



Back to Campus Community Building Circle Lessons

Community Building Circles build a strong sense of belonging, connection, and community, and a shared ownership of the space. The more connected we are, the less likely we are to engage in unexpected behavior.

Week 1

Welcome Back to Campus!

SEL Competency	Self-Management, Social Awareness, Self-Efficacy, Growth Mindset
Welcome	Thank you for being here in circle today, we are very excited to see you! Today's we will be focusing on being back at school.
Centering Activity	<p>Squeeze and Let Go</p> <p>In order to ground ourselves and become more relaxed in this moment, let's try the following activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make both hands into a fist and squeeze them for five seconds...then release. • Squeeze the muscles in your face. Hold for five seconds...then release. • Now, squeeze your legs and feet tightly, hold for five seconds, then release. • Lastly, squeeze and tighten your entire body as best you can. Hold for five seconds...and release. • How do you feel after this Squeeze and Let Go exercise? What do you notice?
Seven Core Circle Guidelines	<p>Introduce/review the Seven Core Circle Guidelines</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Respect the talking piece 2. Listen with your heart 3. Speak with your heart 4. Listen with respect 5. Speak with respect 6. Remain in the circle 7. Honor privacy
Talking Piece (virtual and in-person while practicing physical distancing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish how students will share using a Talking Piece, while honoring one voice: one speaker at a time. (e.g., alphabetical order, person to your left/right/bottom/top of your screen, pick a friend, etc.). • Invite students to bring their own talking piece, hold it, talk about it, but remind them not to physically pass it. • Invite students to imagine a talking piece they would like to talk about in circle. • Invite students to create a visual gesture to be used as a talking piece (thumbs up, a wave, peace sign, hand over heart, clap).
Check-In Round	<p>What movie genre best describes how you're feeling today (e.g., action, comedy, drama, suspense), and why? Students can share their responses orally, Jamboard, Nearpod, or any other platforms. For additional ideas about Check-In, go to https://bit.ly/CheckInsLAUSD.</p> <p>Feel free to modify/adapt the prompt to best meet the needs of your students.</p>
Discussion Round Prompts	<p>Elementary Prompts</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What do you look forward to about returning to campus? 2. What will you miss most about distance learning? 3. How did being away from school change how you feel about it? <p>Secondary Prompts</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What excited you most about returning to campus? 2. What will you miss most about distance learning? 3. In which ways did distance learning help you better appreciate school? <p>Additional Prompts:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How easy or challenging is it for you to focus on your schoolwork today? 2. Share a happy memory during distance learning. 3. What new hobby or interest did you pick up during distance learning? 4. Share a new skill or talent you improved in or didn't know you had. 5. Who was your hero during distance learning and why? <p>Feel free to modify/adapt the prompts to best meet the needs of you students.</p>
Quote	When I say I miss school, I mean my friends and the fun. Not the studying part. -Unknown
Closing Round	Invite students to share something they learned from today's circle.



Week 2

Welcome Back to Campus!

SEL Competency	Self-Management, Social Awareness, Self-Efficacy, Growth Mindset
Welcome	Thank you for being here in circle today, we are very excited to see you! Today's we will be focusing on being back at school.
Centering Activity	<p>5 Step Check-In Process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tune into your body. • Take a deep breath. • Ask yourself, "How am I feeling in this moment?" • Use descriptive words to capture how you feel. • Silently brainstorm what might be contributing to those emotions. • Tell yourself everything is in control and will be okay.
Seven Core Circle Guidelines	<p>Introduce/review the Seven Core Circle Guidelines</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Respect the talking piece 2. Listen with your heart 3. Speak with your heart 4. Listen with respect 5. Speak with respect 6. Remain in the circle 7. Honor privacy
Talking Piece (virtual and in-person while practicing physical distancing)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish how students will share using a Talking Piece, while honoring one voice: one speaker at a time. (e.g., alphabetical order, person to your left/right/bottom/top of your screen, pick a friend, etc.). • Invite students to bring their own talking piece, hold it, talk about it, but remind them not to physically pass it. • Invite students to imagine a talking piece they would like to talk about in circle. • Invite students to create a visual gesture to be used as a talking piece (thumbs up, a wave, peace sign, hand over heart, clap).
Check-In Round	<p>What is your internal weather report? You might feel like there's a sunny day inside (e.g., happy, joy), a gloomy day (e.g., bored, down), stormy (e.g., angry, irritated), or anything else you can think of. Students can share their responses orally, Jamboard, Nearpod, or any other platforms. For additional ideas about Check-In, go to https://bit.ly/CheckInsLAUSD.</p> <p>Feel free to modify/adapt the prompt to best meet the needs of your students.</p>
Discussion Round Prompts	<p>Elementary Prompts</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What have you learned about your teacher(s) through distance learning and since returning to campus? 2. What have you learned about your classmates through distance learning and since returning to campus? 3. What makes you feel connected to the adults and classmates on campus? <p>Secondary Prompts</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What have you learned about your teacher(s) through distance learning and since returning to campus? 2. What have you learned about your classmates through distance learning and since returning to campus? 3. What makes you feel connected to the adults and classmates on campus? <p>Feel free to modify/adapt the prompts to best meet the needs of you students.</p> <p>Additional Prompts</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the silliest thing that happened to you during distance learning? 2. What was the most difficult or challenging thing for you during distance learning? 3. What is the most difficult or challenging thing for you about returning to campus? 4. What important lesson did you learn during distance learning? Why is it so important? 5. What are some ways you can safely express your emotions while social distancing?
Quote	Together we can face any challenges as deep as the ocean and as high as the sky. -Sonia Gandhi
Closing Round	Invite students to share one word that describes their feelings during today's circle.



