TALKING CIRCLE PREPARATION

WHAT INDIVIDUAL VALUES ARE IMPORTANT TO YOU AND AFFECT HOW YOU FEEL?

WHAT SOCIAL PRESSURES IMPACT YOUR BEHAVIOR?

WHAT FAMILY VALUES ARE IMPORTANT TO YOU AND AFFECT HOW YOU FEEL?

HOW CAN YOU ENGAGE AND WORK WITH OTHERS TO IDENTIFY AND AFFIRM PERSPECTIVES?

HOW ARE WAYS YOU CAN TREAT OTHERS WITH DIGNITY AND RESPECT?

WHAT ARE YOUR PERSONAL BOUNDARIES AND PRIVACY NEEDS?

HOW CAN YOU USE A TALKING CIRCLE TO BUILD HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS AND MANAGE CONFLICT?

4th Grade Health Worksheet

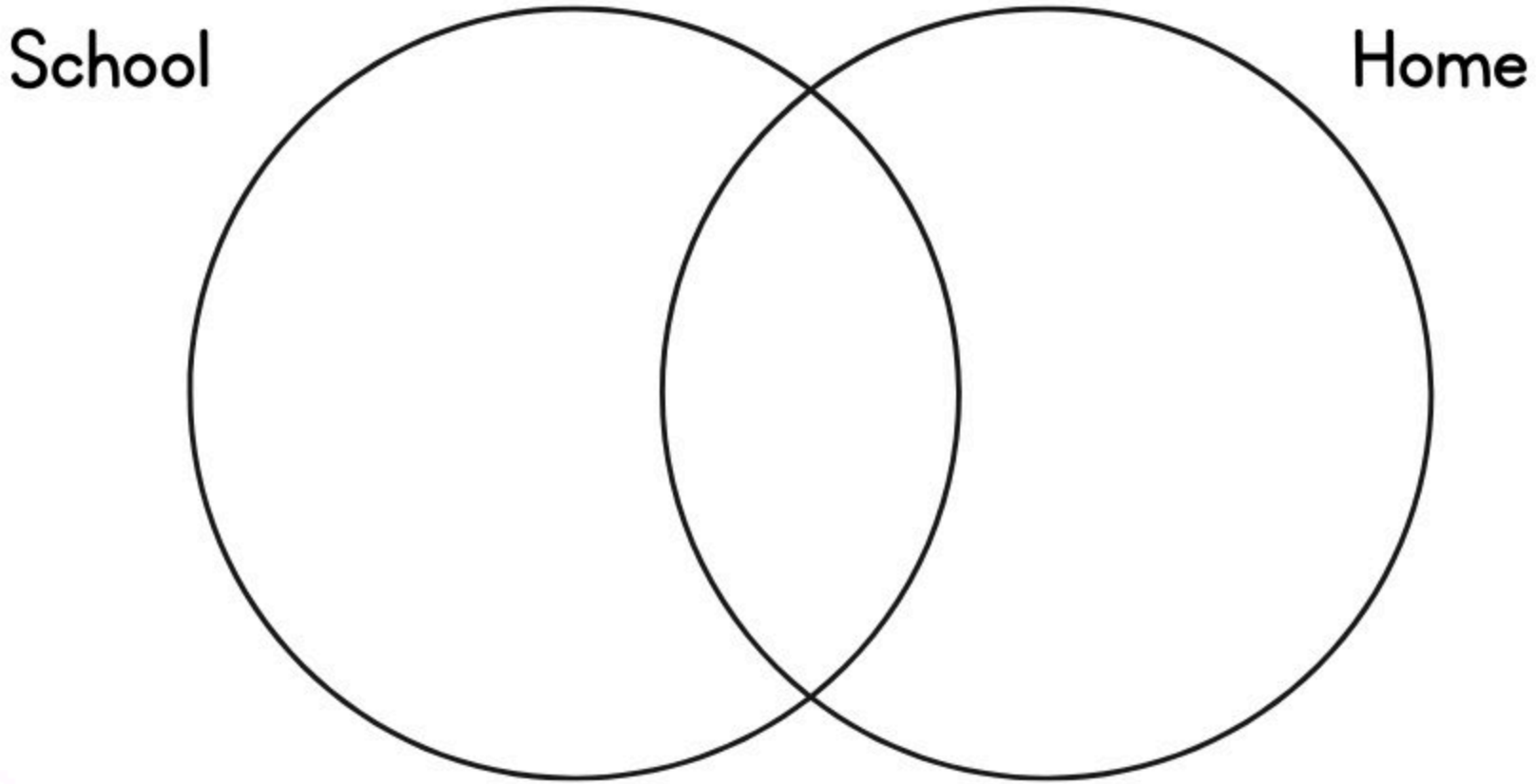
Name: _____

Can you use a Talking Circle at home?

