

The Circle of Human Concern

Belonging in Praxis



Curriculum design by Whole Story and Studio Pathways for the Haas Institute for a Fair and Inclusive Society at the University of California, Berkeley. 2019.

The Circle of Human Concern:

Belonging in Praxis



Length — [30 minutes
 60 minutes
 90 minutes

Description

This 60 minute session focuses on training the trainers to develop the creative capacity for disseminating and holding learners to engage, understand, and activate the power of The Circle of Human Concern. This session assumes that participants have spent quality time understanding the components of The Circle of Human Concern (either through the other lessons or at a minimum through pre-watching the video), have significant knowledge of capitalism and corporations, and are interested in the movement of communities to make change.

Audience

Organizers in base-building orgs, leadership and equity advocates in the non-profit sector and the private sector.

Outcome

Participants will leave with a learning model they can put into action in their communities to deepen understanding of The Circle of Human Concern. They will have deeper relationships with each other and understand the “why” behind key components of the lesson that can applied to future facilitation.

Outline

- Welcome (5 minutes)
- Critical Engagement Process (25 minutes)
- Placemaking (25 minutes)
- Closing (5 minutes)

Equipment

- Projector
- Computer
- Audio system to show videos

Materials

Accordion journal paper cut into 5x5 or 6x6 squares, prefold squares into lotus shaped folds for bookmaking, leave a few unfolding for participants to create, blank letter paper, pens, colored pencils, sharpies, crayons. Assortment of craft papers, butcher paper, scissors (5 pairs), glue sticks, scotch tape.

Room Setup/Needs

Chairs in a circle, tables for creation spaces/bookmaking, floor space for gathering. Set up an altar or centerpiece responsive to the participants attending.

Required Prework

[The Problem of Othering: Towards Inclusiveness and Belonging](#)

Video

[john a powell: Keynote: The Mechanics of Belonging](#)

[Shifting the Narrative](#)

Audio

[The Battle of the Narrative](#)

Video

[The Circle of Human Concern](#)

[History, Race and Power, john a. powell](#)

Guiding Inquiries

Participants will engage in the inquiries...

- How do we build collective interventions towards maintaining public and private spaces for all humans?
- What are examples and narratives of spaces for inclusion, belonging and privacy outside of privatization or corporate dominance?

Overview

This session uses critical engagement to reveal and make visible the wisdom and knowledge leaders hold. It allows creative space for considerations on how to bring people together to deepen the exposure and embodiment of The Circle of Human Concern.

The Circle of Human Concern

Expanding Belonging

Lesson Plan



Overview

To support participants with key strategies for guiding future learners, facilitator should share more in- depth knowledge on the “why” behind each component of the activities.

1. Welcome/Activity 15 minutes

Welcome, [Land Acknowledgement](#) and Community Agreements

For the Welcome activity, use the following Conocimiento in addition to any other activities best suited for your context (See Activity Guide):

You can say something like...

Close your eyes or find a soft gaze on the floor. Think of a time when you felt transformed. What event took place? What lead up to that event? What happened after? Was it a pivotal moment or was it gradual over many months or years? What did you learn about yourself in this transformation? This knowledge you have about transformation is a strength you can depend on when supporting others to make profound shifts in their learning, thinking, and feeling as you guide others through the concepts of Othering and Belonging.

Invite participants to open their eyes. Invite a few participants to share out what their reflections are. You can say something like...

These are the strengths that you can call on when you hold people through process, the strengths that are necessary to remember when asking people to go through change work.

Wrap up the exercise by acknowledging to the group that the qualities and feelings that they surfaced and shared with their partner are all strengths that they can draw upon throughout the workshop.

2. Critical Engagement Process 20 minutes

In describing the purpose of the next activity, say something like...

The purpose of this activity is to provide participants with a visual aesthetic for documenting and supporting the learning process of people through bookmaking, intrapersonal critique, and interpersonal sharing. This activity primes the brain for the next step in developing praxis.

