

What is a Peer Mentoring Circle?

A 'Peer Mentoring Circle' is a model of structured support for youth designed to foster strengths and promote resiliency through developing authentic connection with peers and adults in their community, build skills, counter trends toward self-doubt, and allow for genuine self-expression through verbal sharing and creative activity.

Each week, a group of participants who identify with others of similar age and development will meet with a facilitator for one hour or two hours. The circle consists of simple rituals and a six-step format to provide predictability, safety, and facilitate healthy communication and development of strengths in target areas, as identified by the individual youth within the group, as a group.

During this time the participants take turns talking and listening to one another about their concerns and interests. They express themselves further through creative or focused activities such as role playing, drama, journaling, poetry, movement, drawing, collage, clay, advocacy efforts, etc. Each session, themes are introduced which relate to the participants lives – such as being a person of character, trusting ourselves, friendships, body image, goals, competition, communication, conflict, stereotypes, personal boundaries, and decision-making.

To participate, youth need only have the desire, make a commitment to attend the meetings, and agree to follow the circle guidelines: no put-downs or interruptions, offer experiences – not advice; keep the focus on oneself; and keep what's said in the group confidential.

Participants are free to share at their own pace. Through listening and respect for themselves and others, participants can reflect on and express their own thoughts and feelings with peers. The 'Peer Mentoring Circle' does not aim to provide advice, but encourages participants to critically think about their own lives, behavior, and choices, and share experiences that may be helpful to one another.

By voicing their ideas and opinions in a safe environment, participants strengthen their confidence and mutually encourage one another to express themselves more authentically. By examining cultural expectations in a safe and supportive setting, participants gain greater awareness of their options and strengthen their ability to make choices that are consistent with their own values, needs, talents, and goals.

The 'Circle' will have a start date of _____, and end date of _____ - at which time all youth within the Circle will graduate and receive an award for completion for their effort and commitment to growth and helping others grow alongside them. At this time, youth can choose to become 'Citizens Alumni' and remain enrolled as Mentees at Citizens For Safe Schools to continue to participate in activities with their Circle cohort, receive opportunities and resources reserved for Citizens Youth and Families, and access to the Citizens Institute for Character.

Youth Information

Name: _____

Birthdate: _____

School: _____

Grade Level: _____

Address: _____

Email Address: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Email: _____

Referrer Name: _____

Referrer Email: _____

Referrer instructions: Please complete the above information, and send pages 3 and 4 to the parent/guardian to complete. When returned to referrer, please scan and send to info@citizensforsafeschools.org CO: Amber Martinez, Circle Facilitator or send to PO Box 243, Klamath Falls OR 97601. Once referral is received, Facilitator will connect with referred youth at school for intake and enrollment into the Circle program.

Release of Information and Informed Consent MUST be complete to follow through with enrollment.

Citizens for Safe Schools Authorization for Release and Exchange of Information

Name of Mentee: _____ Birthdate: _____

I authorize and consent to the mutual exchange of information between the staff of Citizens For Safe Schools and the agencies or individuals indicated below for the purpose of supporting the health, safety and wellbeing of my child participating in the Peer mentoring Circle program, as needed.

Information may be shared by and with:

- School(s)
- Klamath Basin Behavioral Health
- Department of Human Services
- Lutheran Community Services
- Juvenile Detention
- Other _____

Information to be disclosed may include:

- School Record
- Family History
- Medical Record
- Psychological Evaluation
- Court Record
- Other: _____
- To exclude: _____

This consent is valid for the child's entire duration in Citizens programing and can be used as a release of information at all of the schools they may be enrolled in during their time with Citizens For Safe Schools. However, this consent is subject to revocation at any time, except to the consent that the program which is to make the disclosure has already taken action in reliance on it. If you prefer that any of the above information not be released, please indicate by writing it in the "to exclude" section.

I recognize the information named above may contain specifics that are protected by federal and state law, and I specifically consent to disclosure of such information.

_____ Date Name of Student

_____ Parent/Guardian Signature

Peer Mentoring Circle Informed Consent

My child, _____, has my permission to participate in the Peer Mentoring Circle program facilitated by Citizens For Safe Schools, beginning on _____ and ending on _____.

I understand that this circle program provides peer support facilitated by a qualified professional, encourages creative and verbal expression, and that the Circle Agreements that follow provide the foundation for circle communication.

CIRCLE AGREEMENTS:

1. Everything heard, and said in circle stays in circle. It is confidential. Only matters which indicate possible harm to or by a circle participant will be communicated with appropriate parties, to include school counselor and parent/guardian.
2. Respect each other. Youth agrees they will treat everyone with respect, including themselves.
3. Right to pass. Youth may pass whenever they choose.
4. Youth will talk about themselves and their own experiences. When talking about others, it is only to explain how they affect the youth and will not veer into gossip.
5. Youth agrees to listen. Everyone has a right to speak and be heard. They will try not to advise others, but listen to them. If others ask for advice, youth may share any experience that might be useful.
6. Everyone has a right to their own views and beliefs. Youth accepts that others' views or beliefs may be different from their own, and it's okay to have diverse perspectives while respecting the experience of others.
7. Youth will participate in each meeting scheduled to the best of their ability. If needing to miss a session, Youth will contact facilitator to inform before Circle.
8. Honesty matters. Youth agrees to exercise integrity toward themselves and others.

I understand that consent to participate in this program includes permission for my youth to participate in all related activities, assessments, and curricula. Photos may be used for promotional materials. I at any time will communicate questions about programming to the Circle Facilitator listed below, and agree not to bring legal action against CFSS or its program staff.

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Date _____

Facilitator Name _____

Phone Number _____

