| Consensus Group Process Talking Stick Circle |
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| This approach is derived from several sources. The Talking Stick tradition has been appropriated from indigenous culture. Consensus group process has developed over the past 30 years and strives to include everyone in the decisions and actions that the group agree to.  This is an excellent discussion of how to operate under this model: <http://www.consensusdecisionmaking.org/> |
| Introduction |
| This process has many benefits. Including being inclusive and participatory, builds relationships, is collaborative, and promotes whole-group thinking. Consensus decision-making places value on individuals thinking about the good of the whole group.  Over time, young people become accustomed to the Circle Process. In many ways students readily embrace it because it is fair, simple to understand, and inclusive. Educating students about the process beforehand is important to its success with students who are unfamiliar. Once you have facilitated a group of students so that they understand the process they will help teach new students how it works. |
| EQUIPMENT/SUPPLIES |
| An object to pass around the circle. Many groups use a special branch of a tree, i.e. Talking Stick. |
| Activity/Process |
| Until a group is skilled at using the circle process it is dependent upon a facilitator to lead the group through the steps toward consensus. The facilitator introduces the issue or question for the group to consider. Students can pass the talking stick around the circle and as the stick is passed to each student it is their turn to talk to the group and offer their perspective of the question.  Other times the stick can be used to highlight the person who is currently speaking, for example during a group discussion the person speaking is finished he or she hands the stick to another person with their hand up and that person takes a turn to speak.  The Facilitator works with the group to 1) Discuss, 2) Identify the emerging proposal, 3) Identify any concerns, 4) modify the proposal to incorporate the comments and concerns,, 5) Check with the group to assess the degree of support for the proposal, 6) finalize the agreement with the group, or go back to step 1 or 3.  Consensus decision-making highlights the process of making decisions, not just the result. In a consensus process all participants are respected and their contributions are welcome. |