1. Explain that for the remainder of the time together, we will collectively explore questions, share wisdom and create shared steps for disseminating and activating the values of The Circle of Human Concern.
2. First show the group how to make either a six-page booklet using a single sheet of paper ([Six-Page Booklet Fold](#)) or a lotus fold for an accordion book ([Lotus Style Folds](#)). (Note: Pre-made folds are supportive for individuals with accessibility needs and can make your time with any group more efficient.. Pre-made folds also make your time together more efficient. Allow 10 minutes for individuals to create their books.)



Click icon to watch video.

3. Re-watch the [Circle of Human Concern](#) video (4 minutes)



4. In their new books, invite participants to spend 4 minutes responding to the following questions:

- How do we build collective interventions towards maintaining public and private spaces for all humans?
- What are examples and narratives of spaces for inclusion, belonging and privacy outside of privatization or corporate dominance?

Have participants pair up with someone next to them. Invite them to share their responses with each other using the following protocol (7 minutes):

1. Explain that each person will get to share their thoughts for 2 minutes. If they have completed sharing within those 2 minutes the time is still theirs to add anything else, or sit in silence with their partner. If you are the partner who is listening, the goal is to listen without responding. The goal is to receive your partners thinking without judgement.
2. After the person who has spoken shares, it is the partners responsibility to offer back the words and gestures that their partner shared using as many words, phrases, and gestures verbatim as possible in 1 minute.
3. When complete, bring the group back together for the next activity.

3. Space Making 25 minutes



In describing the purpose of the next activity, say something like...

The purpose of this activity is to ready participants to lead their own workshops on the core concepts of the Circle of Human Concern, with the goal of bringing a set of people into praxis as holders, guardians, and uplifters of inclusive public and private space.

- 5 minutes
1. Explain the activity for space making:
You might say something like... The question on the table is: How do we provide alternative narratives and engage in debates that present examples of public and private spaces for inclusion, belonging and privacy outside of privatization or corporate rule? How can we make sure no one is in the non-public, non-private space?
 2. In groups of four, choose a specific place that is relevant to your work - for example the courthouse, a public school, a workplace, a public park, etc. This should be a real place that everyone in your group knows well. Divide a piece of paper into four pieces and on the different pieces write, "public," "private," "non-public, non-private", and "corporate". Each group member takes one and then writes **how** these spaces show up in the place you have chosen and **who** has access to those spaces. Write for about 30 seconds, then trade with someone and write again.
- 5 minutes
3. As a group, read through the four papers and reflect on which space is the strongest? Why is this the case? Who is in that space? Who sets the rules of the spaces?
- 5 minutes
4. Now think about the connections. How does the corporate space influence or effect the public or private space? How does it affect non-public, non-private space?
- 10 minutes
5. Now reimagine the place as being more inclusive. How do the spaces need to shift and change? What changes to the design or policies would expand belonging? How would you redesign the space? For example, the removal of metal detectors at schools would increase private space for students. Or creating free calling for incarcerated people would increase private space for them and decrease corporate space for phone companies. You will use the art supplies to create a representation of your envisioned changes in that place.
 6. Document questions, key phrases and ideas in their six-page books or lotus accordion journals.
 7. Use any of the art supplies available to make a model of your new place. Or record and write the process down in journals.

4. Closing

5 minutes

1. Invite participants to set aside any art supplies and prepare to share one element of their space making.
2. Move around the circle allowing each group to share out. (30 seconds each group)
3. Close with a thank you to the group for their hard work and a synchronized clap of the hands.
4. Ask participants to say, "thank you for being here today" or the like, to each person standing next to them before breaking to clean up and leave.

Activity Guide

Welcome and Opening Activities

Alter/Altar Space

As time and space allows, prepare the space for learning by making room for viewing films, holding circle, and engaging with exercises particular to your module. Optionally set a place for inclusion of any relevant objects of beauty or importance (books, flowers, art, etc.) and inviting participants to do the same.

