

Circle the War

A guide for educators and youth workers to speak with young people about the political events of Israel-Palestine in October 2023 (Hamas bombing

Oct 7th/the ensuing War on Hamas, Palestinian atrocities).

Developed by Shoshana Brown and Martin Urbach on October 17, 2023.

Inspired by conversations with Daniel Jerome. Support from Jia Lee, Fernando Restrepo and Nora Aboali.

Introduction

As restorative justice practitioners with a combined experience of over two decades of youth work, we were called to develop this offering. Education must be in dialogue and responsive to the world around us.

As Paulo Friere says, "To exist, humanly, is to name the world, to change it. Once named, the world in its turn reappears to the namers as a problem and requires of them a new naming." As educators we have a responsibility to support young people in naming and understanding the world around them. This moment, similar to previous moments of crisis like the COVID pandemic, George Floyd uprisings, and more will present themselves in education environments whether educators are prepared to navigate the terrain or not. This document offers a guide for educators to help hold space for the variety of complex feelings and questions that arise for students.

We seek to support experienced restorative justice educators in

1. creating space for students to learn global history in real time,
2. develop critical thinking skills,
3. and hone social emotional intelligence through compassionate listening and genuine inquiry.

We encourage anyone facilitating a circle to incorporate these community norms about how we disagree at the beginning of the circle.

1. Use the talking piece to share.
2. Listen to understand and not necessarily to agree.
3. We don't go back and forth. Share your truth, let others share theirs.
4. Take a break if you need to.
5. If you feel hurt or offended during the circle, let a facilitator know and they will support.
6. Speak in "I" Statements. Avoid name calling.
7. Be mindful of the language you use. Some words can be very activating/triggering to people.
8. We are in a circle to grow individually and as a community.

Circle 1: Grounding the Moment

Opening- We are not here to discuss the logistical and or historical aspects of this conflict. We are here to process our feelings, learn how to communicate in community and lean on one another for support. Let us focus on speaking from our own experiences.

How are you feeling in your heart, body, mind and/or soul about this conflict?

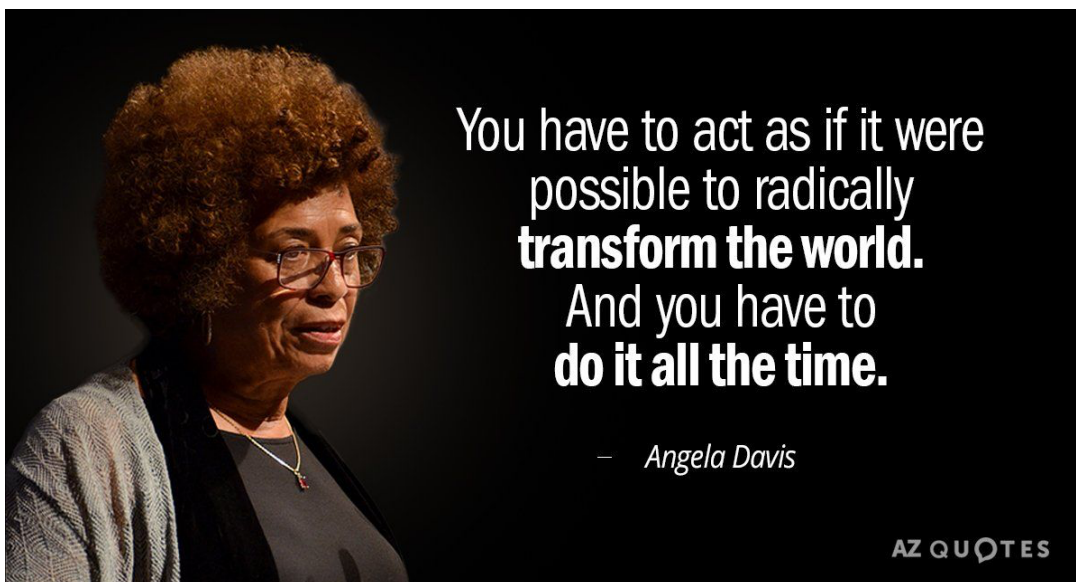
Round 1- We are communal beings and that often means that we learn from those around us. We are often influenced by family, friends, and community. While we value what they teach us, it's important for us to think independently which might mean you question things that are said to you as fact. What are the things you know and what are the things you wonder about?

Round 2- What are your fears going forward?

Round 3-  [Hi-Rez - Hope \(Official Music Video\)](#) What are your hopes?

Round 4- What are your hopes for a better future/tomorrow?

Closing-  [MC Abdul - The Pen & The Sword \(Official Video\)](#)



Circle 2: War and Peace

Opening- We have come here today not to discuss the logistical or historical aspects of the current war in Israel-Palestine. We are here to share our thoughts on war and peace. The Mongo people have a proverb that says “*War is not the resolution to any problem*”. What does this proverb mean to you?

