



Active Peace Circles

THE BASIC STAGES

THE RESTORATIVE MINDSET

1. We co-create a community-driven process grounded in the principles and practices of restorative justice. The process is applicable to any issue where there is sincere interest in hearing the full extent of the harm and healing the harm. It can also be used proactively to avoid harm.
2. The 5 Rs of restorative justice— Respect, Responsibility, Relationship, Repair, and Reintegration—provide a framework that addresses the harm fully, encourages accountability, and fosters restoration without blame, shame, and punishment.
3. We create the conditions that bring out the best in people, while keeping the process uncompromisingly honest and real. We address underlying root causes and systems-level change as we go.
4. We come together across divisions to strengthen the community and bring about fundamental changes in thinking, behavior, and relationships.
5. Since our efforts are aimed at deep level healing and transformation, we build the processes needed for ongoing dialogue, accountability, and relationship-building.

PREPARATION AND ENROLLMENT PHASE

1. We clearly identify the issue and build a community design team to guide the process. The design team determines who needs to be involved and initiates outreach efforts.
2. Our goal is to have those responsible for the harm actively participating in the entire process—the commitment to respect and repair dramatically increases the chances of this happening.

3. We present the restorative goals, methods, and ground rules in a consistent way.
4. In pre-conferencing we go deeper into the harm and assure that those who caused the harm take responsibility.
5. The process unfolds organically and we move forward knowing that there is no guaranteed outcome.

THE CIRCLE PROCESS

1. Once the stage is set and people come together, the first priority is hearing the full extent of the harm—no speculation, just people speaking from their own experience. Once the harm is fully exposed we address who/what is responsible for the harm.
2. Once responsibility has been fully taken the process moves to healing/repairing the harm in the best way possible. This includes good faith efforts to change the underlying beliefs and systems so the harm will not happen again.
3. It might take many circles!
4. The result (if successful) is agreements, timelines, and accountability.

IMPLEMENTATION PHASE

We assure accountability and get feedback into how well the process is working and adjust as necessary.

We create the structures and support needed to keep the restoration process going over time (financial, material, psychological, spiritual, social/cultural).

MEASUREMENT

Our results are demonstrable and include changes at the systems level (e.g., regulatory changes that increase public health protections, training and policy changes that reduce systemic discrimination).

REINTEGRATION PHASE

If the terms of the repair agreements have been met, and the process has been successful, everyone involved can reintegrate back into the community without lingering blame, shame, or resentment.