

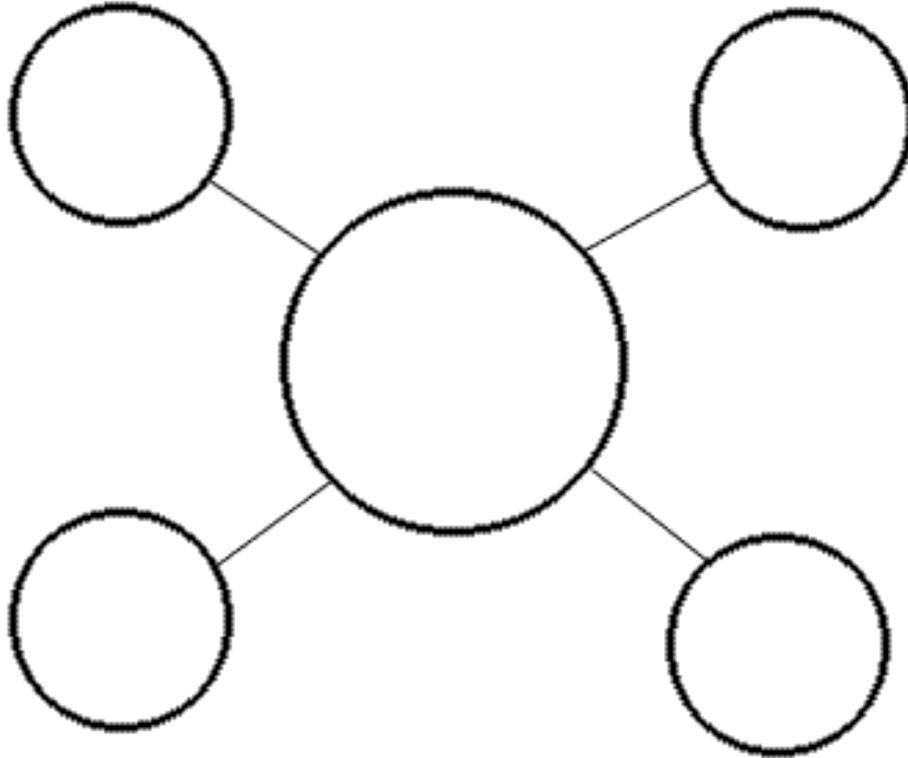
**Workshop Handouts provided by Shemariah Arki,
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1. Circles of My Multicultural Self

2. Creating a Culture of Inclusion

Circles of My Multicultural Self

- ✧ Place your name in the center circle of the structure below.
- ✧ Write an important aspect of your identity in each of the satellite circles -- an identifier or descriptor that you feel is important in defining you. This can include anything: Asian American, female, mother, athlete, educator, Taoist, scientist, or any descriptor with which you identify.



1. Share a story about a time you were especially proud to identify yourself with one of the descriptors you used above.
2. Share a story about a time it was especially painful to be identified with one of your identifiers or descriptors.
3. Name a stereotype associated with one of the groups with which you identify that is not consistent with who you are. Fill in the following sentence:

I am (a/an) _____ but I am NOT (a/an) _____.

Creating a Culture of Inclusion

Security

A nurturing community is a place where it is safe to be yourself. Think of the friends with whom you are the most relaxed—the ones who know you well and still like you—the ones to whom you can say anything and be heard. A safe, secure community allows for growth and exploration. In a safe community, it is possible to take risks, showing people who you really are, asking for help and support, delighting in accomplishments. In a safe classroom, a child can share that he does not understand the math and know that his admission will be met with help and support rather than scorn and humiliation. In a safe classroom, a student can proudly show what she has accomplished, confident that classmates will be delighted, proud and full of praise and admiration, rather than envy or indifference.

Open Communication

In a cohesive community, there is open communication. People share freely what is happening, what they need and what they are worried about. In safe, accepting communities, people's individual differences and different needs are openly acknowledged: "Colleen's eyes are that shape because she is from Korea," or "Seth doesn't share lunches with other students because he keeps Kosher." If there is a problem on the playground, students know that they will be able to talk about what happened. If a student is upset about something, there are ways to communicate that to the teacher and to classmates. Students and teachers alike know that it is all right to talk about anything of concern, and problems are not swept under the rug. All forms of communication—oral, written, artistic and nonverbal—are encouraged. Since all students in the classroom have the right to be "safe," if any particular student's behavior causes others to feel unsafe, this must be addressed as a community, as well.

Mutual Liking

In supportive classroom communities, students are encouraged to know and like their classmates. Multiple opportunities are provided for students to connect with one another—partners for chores, peer reading, group murals—and students are also given many chances and strategies for learning to see and say nice things about classmates. When students share their stories, the teacher asks, "Let's hear three different people tell us what they liked about Jason's story." When a student is sad, the teacher asks for volunteers to support that child. Students are not forced to be friends, but the classroom is structured so that students learn to see and appreciate their classmates as well.

Shared Goals and Objectives

Cooperative communities are those in which students work together to reach a shared goal or objective. The whole class creates a mural for the hallway, or students write, direct and act in a class play that includes the effort and participation of each student. Children are encouraged to help one another with school work as well as personal problems. The teacher sets class challenges: “if we can all get the floor clean in the next 5 minutes, we can have free play time at the end of the day.” Students work with each other, not against each other. Comparative evaluation is strenuously avoided, as are public displays of class status such as star charts and achievement races. Students see their classmates as friends, allies and coworkers.

Connectedness and Trust

In well-developed communities, people feel apart of the whole. They know they are needed, valued members of the group. They know they will be missed if they are not there. They know that others are depending on them to put forth their best effort. Trusting others in a classroom community means telling classmates the truth: “I’m having a bad day because I’m worried about my grandma who is in the hospital.” Trust also means asking others for help and support: “Can I eat lunch at your table today? Mike always uses the word ‘retard’ I don’t like that word.”

Taken from: Because We Can Change The World
A Practical Guide to Building Cooperative, Inclusive Classroom Communities
by Mara Sapon Shevin