

# Values Circle

## Supplies:

Markers and small paper plates or half sheets of paper, enough for the number of people in the circle (suggested 6-8); a small scarf or large cloth napkin for the center piece, a talking piece and a packet of facial tissues. Also, poster paper for the planning section.

### Directions

*Thank you for volunteering to be the Circle keeper! Please read this through so that you are acquainted with the basic outline. You may use these words or most certainly, your own, to conduct, to keep, the conversation. Send the talking piece around in order, to the left.*

### Focus ritual

### “Welcome, Everyone, to I invite you to take a moment to pay attention to your breathing. Purposefully follow your breath as you breathe in and out, thoughtfully, three times.”

### Opening

“I open this circle with two thoughts about relationship. Gregory Cajetes, a member of the Santa Clara Pueblo says, “Mitakuye Oyasin—we are all related, as the Lakota say—is a metaphor that personifies the expression of what Native people perceive as community—integrative and inclusive.\*”

This idea of inclusivity is expressed by a Norwegian principal Kai Robert Johansen, who visited Minnesota and shared his school’s values and methods. Tunhaug School is what we call an ALC, and it serves middle and high school students. Mr. Johansen shared the school’s relationship philosophy: ROSE. *“Its name reflects its content,” he said. “ROSE has nothing to do with the beautiful flower. Rather it means: R—for giving and receiving praise—ros in Norwegian; O—for giving and receiving care—Omsorg in Norwegian; S—for socialization, creating and managing relationships with others; and E—for empathy.”*

The principal continued: *“We also call our school the “human” school. We focus on the whole student. We try to remember that it is not enough to connect to the cellular phone and Internet. At Tunhaug, we greet our students with a handshake every morning. We look each other in the eye and exchange a few kind words. We then are logged onto the human network and ready to start the day and our work.”*

There we have notes on the value of relationship from the Lakota and the Norwegian. This will be a circle about our own values and philosophy.

Our common agreements for this circle are:

Respect the talking piece. Speak from the heart. Listen to understand. Take the time you need, knowing others need time. Honor confidentiality. You may pass.”

### Meeting, Getting Acquainted

“First, let us go around and introduce ourselves. Say your name, what you do at school and one student you appreciate this day.” (The keeper answers the prompt, and gives the talking piece to the person to the left. The talking piece goes around in order.)

### Storytelling

“Thanks for that round. Now, I invite you to take a paper plate and write on it a value word. What was a value that you learned in your family of origin or your work family or your chosen family that helps you get through the day? Write that word on the paper. “(Give people time to think and write.)

“For this round, tell us who your people are and what your word is. Who taught you that word? Tell us a little about what that word means to you today. When you are finished, place the paper with your word on it around the centerpiece so we can all see it. I will start. My people, my family, originally came from….my word is….” (Again, the talking piece goes to the person on the left.)

Let us look at all these values—(read them off). On this round, is there anything you would like to say about another value besides your own? Remember, you may pass, or not.”

### Addressing Issues

“From these values, we can begin to establish a safe and caring learning environment. What do you need in order to work with your colleagues back at your district or workplace, so that you can try to work and learn according to these values? Can someone take notes on the ideas? Thanks. I will pass the talking piece around twice or three times so people can take their time thinking. “

### Making Plans

“Thanks for these ideas. Please read off the list what was said. What is one thing that you can do in your school to help your colleagues keep connected to the ‘human network’?”

### Final Round

“For our final round, how was this circle for you?”

### Closing

“To close our Circle I give you this bit of encouragement: *If your efforts are sometimes greeted with indifference, don't lose heart. The sun puts on a wonderful show at daybreak, yet most of the people in the audience go on sleeping. - Ada Teixeira.”* “Thank you for participating in this Circle.”

(\*Quote from *Indigenous Community: Rekindling the Teachings of the Seventh Fire* by Gregory A. Cajete, PhD;[www.livingjusticepress.org](http://www.livingjusticepress.org))