

Virtual Community Circles

In this time of learning, keeping our students connected and feeling a part of a community is vital to their health and well-being. We can meet their needs for relationship, competence, autonomy, fun, and safety by continuing with Community Circles in a virtual setting. Whether you are connecting with video, audio, or some other format, it is imperative to provide a continual sense of community for students. We are offering several Community Circle lessons that teachers can modify and adjust as you see fit, based on distance learning format and grade level.

Community Circle #1

Social Target: I can recognize emotions in myself.

Plan ahead: You may want to send this [emotions/emojis pdf](#) to students before you begin or share and review with students before they participate in the poll. You can put this poll in Google Docs, Survey Monkey, or whatever platform you are using for distance learning. Feel free to modify the emotions you want to use based on the age of your students.

Establish Online Expectations: Present the social contract from your classroom—*How might our social contract change when we are in our virtual classroom?* Give students time to think (*30 seconds on our clock, and then I will hear from each of you*). The teacher can pick sticks, and the chosen student can share a thought or pass. After a student shares, the other students, if visually together, give a thumbs up to agree or sideways to add a comment. If students are not visible, the teacher can pull additional sticks for students to agree or add comments.

Greeting: Greet the group with a ***Good Morning Class***; the group answers with, ***Good Morning _____***. If students are unable to see each other visually, ***Good Morning Class, this is Roxanne***; group answers with, ***Good Morning Roxanne***. This continues until everyone greets and is greeted.

Poll: How did you feel when you woke up today?

1. Sad 

2. Surprised 

3. Confused 

4. Energetic 

5. Grateful 

6. _____ (other)

Closing the Loop: *How did we do with are our virtual Community Circle? Name something that went well. Share an area of growth for our next meeting.*

Community Circle #2

Social Target: I can recognize emotions in myself.

Plan ahead: Again, post the poll on whatever platform your students have access to and share the poll results with them visually or verbally.

Reminder: *Who can remind us what our virtual Community Circle expectations are? Let's choose one to focus on today.*

Greeting: Greet us with, ***What's up class!***; the group answers with, ***What's up _____***. If students are unable to see each other visually, ***What's up class, this is Mussie!*** group answers with ***What's up, Mussie!***. This continues until all have greeted and been greeted.

Poll: How did you feel when you woke up today?

1. Sad 
2. Surprised 
3. Confused 
4. Energetic 
5. Grateful 
6. _____ (other)

Sharing: Review our poll question - How did you feel when you woke up today?

- *What do you notice about our poll?*
- *What goes on in your body or head that helps you to know how you feel?*

Virtual Activity: Singing “Alive, Awake, Alert, Enthusiastic

How to Play: Sung to the tune "If You're Happy and You Know It"

Sing the song and do the action that matches the words. Sing it faster and faster. Even if students can't see each other, encourage them to make the motions to get some activity.

Lyrics:

*I'm alive, awake, alert, enthusiastic,
I'm alive, awake, alert, enthusiastic,*

*I'm alive, awake, alert;
I'm alert, awake, alive,
I'm alive, awake, alert, enthusiastic.*

Alive: touch ankles

Awake: touch hips

Alert: touch shoulders

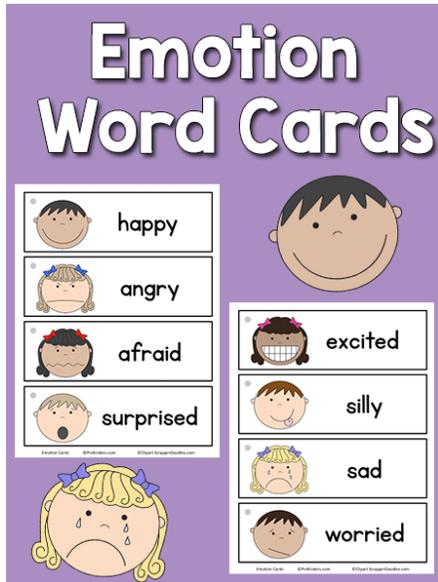
Enthusiastic: arms up in the air

Closing the Loop: *How did we do with are our virtual Community Circle expectation focus?* If this expectation went well, set a new focus for tomorrow. If it still needs work, make a plan to be more successful tomorrow.

Community Circle # 3

Social Target: I can recognize emotions in others.

