

The Circle of Human Concern

Expanding Belonging



The Circle of Human Concern:

Expanding Belonging



Length — ☐ 30 minutes
☐ 60 minutes
☒ 90 minutes

Description

A 90 minute workshop designed to support participants' understanding of the concept of The Circle of Human Concern. Participants engage with Haas Institute's animated explainer video on The Circle of Human Concern and build knowledge through a series of engagements with the visual arts, historical truths, and theater practices.

This workshop is designed to support participants in understanding the concept of the Circle of Human Concern. Participants engage with the Haas Institute animated video [The Circle of Human Concern](#) and build knowledge through a series of engagements with the visual arts, historical truths, and theater practices. You as the facilitator will need to cautiously gauge when participants are needing to stop and discuss more or can move thoroughly through the learning design of this workshop. Should your group not have time to complete all of the components listed here, be sure to close with reflection and introspection on the questions posed throughout.

Audience

High school and college students with some concept familiarity, equity advocates in non-profit sector, community organizers, members of base-building orgs, government staff.

Outline

- Welcome and Conocimiento (5 minutes)
- How'd we get here? (20 minutes)
- Historical Reckoning (60 minutes)
- Closing (5 minutes)

Equipment

- Projector
- Computer
- Audio system to show videos

Materials

- Handouts
- Journals or writing paper
- Writing utensils

Room Setup/Needs

This workshop is flexible and can take place in varied settings: Chairs in a circle, pews/rows of chairs, tables with chairs, etc. This session makes use of

video and music so be prepared if facilitating this in an outdoor setting. Set up an altar or centerpiece responsive to the participants attending.

Resources

1. [Script: Capitalism: A Love Story by Michael Moore](#)
2. [The Guardian: A short history of capitalism's rise and fall](#)
3. [Howard Zinn: A People's History of the United States](#)
4. [The ACLU and Citizen's United](#)
5. [Naomi Klein: Imagining a future without sacrifice zones](#)
6. Definition of [corporation](#) and definition of [capital](#)

Guiding Inquiries

Participants will engage in the following inquiries:

- What is The Circle of Human Concern?
- What are the four societal spheres? (1) public; (2) private; (3) non-public, non-private; and (4) corporate.
- How does expanded corporate space impact the spheres of (1) public; (2) private; (3) non-public, non-private space?

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Lesson Plan



Overview

This workshop identifies the components of The Circle of Human Concern. It illuminates the role of capitalism, the overreach of corporations, the value of public and private spaces, and the work to build a society where no one is outside the circle of human concern.

1. Welcome 5 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 might say something like...

Close your eyes or find a soft gaze on the floor. Think of a time when you showed concern for another human, animal or plant or environment. Why were you concerned? What action(s) did you take to show your concern? What was your intention behind the act or actions? What were the outcomes? (Pause) Can you identify the core of your actions and intentions? Is it love? Is it care? Is it forgiveness? The ability to know what to do? The ability to ask a question? These actions and intentions are strengths that you carry. Name one of these strengths to yourself.

Invite participants to open their eyes. Invite a few participants to share out what their strengths are.

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. How'd we get here? 20 minutes

1. Show the image of by [Coca-Cola Jars](#) by the artist Ai WeiWei.
2. Use the thinking protocol [See/Think/Wonder](#) to help participants unpack what they are looking at. Write responses on the board or white chart paper. (5 min)
3. Provide the background knowledge on the art piece:
 - a. This piece was made in 1995 by the Chinese artist Ai WeiWei who painted the Coca-Cola logo on a Western Han dynasty (206 B.C.-A.D. 9) jar.



Click icon to watch video.

4. Watch the video: [The Circle of Human Concern](#). (5 minutes)



- a. Use the thinking frame [Parts/Purposes/Complexities](#) to unpack what participants see in the video. When using this protocol, use the theme of The Circle of Human Concern as the element to unpack. Write down responses on the board or white chart paper. (10 minutes).

3. Historical Reckoning
60 minutes

Share a description of capitalism by the historian Howard Zinn from A People's History of the United States.
(5 minutes)

- The economic system in which private owners control the “means of production” (industry, manufacturing, and trade). Since the 1500s, most Western economies have been predominately capitalist, while incorporating elements of Socialism. In the 19th century, capitalist systems of production incentivized the Industrial Revolution and the growth of science and technology, allowing some wealthy industrialists to become astonishingly rich. However, capitalism has been criticized for exploiting working-class people and creating a way of life that is petty, materialistic, and ultimately meaningless.
 - Within capitalism, the corporation has grown to be the dominant institution. In the United States corporations hold the same rights as individual people and have no restrictions on spending in political elections.
1. Watch the video: [The Invention of Whiteness](#) (5 minutes)



The Invention of Whiteness

with john a. powell Professor of Law, UC Berkeley

2. Pose the following questions. Have participants write down their responses in their journals. (10 minutes).

- a. What might be different about the world had early resistance to elite control been successful?
- b. According to powell, why did the elites manufacture white identity?
- c. How might our relationships be different if racialization was not created and systemically embedded within cultures and structures?
- d. According to powell, what is the institution that elites used to extract wealth and resources?

