

# Community Circles

Connecting at the Speed of Soul  
COSA - 4.25.22



# OEA Choice Trust: Our Vision

Inspiring schools to create  
healthy workplaces for all staff

All Oregon public school employees are healthy, resilient and engaged as champions for healthy school environments and vital communities. As a result, they are fulfilled in their work, model well-being for students and are better equipped to foster student success.



# Community Circles: Connecting at the Speed of Soul

## Objectives:

- ❖ Joyfully connect as a community and practice collective care through the exploration of values, play, and learning about each other as a model for work in your school community
- ❖ Connecting to resources which support adult SEL-centered skills and wellness





**Game: Low-Risk, Low  
Vulnerability -  
“Roller Coaster”**

Games of spiraling  
vulnerability, risk, and  
buy-in are remarkable  
in creating relational  
trust, joy, knowing,  
belonging, and  
investment in the  
community.



# Values Line Up

Please stand to one side or the other of the room to express “Strongly Agree” or “Strongly Disagree” with each statement.

## Statement One

“Attending to the needs of adults and to the relationships among the adults is equally important to attending to relationships with and among children.”

Boyce-Watson & Pranis

## Statement Two

Rules without relationship build rebellion.



# Circles: Intentions & Purposes

An exploration of the reasons why we are drawn  
into circles



# Intentions of Circles

## **Belonging & Connection**

Connection circles are about being seen, being heard, being known and developing affection. Circles can also help address unspoken social questions and concerns humans have when interacting with others.

## **Inquiry/Content/Issues**

Using a circle to present and process the subject at hand engages staff in what they are processing and learning. Circles also provide a way for leaders to measure their staff's engagement in, and comprehension of, a subject.





# Circles: Building or Responding?

## Proactive Circle

This is a circle brought together *before* a specific event in need of repair. It can be used to build knowing and belonging, establish interest in content, learn needs and boundaries, or foster interest, curiosity, and inquiry.

## Responsive Circle

This is a circle brought together *after* an event that must be addressed by the group. It may be that a individual or group has had their dignity violated, something outside of the classroom needs to be processed, or group agreements need to be revisited.





# According to the IIRP, Proactive Circles...

- ...should account for 80% of the circles that are done within a setting.
- ...are intentional and can allow for participants to take risks as the community strengthens.
- ...build trust and social capital.
- Proactive circles include but are not limited to:
  - creating norms
  - community building
  - course content
  - games



# Sharing OUR Stories: Conversations of Belonging & Knowing







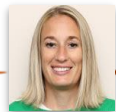
“A “perfect circle” is one in which all can see each other and be seen, all can hear each other and be heard, all can understand each other and be understood, and all can love each other and be loved.”

- Anonymous Maker of this Slide

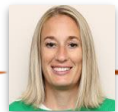




**Circle Question I:**  
**Who is the most well person you  
know? Why?**



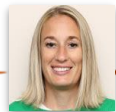
Circle Question II:  
“One thing I have done to  
support the building of  
community at school is.....”





