

Peacemaking Circle Training

Date: November 14th & 15th, 2018

8:00am-8:30am: Registration/Check-in

8:30am-4:30pm: Peacemaking Circle Training *Lunch provided

Location: Minnesota State University-Moorhead (MSUM)

Comstock Memorial Union

615 14th St S

Moorhead, MN

About Peacemaking Circles

The Peacemaking Circle training is an opportunity for anyone interested in conflict resolution, community building or restorative justice to increase their skills and knowledge for having difficult conversations. The peacemaking circle is a dialogue process useful for increasing understanding among different perspectives and for creating effective solutions to long-standing issues of conflict or disconnection. The circle strives to create an environment safe for every participant to express their point of view and nurtures the possibility of finding win-win solutions for the benefit of all. Circles have been used in schools, families, workplaces, neighborhoods, faith communities, social services and the justice system.

What is the circle process?

The circle is a dialog process that works intentionally to create a safe space to discuss very difficult or painful issues in order to improve relationships and resolve differences. The intent of the circle is to find resolutions that serve every member of the circle. The process is based on an assumption of equal worth and dignity for all participants and therefore provides equal voice to all participants. Every participant has gifts to offer in finding a good solution to the problem.

The circle process is deliberate in discussing how the conversation will be held before discussing the difficult issues. Consequently, the circle works on values and guidelines before talking about the differences or conflict. Where possible the circle also works on relationship building before discussing the difficult issues.

The responsibility of the keeper is to help the participants create a safe space for their conversation and to monitor the quality of the space throughout the circle. If the atmosphere becomes disrespectful, it is the responsibility of the keeper to bring the group's attention to that problem and help the group re-establish a respectful space.

The following qualities are helpful in fulfilling that task:

- Patience
- Humility
- Deep listening
- Acceptance of everyone as worthy of respect
- Willingness to sit with uncertainty
- Ability to share responsibility

Using a circle process is not simply a matter of putting chairs in a circle. Careful preparation is essential to good practice in using circles. The Circle Keeper uses specific elements to design the circle and to create the space for all participants to speak their truth respectfully to one another and to seek resolution of their conflict or difficulty. Some of the essential elements include Opening Ceremony, Values/Guidelines, and Guiding Questions.