

Ways of Knowing and Working Together

PPH Staff Development Team

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Racism is a structural system that assigns value and grants opportunities and privileges based on race.

- **Racialization** – a process that attaches racial meaning to create inequity
- **White supremacy** – a system that assumes that the practices of whiteness are the right way of organizing human life



National Collaborating Centre for Determinants of Health. (2018). Let's talk...Racism and health equity. Antigonish, NS: NCCDH, St. Francis Xavier University.

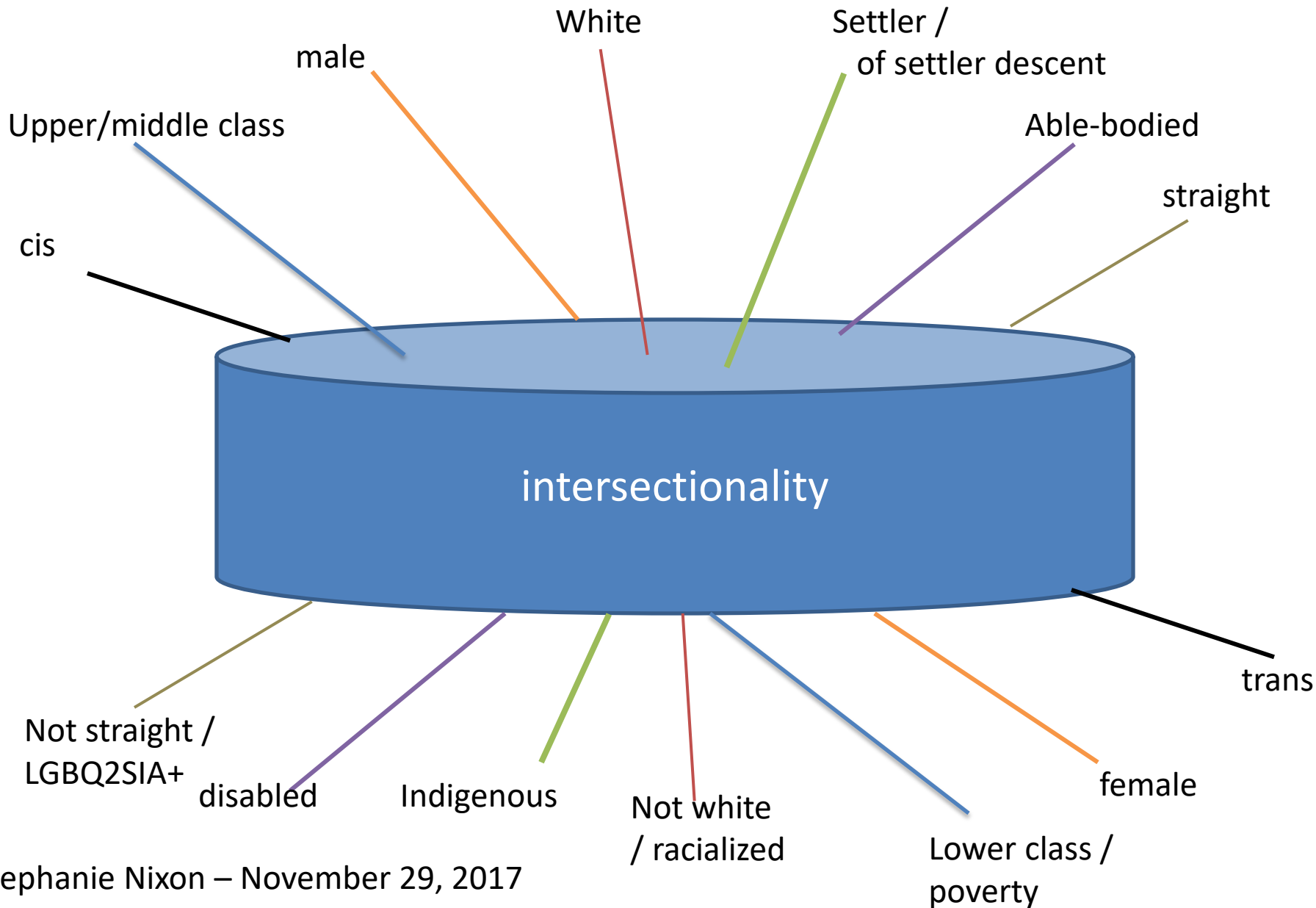
Privilege

You have a benefit others don't
You didn't earn it
Systems give it to you because of who you are



