

THE PAF CIRCLE

- description

BASIC EXERCISE FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CLASS

The PAF circle has an incredible effect. It creates a space where everyone can share their feelings and experiences. The circle is the foundation, where bad and good experiences are shared. When a person is sharing something in the circle, he/she has others full attention.

You can work with many different themes in the circle, as soon as everyone understands the circle. Quickly you can create a space of feeling safe and having trust in the adult administrating the circle.

We create a space where you feel others' presence and a space where the heart has a big meaning to create good and positive relations between the students within the classroom as well as outside of school.



The PAF circle usually starts at the beginning of the school day, but can be done at any time of the day. It often requires 14 days of getting used to the circle. It is therefore essential to make the circle several times a week, to make the students become acquainted to the circle and trusting the circle.

Initially, you practise the gathering of the circle. Set the rules for how and where you want the circle to be within the classroom.

If necessary, you can move the tables, to make a space for the circle in the middle of the room. When the gathering of the circle is established, it will take under a minute for the students. The circle can be done standing up or by the students sitting on the floor. They can decide how they feel most comfortable.

The circle can eventually be held in other places, like in the school yard and on excursions. The circle will make the students listen immediately, and everyone has to be able to see everyone, so they know that they are a part of the circle. When the circle is a part of their daily schedule (f.ex. 1-2 times a week), you can start by adding exercises to the lecture. This might take from 10 minutes to two lectures. It is important not to rush the exercises.

The circle is an obvious chance to talk about various themes. When the students get her/his time to loudly talk about their challenges or biggest interests and say it out loud, they feel heard and accepted.

We strengthen the community when we can relate to each other in our experiences and learn to listen to what others have to say.

It is important to learn to be curious about a classmate, letting them tell their story without being judged or getting the feeling of having done something wrong. It is equally important to give advise and support to each other, to make the student in focus get the sense of "we support and understand each other, and this is my class, and I belong here."

THE PAF CIRCLE

- this is how you start

MAKE THE CIRCLE A SAFE PLACE TO BE

The class must be gathered around something that is nice and feels safe. There is ALWAYS just one talking at a time while the others listen. It is not allowed to interrupt. You decide upon a word one can say when they have finished telling their story. If needed, you can decide on a word that means: "I don't have anything to say or anything else to say about my experience."

The rest of the class responds by saying the same word back. It can be different words every time. Other classes have used words like: the end, carrot, ice cream or dot.

MAKE THE CIRCLE STRUCTURED

When you need to make room for the circle, remember, that chairs and tables has to be moved quietly. Instruct the children on how to sit in the circle. Do they have their special spot or is it random every time? Does it have to be boy-girl-boy-girl or in alphabetic order? Maybe the day of birth?

START BY SAYING HELLO

When everyone is gathered in the circle, and sense the atmosphere being calm, the adult can start by greeting the student on his/her left. From there the student responds on the greeting and then greets the person on his/her left. It can be a hello, good morning or a smile. It is important to have eye contact with the person you say greet, to establish a connection. Also remember to add the persons name when greeting.

This is a good way of saying hello to everyone in the class and you invite the students to be in the same mood.



Sending a hug could also be a very good option

TALK ABOUT THE POSITIVE THINGS FIRST

Take a round talking about the positive experiences from the morning or the day before.

ENCOURAGE THE STUDENTS TO PUT WORDS TO THEIR FEELINGS

Every time a student has told their story, it is important that you ask the question:

How did it feel in your body? Try to explain how it felt?

Also ask the rest of the class to feel the same feeling that is being described.

It is always hard to put words to your feeling in the beginning, but with training, it becomes easier, and it makes a difference for the telling of the story.

The students also become better at noticing their body language when other students tell about their story.

THE PAF CIRCLE

- This is how it is done

EXAMPLES ON QUESTIONS TO ASK:

- Tell about a positive experience where you felt a good connection with someone.
- Tell about a person who was kind, smiled or who hugged you.
- Tell about an experience where there was a nice atmosphere - how did you notice it?
- Tell about how you came out of a negative situation in a good way - when did you calm down peace afterwards?
- Tell about a good thing you experienced/felt/saw this morning/today/yesterday.
- Tell about a good thing you wish/hope happens today.
- Tell about something you like to do.
- Tell about something you are good at.
- What do you wish to be when you grow up?
- Say something nice about the person next to you.
- Say something nice about your class.
- Say something nice about your school.
- Mention a person in your daily life that has meant a great deal for you and explain why.
- Mention what you and your family are good at.
- Talk about your interests.
- Tell about who and what can make you laugh.

You can add your own questions to the list or let the children inspire you to ask new questions.

Be aware of the length of the answers - should they be long or short?

Always remember to add this after an answer: Can everyone try to feel the feeling that is being described in your own body.