Circle Question III:  
“The adults in my building  
most need

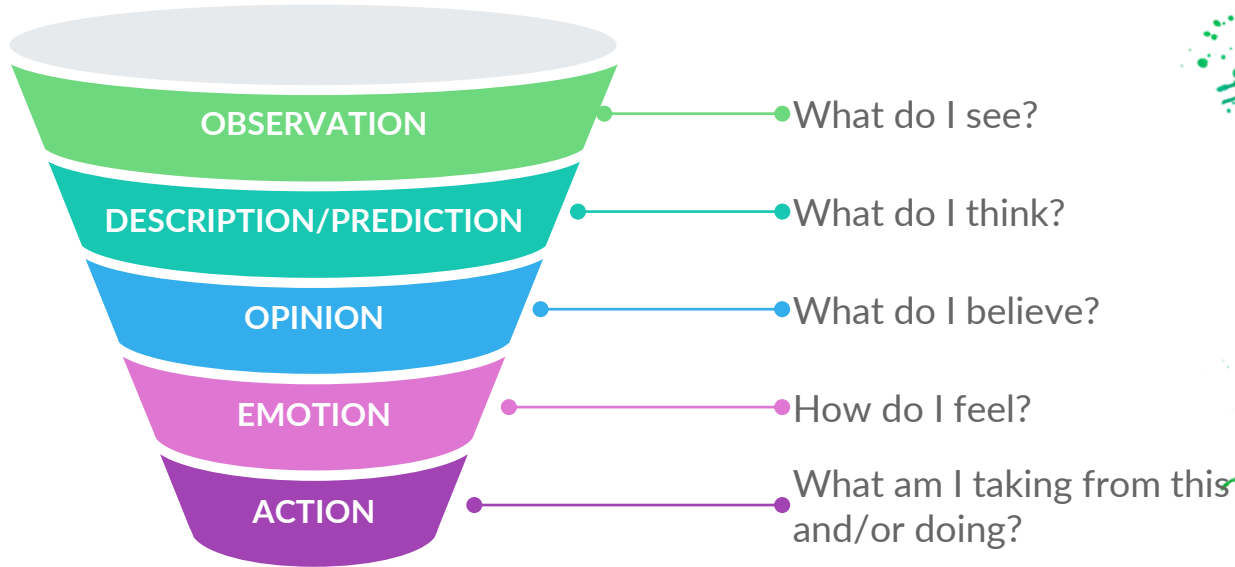
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to feel well right now.”





# Spiraling Depths

Gradually increase risk, vulnerability, trust, personal reflection, social connection and complexity



# Samples of Spiraling Rounds of Prompts

## **Belonging & Connection: Sweet Treats**

1. Name a dessert.
2. What is your favorite dessert?
3. Name a dessert that describes your current mood.

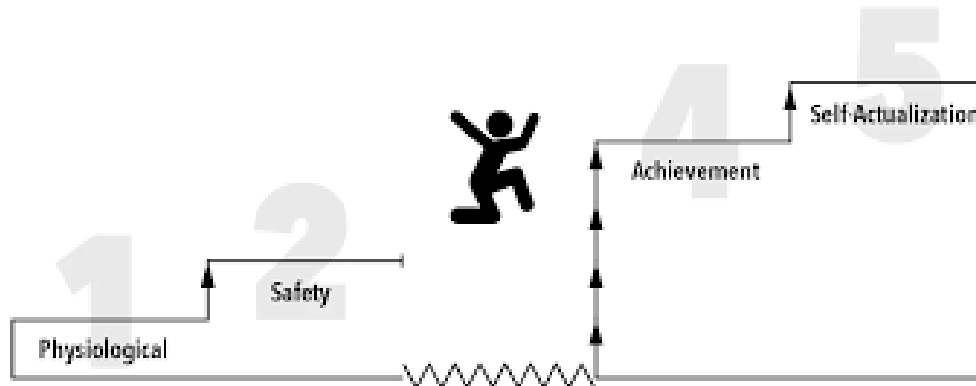
## **Inquiry & Content: Book Review**

1. Who was your favorite character in the story?
2. Describe the characteristics of the main character.
3. Which character is most like you? Why?



Source: *Belonging Through a Culture of Dignity*, Cobb & Krownapple

# Circles & Emotional Equity - Belonging: Why It Matters



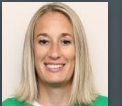
Source: *Belonging Through a Culture of Dignity* (2018) by Peter Cobb & John Krownapple in UK, adapted from Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs





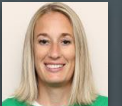
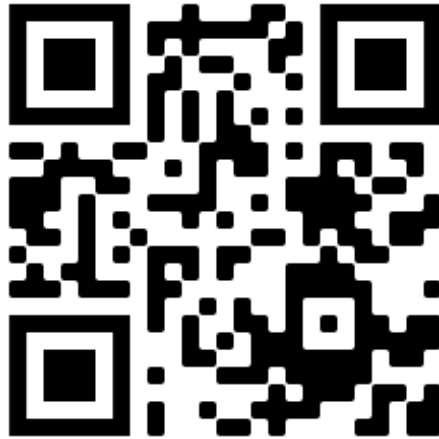
# Feedback:

<https://tinyurl.com/2p94w4a4>



# Resources:

<https://tinyurl.com/5n7sj8ut>



**Optimistic Closure:**  
**Which tool or idea are  
you most excited to  
explore with your staff?**