Oppression

You have a disadvantage others don't
You didn't earn it
Systems give it to you because of who you are



Stephanie Nixon – November 29, 2017

Learn more about the concept of intersectionality:

https://www.ted.com/talks/kimberle_crenshaw_the_urgency_of_intersectionality

What is whiteness?

- Whiteness is a system of power and privilege
- It is the dominant system of power in Canada
- Whiteness is often seen as neutral
- It shapes societies in significant ways

Dr. Ron Wyatt – Dismantling Institutional Racism to Achieve Health Equity: A New Framework workshop

White Privilege

- The word *white* creates discomfort among those who are not used to being defined or described by their race.
- The word *privilege*, especially for white people who have lived in poverty, sounds like a word that doesn't belong to them—like a word that suggests they have never struggled.

Cory Collins, What is White Privilege, Really?

<https://www.tolerance.org/magazine/fall-2018/what-is-white-privilege-really>

White Privilege

- Luxury of refusing identification with whiteness is itself part of white privilege
- While many white people accept that people of colour experience life as second-class citizens, that realization does not typically lead them to acknowledge that white people are therefore necessarily advantaged, and effectively benefit from racism

Confronting White Privilege

- Confronting the reality of white supremacy and white privilege is work and it is *hard* – takes a cognitive and emotional toll

Why is it so difficult?

- It evokes emotions
- Fear of saying the wrong thing
- Denial of privilege based on race

“Successful race talk is crucial for increasing ‘racial literacy’” – Dr. Ron Wyatt

Paying Attention to Race

The INTENT	The IMPACT
<p>Seeing oneself as colourblind may be intended to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Tell people we are against racism2. Tell people we plan to treat everyone equally	<p>Seeing oneself as colourblind often has a negative impact because it can:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Tell people that race shouldn't matter in their lives...when it usually does – so it denies people's lived experience2. Tell people that we will likely ignore them if they tell us there is subtle racism present in what we say or do3. Tell people we are inattentive to how racism and privilege play out in our society and institutions

Dr. Ron Wyatt – Dismantling Institutional Racism to Achieve Health Equity: A New Framework workshop

Epistemic Racism

Epistemology – “the study of knowledge, exploring questions such as how knowledge is acquired and what assumptions are made in the historical development of knowledge” (NCCAH, 2013)

Epistemic racism is when one cultural group’s way of knowing dominates and devalues another cultural group’s way of knowing.

“When the school is on the reserve the child lives with its parents, who are savages; he is surrounded by savages, and although he may learn to read and write, his habits, and training and mode of thought are Indian. He is simply a savage who can read and write.”

John A. MacDonald, 1879

“I want to get rid of the Indian problem ... Our objective is to continue until there is not a single Indian in Canada that has not been absorbed into the body politic and there is no Indian question, and no Indian department, that is the whole object of this Bill.”

Duncan Campbell Scott, 1920

Worldviews & Ways of Knowing

Worldview: “how we see the world – it is affected by our belief systems, decision making, values, beliefs, language(s), traditions, ceremonies, and ways of passing knowledge on to other generations.”

Ways of Knowing: “describes information passed from generation-to-generation and is collective and often comes from: storytelling, ceremonies, traditions, ideologies, medicines, dances, arts and crafts, or a combination of these.”

