

RESTORATIVE CIRCLE PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

WHAT IS A RESTORATIVE CIRCLE?

- The Circle provides the opportunity to repair the damage caused by unacceptable behaviour. The community of people affected by an incident come together to find ways of repairing the damage and minimizing further harm.
- The Circle allows the offender to accept responsibility and understand the impact that their behaviour has had on themselves, their supporters and the wider community.
- Those impacted by the unacceptable behaviour are provided an opportunity to explain how they have been affected and contribute to developing an agreement on how best to repair the damage and minimize any further harm.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING?

- This process provides everyone affected with an opportunity to participate. Those affected share how they were feeling at the time and how they have been impacted. They play a vital role in determining ways of repairing the harm.
- Family and supporters are able to elaborate on what has happened to them as a result of the incident and what needs to happen to move forward.
- Those who are responsible for the incident are held accountable for their behaviours and rather than being outcast they are re-integrated into the community after being confronted (often for the first time) with how their unacceptable actions have impacted others.

WHAT HAPPENS AT THE RESTORATIVE CIRCLE?

- Participants sit in a circle and everyone has an opportunity to speak and contribute.
- All participants explain what they were thinking or feeling at the time of the incident from their perspective. The impact is often emotional.
- The facilitator follows a script to help participants decide what needs to happen to repair the damage and minimize further harm.
- When an agreement is reached, it is recorded in writing and signed by the participants. Each participant receives a copy of the agreement.

