

# Circling Up

Activities to Establish Community

ICEBREAKERS AND TEAM BUILDERS TO BUILD COMMUNITY

## OBJECTIVES

- To help participants understand the value of hearing multiple viewpoints
- To co-create a tool to support intentional dialogue and conversation
- To practice a process for group discussion

## MATERIALS

- Download **TALKING BUNDLE COLOR CHART** from **BUILDING INTENTIONAL COMMUNITIES.COM** and make one copy per participant.
- Spools of thin colored ribbon in multiple colors
- A spool of wide white ribbon
- Twigs and tiny branches that are one to two feet long. (*You can provide these or ask participants to go out into the yard to find them.*)
- Feathers
- Small bells or other ornaments
- Scissors for each participant
- Glue for each participant

## SETUP

- You can precut three to four strips, each two feet long, from each spool of colored ribbon for younger participants.
- Cut one strip of the white ribbon so that it is three to four feet long.

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. **Ask** the group, “**Have you ever been in a group where everyone wanted to talk at once? What did this feel like?**”
2. Explain that the group will **create a talking stick that will help them support the value of community and respectful communication.** It will also help them have **shared communication without always relying on the instructor** to maintain order.
3. **Explain** that **each ribbon has a meaning. In the Lakotah Tradition:**
  - **Red is for life.**
  - **Yellow is for knowledge.**
  - **Blue is for prayer and wisdom.**
  - **White is for spirit.**
  - **Purple is for healing.**
  - **Orange is for feeling kinship with all living things.**

CONTINUED



# Circling Up continued

- **Black is for clarity and focus.**
4. Ask each participant to **select a twig and one strip of ribbon.**
  5. Ask participants to **glue the ribbon to the twig** by starting at the top and wrapping the ribbon around the stick until it reaches the bottom.
  6. Suggest that they **leave any extra ribbon hanging at the end** rather than cut it off.
  7. Next, **place the wide white ribbon in the center** of the floor.
  8. Explain that they will now do a **ritual** to join together these twigs into a **TALKING BUNDLE.** **Explain** that **each single talking stick represents the individual, whereas joining the sticks together represent a group of individuals combining to create the whole.**

Doing this will **charge the sticks with powerful thoughts** and intentions and turn these ordinary twigs into a powerful symbol of the group's values.
  9. **Ask** each participant, “**What do you value**

**about hearing the voices of everyone in this group?”**

10. Each person should **select an offering** to give to the talking stick based on the color chart. *For example, if they chose red ribbon (life), they might say, “In this group I value birth, new beginnings, or exciting discussions.” If they chose a yellow ribbon (knowledge), they might say, “In this group, I value learning from one another, hearing each other's stories, and seeing things from a new angle.”*
11. After each participant shares their offering, they should **place** their twig in the bundle with the other twigs.
12. Once each person has spoken, gather the twigs together, **wrap the white ribbon** around the twigs, and **tie** it off at the bottom.
13. **Explain** that **we have just had our first talking circle and that in the future the group will use the talking stick during discussions and circles.**

## DEBRIEF

- **When will this talking stick be most important for us?**
- **What do rituals do for us?**
- **What are some powerful rituals you have in your family?**
- **How have rituals been used in communities for healing, connection, growth, motivation, or marking transitions?**
- **What other types of rituals could we create?**