- Angela Mashford-Pringle, 2018

Indigenous Worldviews



Land

Community/Kinship
(Communal)

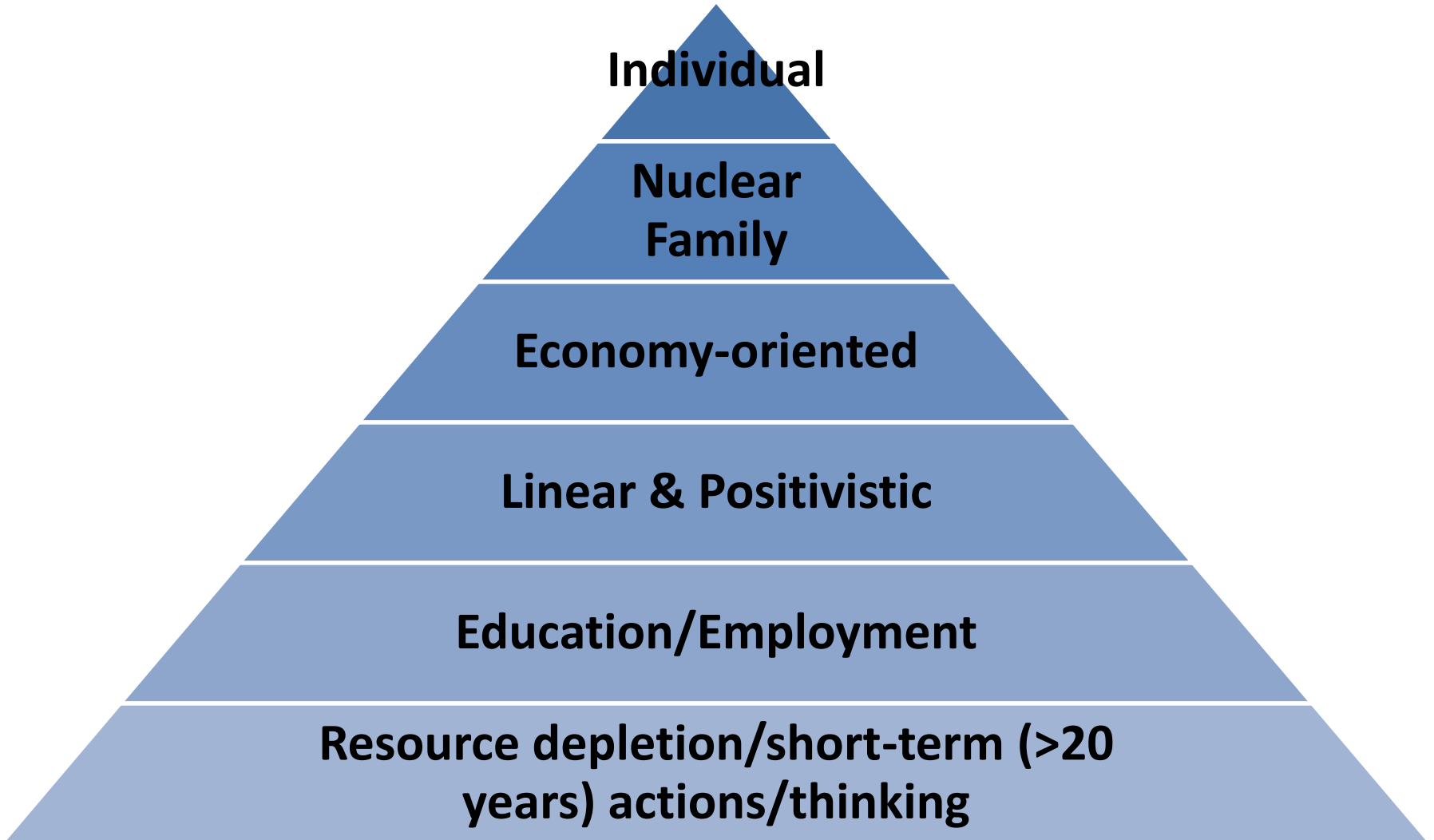
Culture & Language

Wholistic (all my
relations)