Music

Play music as participants arrive and get settled. Some suggestions for songs: We Are-Sweet Honey and the Rock, Pata Pata-Miriam Makeba, People Everyday, Two Hearts-Valerie June, Waiting in Vain- Bob Marley, Can I Kick It-A Tribe Called Quest, I Am That I Am-Peter Tosh.

Circle Process

Most lessons open and close with circles, where participants and facilitator(s) stand or sit in a circle (or semi-circle or oval as needed!) in order to transform traditional, hierarchical learning spaces into collaborative community spaces.

Breathing Exercise

Invite participants to engage in an embodied practice of mindfulness and internal and external presence.



This icon indicates a talking point.

You might say something like: *“Exhale first. Breathe in deeply. Hold it for a moment. Exhale slowly.” (pause) Now take 3 deep breaths on your own. When you breathe in allow yourself to receive the air. As you exhale, relax completely.”*

Land Acknowledgement

Open with an acknowledgement of the land we stand on. Explain that land acknowledgement is an important element of reckoning with our collective past. It is a way to shift power by remembering and honoring the historical truth, the trauma, and the knowledge that our indigenous family is still here and has for centuries maintained stewardship over the land we are on.

A formal, opening acknowledgment of the indigenous land we stand on includes acknowledgement of the indigenous community whose land was colonized (in North American contexts). If more research is needed by facilitator, <https://native-land.ca> is an excellent resource.

Conocimiento

A Spanish word meaning “knowledge or conscience.” The Conocimiento Principle, a principle of the Latinx/Chicanx movement for transformation and equity, recognizes that common unity begins with the process of shared awareness and understanding, or Conocimiento.

