 60 mins |

EXPECTATION(S)

Work Habits and Learning Skills

Collaboration

Listening respectfully to the experiences and points of view of peers

Self-Regulation

Waiting to speak, avoiding debating other students' beliefs

"I CAN" STATEMENT

- I can be a good listener and help to create a positive community in my classroom.
- I can understand how sharing circles and a talking stick were traditionally used and why they can be helpful.
- I can speak from the heart and be truthful and caring toward others.
- I can reflect on my own thoughts and feelings, and share them appropriately with my classmates

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY

- Format of sharing can be adapted to student needs
- The talking stick should make its way around the circle several times, giving students multiple opportunities to share
- Students who are not comfortable sharing can write their thoughts down

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT (Physical Space)

- Students should be sitting in a circle in the classroom
- Lights can be dimmed to create a calm atmosphere

Online learning

- Students can share their thoughts through posting websites like PadLet

- Students can be separated into small groups to make sharing easier
- The teacher can list the order for students to share
- Students can select a person to go after them

RESOURCES AND MATERIALS

- Talking stick (can be a stick, feather, or other natural item; students can collaborate in finding or choosing a talking stick)
- Chairs, carpet, or alternative seating arrangement

Further reading for teachers:

<https://passthefeather.ca/sharing-circles/?v=e4b09f3f8402>

TEACHING/LEARNING SEQUENCE

Beginning/Activation: (15 mins)

Before entering the circle, ask students about their experiences with sharing circles in the past.

- Did they enjoy them?
- How do they work?
- How do these circles fit into their knowledge of Indigenous peoples?

Acknowledge the purpose of sharing circles in various Indigenous cultures as the primary form of conflict resolution. It is important to recognize the traditions of your local Indigenous community and access specific resources on sharing circles from that community.

Students may be interested in watching the following video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QHNNQ10VvD0>

Middle/Action/Application/Exploration: (40 mins)

If this is the first sharing circle with students, create a set of guidelines and rules for participating in the circle. Some sample guidelines may include:

- One person speaks at a time
- The talking stick/object goes around the circle at least twice so that everyone can share
- Things that are shared in the circle stay in the circle

Once the norms have been established, students can rearrange their chairs into a circle or find

a space to sit in the classroom (dependent on class space/size).

After this general setup, be explicit about your intention for the current circle. Is it to build relationships? to explore an academic topic? to rectify a wrong? to explore an issue of concern? Ensure students understand the purpose of the circle; you may also use guiding questions as the circle's facilitator.

Begin the sharing circle by speaking first as the facilitator; pass the feather along to the next student and allow an opportunity for students to share and listen.

End/Consolidation/Communication: (5 mins)

Close the circle by thanking students for sharing and allow a quiet moment of reflection before moving to the next lesson or activity.