Mind, Body & Spirit

Balanced

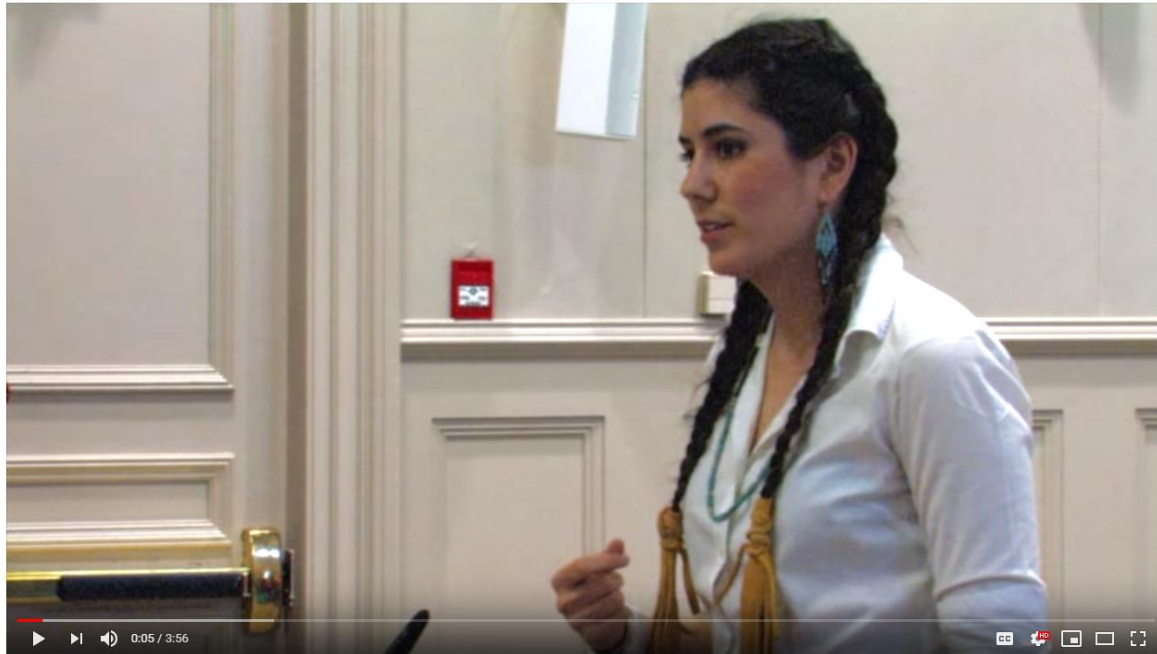
Western Ways of Knowing



Two-Eyed Seeing



Two-Eyed Seeing



Poet Laureate Rebecca Thomas presents at Halifax Regional Council, 2016

Video available online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r3D-vNOvpxc>