–Roberto Vargas, Ph.D

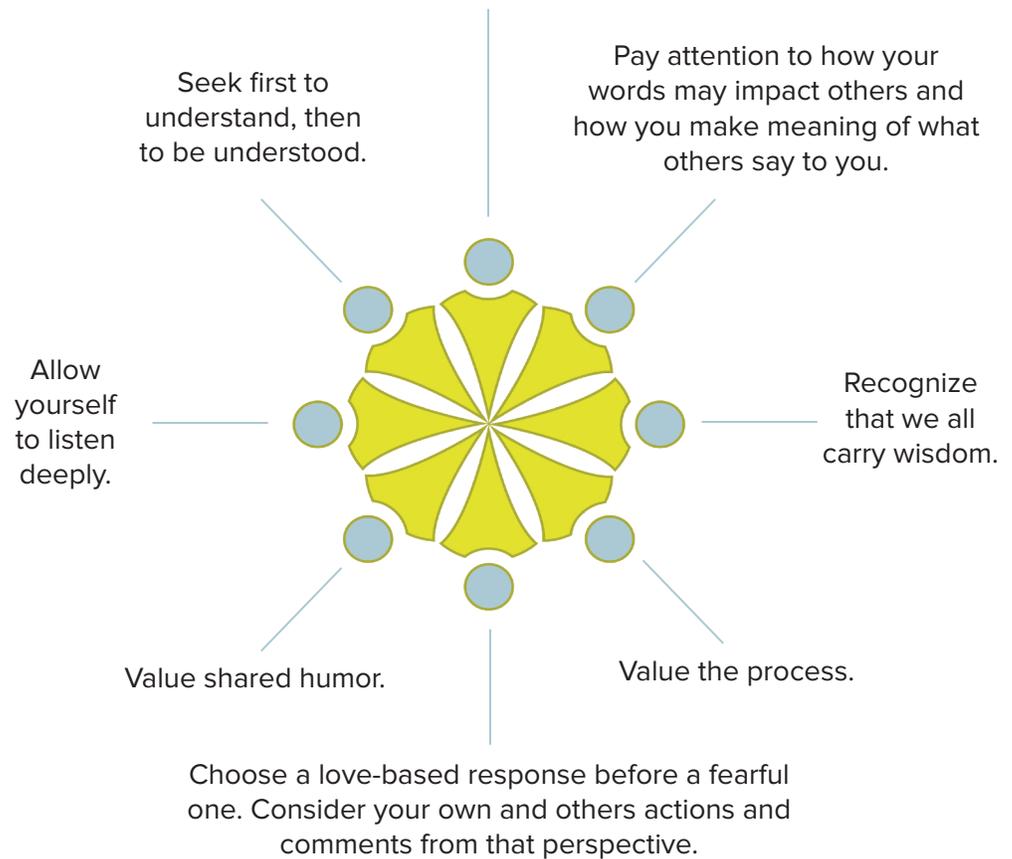


You might say something like... *“Conocimiento was used and highlighted during the Farm Workers’ Movement in California to bring people together in community to understand and leverage each others’ strengths.”*

The process of Belonging begins by identifying what’s already beautiful and present. Conocimiento is a practice that centers the human experience as meaningful and worthy. It is a practice that shares and uplifts the strengths of each person in relation to the collective, in order to achieve a common purpose. It will be important to practice *conocimiento* in your workshops to support people’s ability to feel immediately connected for a common cause.

Community Agreements

Use and adapt these agreements to help set the tone, intentions, values and ethics of the learning environment.



Various Thinking and Speaking Protocols

Save the Last Word - Save the Last Word is a thinking and discussion routine used to clarify and deepen thinking about a text.

See, Think, Wonder - See, Think, Wonder is a thinking routine developed by Project Zero (Harvard Graduate School of Education) to help learners make careful observations and develop their own ideas and interpretations of what they see.

- What do you see?
- What do you think about what you see?
- What does it make you wonder about?

Parts, Purposes, Complexities - Parts, Purposes and Complexities is a thinking routine that helps learners slow down and make careful, detailed observations of an object or system they are examining. This routine encourages them to look beyond the obvious features of an object or system and to consider its functions and complexities. Parts, Purposes and Complexities is a thinking routine created by Agency by Design with Harvard Project Zero.

- What are the parts? What are its various pieces or components?
- What are its purposes? What are the purposes for each of these parts?
- What are the complexities? How is it complicated in its parts and purposes, what are some complexities of the relationships between the two, what questions arise?

Speaking Order

Speaking Order is used in social practice circles around the world. It is one way to address and practice the reversal of systemic inequities introduced and held by white supremacy and patriarchy. Speaking order supports a shift in power from the people who have been granted the most power in our society based on colonialism, imperialism, and paternalism. These systems function to bias societies towards a worldview of hierarchical domination over others rather than a holding a viewpoint of community wisdom and collective good.

Speaking Order is often difficult to explain in settings where the system of inequity is not understood by all in the room, particularly with people in positions of privilege (such as white men) who may be used to holding more space in conversation and/or decision making, or are new to understanding white privilege and the role it plays in perpetuating the historical oppression of people of color around the world.



To introduce Speaking Order, you might say something like: *“We are going to practice shifting the power dynamics today. We will use Speaking Order as a way to reckon with our shared history of imperialism and a white ruling class. Speaking Order will ask that anyone who self identifies as having been granted the most unearned power in our society... based on factors of race, gender, age, religion, ability, etc...will let others speak before weighing in. Again, we ask the group to internally self-identify and simply stay mindful throughout our time together of who takes up the most/least airtime in group discussions and decisions. Speaking Order asks that the floor be turned over to lead from the wisdom of those who have been most “Othered” and carried most of the burden of societal oppressions. We acknowledge that there can be discomfort around this ask regardless of your positionality or “situatedness”, but invite this practice as a model for authentic reconciliation and as a path to increase mutual Belonging.”*

More Useful Resources

- [Culturally Responsive Resources](#)
- [Restorative Circle Processes](#)
- [Pillars of Andragogy](#)