

# Restorative Circles

Restorative Circles offer ways for individuals and communities to establish connection, discover meaning and recover power on profound levels. They create a forum for reaching agreements that help sustain effective and nurturing relationships both personally and within society.

The Circles have developed within the Restorative Justice movement, which in recent decades has rediscovered and adapted ways for communities to promote responsibility and healing. Rethinking justice, and engaging with the challenge of consciously building whole system responses to community well-being, has opened up revolutionary possibilities for furthering a culture of peace.

These handouts were created during a workshop lead by Dominic Barter who developed this particular Restorative Circle process. He has applied their use in the Brazilian Justice and Education systems. His process makes profound use of Nonviolent Communication to reconnect those separated by conflict and support them in reaching agreed action.

Dominic Barter has studied the interface between societal and personal change, and the role of conflict, since the 1980s. Since 2004 he has worked as consultant and training program director for the Brazilian Restorative Justice pilot projects, in collaboration with the UN Development Program, UNESCO, the Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Education and Special Secretariat for Human Rights. He has focused on developing effective models and training programs for practitioners to address youth crime and its consequences, as well as working with judges, school administrators, police, social services as well as youth and community leaders in supervising implementation. Dominic coordinates the Restorative Justice Project for the international Center for Nonviolent Communication.

Restorative Circles (RC) is a process for addressing conflict between people within the context of their community.

RC is a series of meetings among those involved in a conflict either directly, indirectly or structurally.

RC meetings rely on reflective listening to offer everyone an opportunity to speak and be heard.

RC is a process for

1. discovering the underlying unmet needs or concerns that trigger conflict and
2. facilitating holistic, transparent solutions for moving forward to meet needs and restore community.

## PRE CIRCLES

1. **What happened** (observable & specific)
2. **Listen** (meaning it has)
3. **Inform**
  - describe RC process
  - invite (who else needs to be there to resolve the conflict)
  - voluntary consent

**Author**

**Receiver**

**Community**

# RESTORATIVE CIRCLE



## MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

**What do you want the person to know about how are you doing now in relation to the event and its consequences?**

**What do you want...**

What did you hear him/her say?

Is that accurate?  
Is there anything else you'd like to say about that?



## SELF RESPONSIBILITY

**What do you want the person to know about what were you looking for when you chose to act?**



## ACTION PLAN

(to meet needs, restore & re-integrate)

**What do you want to happen next?**  
What would you like offer & to whom?  
What would you like to request & from whom?

# POST CIRCLE

1. **What happened** (observable & specific)
2. **Listen** (meaning it has)
3. **how satisfied are we with the consequences of our actions?**