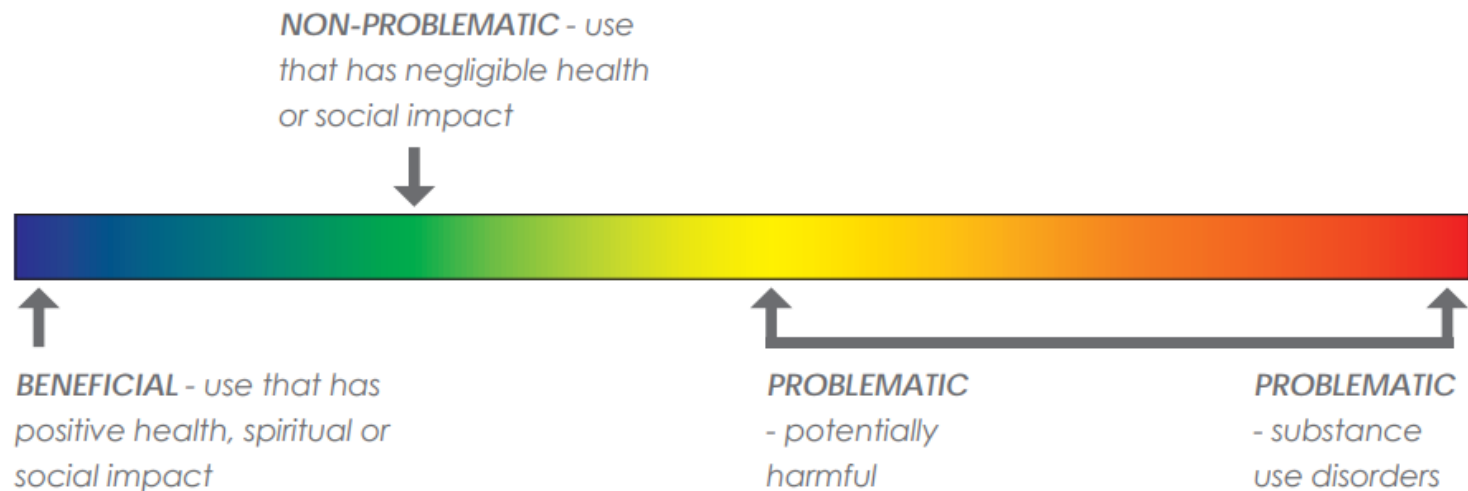
A Case Example

Harm Reduction: Ways of Knowing and
Working Together

A public health perspective on drugs

- Drug use is an enduring feature of human life. Most drug use does

Figure 1: Spectrum of Psychoactive Substance Use



criminalization)

Harm Reduction

- Client-centred, non-judgmental, non-coercive
- Targets the causes of risk and harm
- Evidence-informed, practical, feasible, cost-effective, transparent, accountable
- Promotes autonomy and dignity
- Values meaningful engagement with affected communities in policy and program decisions
- Challenges policies and practices that maximize harm including: criminalization, discrimination, prohibition, abstinence-only services, social inequities

“In Canada, one important context is the systematic cultural oppression and marginalization of Indigenous peoples. This legacy has not only contributed to existing social and health inequities, but also continues to profoundly negatively impact on the health of Indigenous peoples. Redressing social dislocation, family separation, incarceration, poverty, and pain is key to reducing harms. Harm reduction approaches must therefore include Indigenous self-determination and leadership and must be context-specific, locally-informed, and culturally safe.”

WRHA, 2016

Power and Privilege in Western Harm Reduction

- Derives from western health concepts. Oversight of spirituality
- As it became institutionalized – stripped of activist roots. Can be downstream and not transformative
- Who gets to decide which drug harms are unacceptable? (STBBI funding)
- Focused on harms: Can forget to look at benefits of drug use
- Can bring more interference into the already highly regulated lives of people who use drugs
- Principles of cost effectiveness and evidence informed: what counts as evidence?



Review: What is Rights-Based Reconciliation?

- "Reconciliation will never be achieved so long as one side sees it as a recognition of rights, and the other side sees it as an act of benevolence." - Murray Sinclair
- United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples
 - The right to self-determination
 - The right to cultural Identity
 - The right to free, prior and informed consent
 - Protection from discrimination

Welcome

***13 Moons Harm Reduction:
Culture as Harm Reduction***

Small Group Discussions

- The discussion sessions provide time for reflecting on the complex topics presented.
- The goal is to encourage networking between program staff and inspire collective thinking and reflection, rather than to collect the ideas that emerge from the conversations.
- We encourage you to continue to learn and seek out additional resources as we move from knowledge and intention to practice and impact.

Set up

- Groups of about 8 people
- You are encouraged to go outside or arrange yourself without a table between you.
- Form a circle either sitting on chairs, on the ground, or standing.
- Your group may choose to discuss all or only some of the questions shared in your handout.
- Come back to the large room at 11:50am

The Process

- We will use a non-hierarchical process that draws from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous forms of dialogue.
- In keeping with Indigenous ways of knowing, the thoughts and feelings of all participants are valued equally, and when one person is speaking, others do not interject.
- Moving clockwise, each person is encouraged to share thoughts or feelings about the question in turn.
- In talking circles a speaking object (a natural object like a rock, feather, or stick) is used to represent the speaker and is passed to the next person when the speaker is finished speaking.
- People can pass if they don't wish to share.
- Once everyone has shared, encourage open discussion and responses to other people's thoughts.

Break



Closing

Take a stickie note and write down one thing you heard from someone else that stuck with you.

Participant evaluation forthcoming.