Plan ahead: Share the link for the [emotions quiz](#) to be used as the activity with your students. For younger students, if you have them online with you, you may want to go through it together. You can also create a quick quiz of your own and limit it to 3-4 pictures and then process. (see suggested photos below)



Reminder: *Who can remind us what our virtual Community Circle expectation focus for today is? What might be one thing you can do to help us reach that goal?*

Greeting: Food Greeting

Students share their greeting with the class and then share a food they like to eat. Student greeting, ***Good Morning Class, I like to eat bananas!*** class responds, ***Good Morning, _____, yum bananas!***

Sharing: *How do you know what other people's facial expression is saying? What clues might you use to figure it out? Talk about what can happen if we misread someone's facial expression, how we can check with someone about how they are feeling.*

Online Activity: Take [this quiz k-5](#) to see how many emotions you can recognize. Share which feeling was the hardest to figure out...which one was easiest?

Optional Goal Setting: You may want to create learning partners that can discuss with their partner how they felt about a particular part of their learning day as they continue to connect. Students put an emoji/emotion word after one of/the learning tasks they accomplish today.

How are you feeling?



Happy



Joyful



Content



Silly



Sad



Angry



Scared



Worried



Confused



Surprised



Hurt



Embarrassed

Community Circle #4

Social Target: Practicing how we can pass on our emotions to others.

Plan for Success: Before beginning the greeting, brainstorm with the students' different types of voices they can choose for their greeting.

Reminder: *What are some of our virtual Community Circle expectations? What might be one thing you can do to help us follow those expectations?* Give everyone 30 seconds to do their thinking, then call on a few to share.

Greeting: Funny Voice Greeting

The first person to start the greeting says, ***My name is _____ and I want you to greet me in a _____ voice.*** The class then responds by saying in that voice, ***Good Morning _____.*** Some possibilities for different voices are spooky, whisper, loud, soft, baby, deep, squeaky, sing-song, etc.

Virtual Activity: Pass a Smile/Positive Word

How to Play: The leader turns to the player on their right and frowns. This player turns and frowns at the person on their right and so on around the circle. The frown must be mean looking. The leader now smiles to the person on their left, and that person passes a smile to the left. The smile is passed until all have received it. The smile should be genuine.

Plan for Success: For the fun of it, players can practice other facial expressions to pass around the circle. It may be that students see each other in a different order on their screen, so pulling sticks or using alphabetical order might be helpful. If students are not visually connected, they can pass a positive word, a sound, name something in a category, or some other verbal cue.

Closing the Loop: Follow-up with a few questions.

- *How did it feel when your neighbor frowned at you? How about when they smiled? Or, How did it feel to hear a positive word? What did you see in your mind when you listened to your neighbor's sound or word?*
- *As you were watching your classmates pass the smile around, what was your face doing? Talk about how seeing others smile makes us smile and feel better as well. Alternately for those sharing some verbal cue, think about how it might feel if others share a positive word or compliment with you.*

Community Circle #5

Social Target: I can name ways to have fun with those I am spending time with at home.

Reminder: *What are some of our virtual Community Circle expectations? What might be one thing you can do to help us follow those expectations?* Give everyone 30 seconds to do their thinking, then call on a few to share.

Greeting and Sharing Combination: The student says **Hello Class**, and then answers the sharing question ***I have been*** _____. The class answers, **Hello** _____.

- Sharing Topic - *What have you been doing together with those you have been spending time with to have fun?*
 1. Play games
 2. Eat meals
 3. Cook
 4. Get out in Nature
 5. Watch TV
 6. Discuss current events
 7. Build something
 8. Clean
 9. Other

Virtual Activity: Guess the Number

How to Play: The leader will think of a number and write it down on a piece of paper. Hide the number and let students know that you have chosen a number between one and _____. Choose a number range that appropriately challenges the group, given their age and skill level. Going around the circle, students take turns asking a yes-or-no question to try to determine the number. If a student does not have a question, they may pass.

A student who thinks they know the number may take a guess. If the guess is incorrect, the questioning continues. If it's correct, the teacher may choose another number or pick a child to choose a number. To emphasize the cooperative nature of this activity, be sure that the child who correctly guesses the number is not the next one to choose a number. The ultimate goal of this activity is to see how many numbers the group can figure out within a specific time.

Plan for Success: Encourage students to think of questions that will give them information about the number, rather than questions that just eliminate one number. Instead of asking if it's the number after fourteen, for example, students might ask if it's a two-digit number, whether it's larger than ten, or if it has a five in it. This activity helps children develop questioning skills and listening skills.

Closing the Loop: Ask a few reflection questions.

- *What were some of the questions that were very helpful in guessing the number?*
- *Why did those questions help us narrow down the possible numbers?*