National Center for School Safety

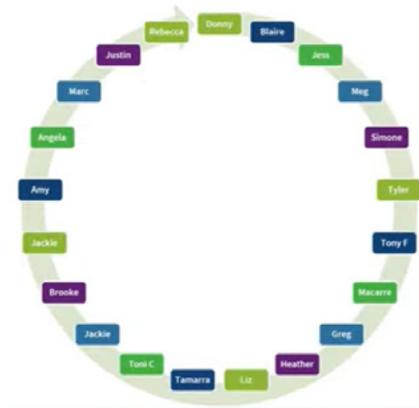# Restorative Virtual Circles



Restorative circles are one way to build positive classroom environments and maintain strong, open relationships in school. In this video, Derrick Franke, trainer and facilitator of restorative practices with the International Institute for Restorative Practices, explains how educators and school specialists can transition restorative circles from the classroom into an online environment.

### Learning Outcomes

» Understand the unique challenges that come from transitioning restorative circles to a virtual setting.

» Learn techniques and technical skills to streamline communication and support positive outcomes.

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## Key Takeaways

☑ Twenty students is the suggested maximum number for a virtual restorative circle. It may be necessary to do multiple smaller group circles to ensure the best experience for everyone.

☑ When it comes to sequential circles, creating a graphic or sharing your list of students in the order they will be called on in the chat can help decrease uncertainty and anxiety.

☑ Managing the mute/unmute process, or letting students manage it, is a personal decision and often influenced by factors such as the age of the students, seriousness of the topic, and size of the group.

☑ There are a number of options for how to handle The online chat function can be turned off completely, limited to chats with only the teacher, or allowed to be used by and sent to everyone.

☑ In non-sequential circles, students should have an item that will serve as their personal "talking piece" which they can hold up to indicate they are ready to share.

☑ In all classrooms, but especially in those that have used circles previously, circles can be a successful way of connecting to students as well as connecting students to each other.

## Additional Resources

Circle Keeper's Handbook - A handbook on the purpose, implementation, improvement, and management of circles.

Restorative Practices and COVID-19 - Resources on how to appropriately transition different aspects of classroom learning to a virtual setting.

Progress Report Episode 5: Restorative Practices - A podcast episode that features school staff discussing their implementation of restorative circles in the classroom.

## Questions for Discussion

» Do you feel that sequential or non-sequential circles would be more appropriate for your virtual classroom?

» What are the communication challenges you anticipate? What steps can be taken to alleviate those challenges?

» What strategies will you use to manage the chatbox? The mute/unmute protocol?

» What is the purpose of using circles in your classroom?

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