Health
4th Grade

Lesson 5: Health | 20 – 40 minutes

Lesson 1–Talking Circle

Summary:

Students will learn about historical Indigenous problem-solving methods through a Talking Circle activity. Students will then be able to apply the Talking Circle principles in their own classroom and home settings to identify issues, address them, and resolve conflicts.

Key Discovery:
Understand how personal values and perceptions impact decision-making and desired goals. Implement ways to identify boundaries, recognize ways to respect others, and improve communication skills.

Standards	• 4.WHP.1, 4.WHP.5, 4.HRVP.4, 4.HRVP.5, 4.HRVP.6
Materials	• Talking Circles to Communicate and Develop Resolution Teacher's Background Narrative • Talking Circle Preparation Worksheet • Venn Diagram for School and Home Worksheet
Vocabulary	• **Talking Circle:** A traditional Indigenous discussion and decision-making format that promotes active listening and balanced voice. • **Emotional Self-Regulation:** The ability to monitor, evaluate and modify the emotional reaction to feelings and impulses. • **Patience:** The ability to delay comments or actions without becoming upset or angry or complaining. • **Perspective:** A particular point of view or attitude that impacts a decision or how one feels about a topic or issue. • **Fairness:** Treating others free from bias, favoritism or discrimination. • **Decision:** A choice or judgment made after considering different options.



Setup & Logistics:

Classroom setting for Talking Circle Activity.
Identification and use of a “Talking Stick”.

Class Flow:

Activity 1— Talking Circle:

Step 1: Explain the Talking Circle.

- How it works, purpose, and listening and talking.
- Identification of a Talking Stick and how it is used.
- Teacher Prompts:
    - Explain that in Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw traditions, Talking Circles are more than just conversations—they are a sacred space.
    - Share that the Tribe uses circles for Council business, peace-making events, healing activities, and collective decision-making.
    - Emphasize that in this circle:
        - Only the person holding the talking piece speaks
        - Speaking is a choice and not speaking is a choice.
- Hand out Talking Circle Preparation Worksheet and invite students to think about their responses.

Step 2: Have students gather in a circle.

- Teacher suggestion: Set up circle so close friends are not sitting closely together.

Step 3: Practice Talking Circle/Values Sharing

- Ask two or three rounds of prompts. For the first practice circle, keep the questions light, fun, and more neutral (as students become more capable, the issues can become more complex).
    - Round 1: Introduction of self (name/preferred name) and their favorite animal. This would be a quick, warm-up round.
    - Round 2: How can you show respect and inclusion to others?
    - Round 3: How do you participate in a decision-making activity?
        - Do you actively participate by speaking right away?
        - Do you wait a bit to speak, process, or ask questions?
        - Do you prefer to not participate in discussions on some issue(s)?
    - Round 4: How can we help each other succeed?



- Record repeating values on the board. Practice role modeling and active listening together.

Step 4: Group Decision(s):

- Can the class, as a group, decide shared values that could be adopted as a classroom agreement?

Step 5: Venn Diagram Worksheet (optional)

- Invite students to consider sharing Talking Circle activities in their home(s).