Seven Core Circle Guidelines

Speak with your heart: This means speaking for yourself, talking about what is true for you based on your own experiences. When we speak from the heart we are aiming for eloquence, for choosing words that accurately communicate what we hold to be important.

Listen with your heart: We are accustomed to judging other people, often without even knowing anything about them. These assumptions can keep us from really hearing what they have to say and what they have to say may be something important and/or helpful. Therefore, when we listen from the heart, we are trying to set aside any assumptions and/or judgments we may hold about the person. This opens up the possibility of making wonderful discoveries about each other.

Virtual talking piece: Establish how your students will share while honoring one voice; one speaker at a time. (e.g., alphabetical order, person to your left/right/bottom/top of your screen, pick a friend, etc.).

Listen with respect: This means to listen to what is being said, without judgement. This also means to make sure that one's body reflects being respectful.

Speak with respect: This means to be mindful of the words that one uses when sharing their thoughts. Hurtful words should never be used. It best to use affective statements ("I" statements) when speaking one's truths.

Remain in the circle: This means to be physically and mentally present when being in circle. It is important to bring our attention back to circle when our mind wanders.

Honor privacy: It is important to remind the participants that things shared in the circle should remain in the circle. Do however, disclose that you are a mandated reporter and will report suspicions of child abuse or neglect.



Sample Virtual Community Building Circle Prompts

Building Connections

- Share a happy memory.
- If you could be a superhero, what super-power would you choose and why?
- What do you appreciate about your school?
- How would your best friend describe you?
- If you had an unexpected free day, what would you do?
- If you were an animal, what animal would you be and why?
- Name two things or people who always make you laugh.
- Do you have a hobby? Why did that hobby interest you?
- Name a male and/or a female who is your role model. What makes them a great role model?
- If you could have a face-to-face conversation with someone alive today or someone from the past, who would it be and why?
- Describe your ideal job.
- Describe your favorite vacation.
- What is one skill or talent you have?
- If you were a reporter, what kind of stories would you like to write about?
- Who is your hero? Why are they your hero?
- What do you think other people see as your best quality? Why?
- What is the silliest thing that ever happened to you?
- What is the best thing that happened to you this week?
- What was the most difficult or challenging thing that happened to you this week?
- A time you faced one of your most difficult challenges. How did you deal with it?
- An experience when, out of a crisis or difficulty situation, you discovered something positive.
- A time when you received bad news from a friend or family member and were grateful.
- Something that scares/scared you. How do/did you deal with it?
- An embarrassing moment that you can laugh at now.
- Something that makes/made you angry. How do/did you deal with it?
- A time when you were outside your comfort zone.
- An experience when you caused harm to someone and talking through the situation made it better.
- An experience where you did not fit in.
- What is the most important lesson you've in life? What made it so important?
- What is one thing you would like to grow or improve in? Why?

Community

- What change would you like to see in your community? What can you do to promote that change?
- What change would you like to see in your classroom? What can you do to promote that change?
- What is something you value about your community (culture, school, youth group, etc.)? Why?
- What is your favorite place to go in your community and why?
- What is a memory you have about the neighborhood that you grew up in?



- What is something you like about your neighborhood? Why?
- What do others expect from you at school?
- What do you expect from others at school?

Exploring Relationships

- What is the most important quality to you in a friend? Why is it important to you?
- Who is someone in your life you look up to?
- Who is someone in your life you have learned from? What did you learn from them?
- Who is someone in your life that has helped you grow? What did they help you accomplish?
- Name a teacher who has influenced you in positive ways? How did he/she influence you?
- Share a time when you felt like you really belonged. What was it that caused you to feel that way?
- Share a time when you felt left out. What was it that caused you to feel that way?
- Who knows you the best? How does that person know you so well?
- Who do you appreciate the most? What do you most appreciate about that person?

Hopes and Dreams

- If you could go anywhere in the world, where would you go?
- Close your eyes and imagine yourself ten years from now. Where are you? What are you doing?
- What is the one thing that gives you the most satisfaction?
- What is one skill or talent you wish you had?
- If you could do anything in the world, what would it be?
- What do you dream about? Do you feel your dream can come true?
- What are three things you would do if you could change the world?
- What is your biggest goal? How will you celebrate your accomplishment?
- What is an obstacle that can get in the way of you reaching your goals? How do you plan to overcome this obstacle?
- What does it mean to be totally free? What would it look like?

Exploring Values

- What value would you like to offer for our classroom?
- What does being a good student mean? Do you consider yourself a good student?
- What are your challenges?
- What demonstrates respect?
- How do you demonstrate respect?
- What are three "gifts" that best describe you?
- What is something you value about your family? Why?
- What is something you value about yourself? Why?
- What is something you are thankful for? Why?
- What is the difference between something you want and something you need?
- What does power mean? What do you or others demonstrate having power?