

TALKING STICKS

Transforming Conversations



Fact Sheet

- Everyone's contribution is equally important.
- State what you feel or believe using "I - statements," i.e. "I think that.." or could share a story or personal experience.
- All comments are directed to the question or the issue, not to comments another person has made. Both negative and positive comments about what anyone else has to say should be avoided.
- When the talking object is placed in someone's hands; it is that person's turn to share his or her thoughts, without interruption. The object is then passed to the next person in a clockwise direction.
- Whoever is holding the object has the right to speak and others have the responsibility to listen.
- Everyone else is listening in a non-judgmental way to what the speaker is saying.
- Speakers should be respectful of time when it's their turn.
- The Circle Talk is complete when everyone has had a chance to speak, but if desired, the stick may be passed around again.
- The circle is most often used to discuss issues of importance.
- The object used to pass around should have a connection to the earth (stone, stick, feather).

Uses

- Can be used as an activity for class and team building; class meetings; getting to know each other; to discuss challenging issues; to find solutions; make class or group decisions; as the medium for class meetings or for students to practice agency and experience consensus forums and leadership. Also can be used as an effective classroom management tool.
- Creative storytelling.
- Reading Aloud: Particularly helpful to students who find reading aloud a daunting experience. This tactic helps prepare them for their turn and with parameters, can be a helpful tool.
- Resolving conflicts: When two or more students experience conflict, it can be difficult to get them to talk calmly about the issue. With teacher as mediator, this format works well as it encourages listening and prevents arguments.

Benefits

- They provide a model for an educational activity that encourages dialogue, respect, the co-creation of learning content, and social discourse.
- The nuance of subtle energy created from using this respectful approach to talking with others provides a sense of communion and inter-connectedness that is not often present in the common methods of communicating in the classroom. It is representative of the Aboriginal Worldview and Perspective (holistic and interconnected).
- When all voices are heard in a respectful and attentive way, the learning atmosphere becomes a rich source of information, identity and interaction.

Talking Circle Protocols

For First Nations people, everything is about relationships and making connections. The protocol for talking circles or really, any event or structure, is to introduce yourself, explain who your family is and where you come from (Nation).

Why?

1. It provides your listener with a reference for who you are “okay, she is Nuxalk and her family are the Cole’s.”
2. It provides you with credibility (sourcing). She is Nuxalk and can share Nuxalk stories etc. She has the rights.
3. It creates a connection with others and hopefully works towards building relationships.
 - a. Create a connection with someone in the circle.
 - b. Create a conversation with that person.
 - c. Build a relationship with them.