

Stages in a Sentencing Circle

Stage	Activity
Preparation	Identify who will come and remove surprises.
Opening	Welcome, ground rules, introductions, creating comfortable atmosphere.
Legal stage	Facts, history, probation report.
Clarifying facts	Anyone can add information, share feelings and concerns.
Seeking common ground	Identify the issues that underlie the crime: alcohol problems, broken family relationships, exclusion from school, gang memberships.
Exploring options	Examine what must be done to support the victim, what must be done by the offender, what must be done by the community.
Developing concerns	Ensure everyone has been heard and all options understood; probe what options are realistic and will gain shared commitment.
Closing	Summarize, even if consensus is not reached; allow people to leave feeling good.

Source: Nicholl, C. G. (1999). *Community Policing, Community Justice, and Restorative Justice: Exploring the Links for the Delivery of a Balanced Approach to Public Safety*. Washington, DC: Office of Community Oriented Policing Services.