3. Watch the clip with musician, historian, filmmaker and activist Boots Riley. [How Capitalism Needed Racism to Operate](#). (end at 2:24) (3 minutes)
4. Handout the script of [Capitalism and Corporations: A Brief Comedy](#). Invite participants to work in groups of four with those around them. Assign each group a section of the script. Each group will engage one scene from of the script. They will then, share out to the whole group. Depending on group size, some groups may have the same script.
 - a. Explain that they will have 10 minutes to:
 - i. Select who will read each part.
 - ii. Read through the script animating their voice (low and high tones, fast and slow patterns of speech), adding one gesture per line.
 - iii. Groups may choose to read the script as is or “remix” staggering who says which line and when and repeating phrases to create meaning.
 - iv. They will present their mini-performance back to the full group.

5. Have groups return to the whole group and share embodied scripts in order from 1-9. (10 minutes)
6. Surface people's thoughts by individually reflecting on the following questions in journals for 5 minutes, share a few responses aloud after: (15 minutes)

- a. What is The Circle of Human Concern?
- b. What is the purpose and design of corporate dominance?
- c. What is the shape and experience of a public and private life with corporations sitting inside The Circle of Human Concern?
- d. What steps do we need to collectively engage in to insist on a public and private life without corporations?

4. Closing 5 minutes

1. Bring everyone together in a circle to close. Read the following quote:

All that you touch

You Change.

All that you Change

Changes you.

The only lasting truth is Change.

-Octavia Butler

1. Ask participants to choose one word that describes a take-away from their learning today. Go around the circle and ask each participant to speak it into the circle.
2. Thank the group for being together and for building communities of belonging.

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

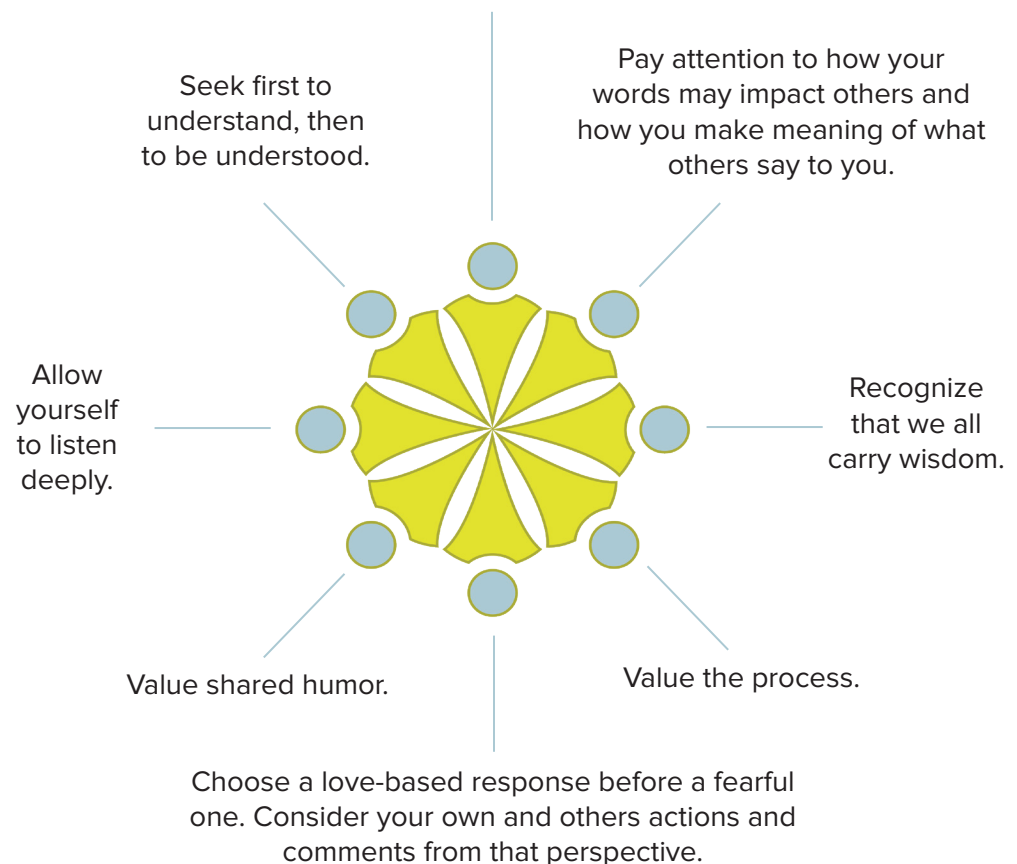


You might say something like... *“Conocimiento was used and highlighted during the Farm Workers’ Movement in California to bring people together in community to understand and leverage each others’ strengths.”*

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](#)