What are some topics you would like to use in a Talking Circle at School and some topics for a Talking Circle at Home?

Remember: At home your parents/guardians still make the final decisions, but a Talking Circle can provide an opportunity for you to explain your feelings and position and hear the thoughts and positions of your parents/guardians and siblings.

Are any of your school and home topics the same or similar?



Talking Circles: Listening, Sharing, and Problem Solving

The contemporary Constitution of the Confederated Tribes of Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians does not contain a specific section called Talking Circle. However, both the Tribal Council and the Tribe's Community Action group actively use the Talking Circle method to foster communication, address issues, and share thoughts and feelings. Talking Circles provide a safe and predictable way to share feelings, ask questions, and state opinions.

Talking Circles have long been considered an Indigenous style of addressing and resolving problems. The Tribal Council is generally the decision-makers in the Tribe, but good leadership involves listening to your community/group to know what they want, how they are thinking and feeling about a topic, and what they might want done. Leaders are usually chosen for their leadership ability, but good leaders are also good listeners.

Purpose of a Talking Circle:

- To create a safe place for participants to share thoughts and feelings.
- To ensure everyone has an equal chance to participate.
- To encourage disagreement in a respectful way and communication in a good way.
- To help participants listen carefully before making decisions or forming opinions.
- To explore options and address issues or concerns.
- To create a community with common understandings and vested ownership in a decision.
- To create a teaching opportunity for participants.
- To teach patience: sitting and waiting for your turn to speak.
- Designed to provide space for the speaker to share their thoughts and position, rather than "call out" others for their comments. (Fosters direct communication rather than reactive communication).

How to set up a Talking Circle:

- The formation of a Talking Circle begins with everyone in a circle. That way, no one is in front of another and no one is feeling "left out" in the back.
- A stick (or any item) is used: One cannot talk unless they physically hold the talking stick item.
- Talking Circles work best in a classroom setting if "friends and buddies" are not sitting right next to one another.

Ground Rules for a Talking Circle:

- One person talks at a time. All others listen.
- You can only talk when you are holding the stick/items designated as a stick.
- No name calling or inappropriate comments.
- Everyone has a chance to speak or pass the stick before anyone speaks a second time.

Circle Keepers (Facilitators).

- Acts as a Guide to help start the Circle.
- Shares the rules and guidelines.
- Ensures the space remains safe and respectful.
- In a classroom setting, this is usually the teacher. As students become more adept at a Talking Circle activity, a student participant may become a Circle Keeper.

To ensure equality and prevent challenges of favoritism, the Talking Circle concept works best if the stick is simply passed to the next person to the left (rather than the speaker choosing the next person to talk). A person speaks and then passes the stick to their left; that person talks and then passes the stick to their left. This happens until everyone has had a chance to speak. Sometimes it is difficult for the speaker to stop speaking, so time limits can be established at the beginning of the talking circle activity. If any other speaker simply agrees with a previous speaker, they can state that directly. However, they can also restate their position in their own words.

No one is mandated to speak. Anyone holding the stick can simply pass it to the next person without talking. **Choosing to not speak should not be considered non-participation**. Some people simply choose to listen and may not have or want to share their ideas on any topic.

One of the most difficult parts of a Talking Circle is to teach participants to engage in active and thoughtful listening, rather than formulating their responses to what is being said. Reinforce that talking is a chance to share the speaker's thoughts, rather than respond or challenge the statements of other participants.

Encourage participants to speak from their heart, as well as their mind. Speakers are to be encouraged to be authentic in their comments and what is important to them. Speakers should not use their speaking time to engage in debate or offer advice to others.

The Talking Circle is a process. The final decision may not please everyone, but the Talking Circle ensures everyone has a chance to participate, be heard, and have their opinions considered. The final decision may be made by the Teacher or by majority vote or by consensus. The intent of the Circle is to find resolutions that best serve every member of the Circle. Sometimes this is possible, and sometimes other factors (school rules, finance, practicality) make this type of decision not possible. If other factors prevent a choice decision from being implemented, those factors should be explained as part of the Circle decision-making process. It would work best if those factors were shared before the Talking Circle begins.