

Restorative Circles

The STOP COVID-19 CA team has identified restorative circles as a way to assist community members with healing from the COVID-19 pandemic experience. A restorative circle is a safe, healing space for community members to discuss their concerns regarding health, healthcare, COVID-19, and other related topics. This document will provide a checklist for stakeholders interested in organizing restorative circles within their communities.

A Circle:

- Is hosted by a community partner with logistical support from a university partner & the STOP COVID-19 CA Vaccine Hesitancy Working Group
- Is facilitated by a community member, has 2-3 mental health providers, & 1 moderator
- Includes: Establishing a safe space & solidarity, Acknowledging discrimination, Giving space for participant concerns, resiliencies, & takeaways, & Providing resources
- Can occur once or multiple times between May - July 2021 depending on community needs & capacity

Checklist by Partner:

UNIVERSITY PARTNERS

Identify community partners and stakeholders to host restorative circles in your region.

Provide logistical support to community partners and stakeholders:

- Zoom or another platform with breakout room and whiteboard capability.
- Personnel support – provide 2-3 mental health professionals for breakout rooms, 1 moderator to assist with navigating Zoom and the whiteboard.
- Other support – creating flyers for event, advertising event on social media, other.
- Evaluation – collecting number of attendees, general concerns raised, etc.

Prepare a virtual to-go packet for participants with future events and mental health support materials (in appropriate languages).

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Set a date and time for at least one circle in your community. We recommend:

- 60-120 minutes depending on community needs.
- Offering circles for each language within the community.

Designate a facilitator for each circle that matches the demographic and is engaging. A facilitator may:

- Create a welcoming virtual environment (consider music & virtual background, breathing exercises, videos, jokes/stories).
- Establish shared agreements and create a safe space.
- Use therapeutic techniques and storytelling to inspire sharing among participants.
- Create opportunities for participants to share their concerns, resiliencies, and takeaways from the circle.

Determine who will provide acknowledgements of land, abuses, and discrimination.