Round 1- Reflect on this poem: What I Will by Suheir Hammad

I will not
dance to your war
drum. I will
not lend my soul nor
my bones to your war
drum. I will
not dance to your
beating. I know that beat.
It is lifeless. I know
intimately that skin
you are hitting. It
was alive once
hunted stolen
stretched. I will
not dance to your drummed
up war. I will not pop
spin break for you. I
will not hate for you or
even hate you. I will
not kill for you. Especially
I will not die
for you. I will not mourn
the dead with murder nor
suicide. I will not side
with you nor dance to bombs
because everyone else is
dancing. Everyone can be
wrong. Life is a right not
collateral or casual. I
will not forget where
I come from. I
will craft my own drum. Gather my beloved
near and our chanting
will be dancing. Our
humming will be drumming. I
will not be played. I
will not lend my name
nor my rhythm to your
beat. I will dance
and resist and dance and
persist and dance. This heartbeat is louder than
death. Your war drum ain't
louder than this breath.”
— Suheir Hammad

Round 2- "You can't separate peace from freedom because no one can be at peace unless he has his freedom." –Malcolm X What does peace mean to you?

Round 3- “Peace cannot be kept by force, it can only be achieved through understanding.”
-Albert Einstein What or who do you want to understand more?

Closing-  MC Abdul - Shouting At The Wall (Official Video) "You may not always have a comfortable life and you will not always be able to solve all of the world's problems at once but don't ever underestimate the importance you can have because history has shown us that courage can be contagious and hope can take on a life of its own." - *Michelle Obama, American First Lady* What courageous thing can you do to advocate for peace?

Circle 3: The Impact at home

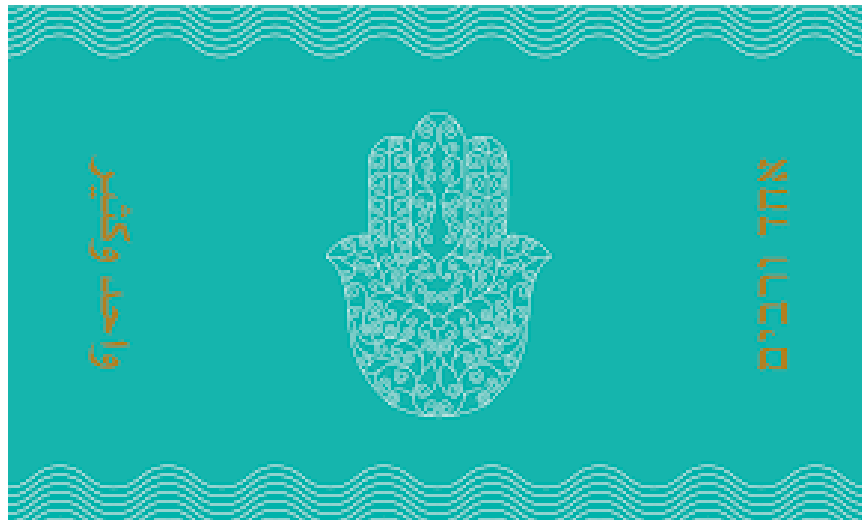
Opening- We have come here today not to discuss the logistical or historical aspects of the current war in Israel-Palestine. We are here to share how the events in Israel- Palestine are affecting each and every one of us. Desmond Tutu said "My humanity is bound up in yours, for we can only be human together." What does this mean to you?

Round 1- What does it mean to have safety?

Round 2- How are you seeing the war/news impact those around you?

Round 3- what does it mean to belong?

Closing- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie said “Culture does not make people. People make culture.” What is the culture we are making in our school community?



Flag of No Nation, artist: Tom Haviv

More Resources

A guide to prepare for the backlash that often comes when engaging with this content:

<https://defendinged.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/LIBERA1.pdf>

Israel- Palestine

- <https://icsresources.org/curriculum/the-arab-israeli-conflict/>
- <https://teachpalestine.org/curriculum/samia-shoman/>
- <https://rethinkingschools.org/2023/10/11/violence-in-israel-and-gaza/>
- <https://www.972mag.com/picking-up-pieces-grief-israelis-palestinians/>
- articles and videos from Israelis who've been directly impacted by Hamas' violence that are calling for de-escalation and an end to the war.
 - [Little Rock](#), [Michal Halev](#), [Silver Family](#), [Ofer Cassif](#), [Maoz Inon](#), [Neta Heiman](#)

Antisemitism

- <https://www.morningsidecenter.org/teachable-moment/lessons/examining-anti-semitism-past-present>
- <https://www.facinghistory.org/ideas-week/responding-antisemitism-classroom>
- <https://www.osce.org/odihr/120546> various lessons and books

Islamophobia

- Digital presentation for teachers: <https://ing.org/resources/countering-islamophobia-in-education/>
- [Expelling Islamophobia](#): a lesson plan from Southern Poverty Law Center
- [Countering Islamophobia](#): a lesson plan from Southern Poverty Law Center
- <https://www.challengeislamophobia.org/> Various Lessons
- Fact Sheet: <https://www.issuelab.org/resources/27606/27606.pdf>

Media Literacy

- Media literacy during the fog of war: <https://www.tiktok.com/t/ZT8k6hp4E/>
- [Media Literacy ResourcesNewseumEDhttps://newseumed.org › medialiteracy](#)
- [Media Literacy | PBS NewsHour ClassroomPBShttps://www.pbs.org › newshour › classroom › subjects](#)
- [Top 5 Media Literacy Lesson Plans & Activities for Middle ...AES Educationhttps://www.aeseducation.com › blog › top-5-media-li...](#)