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The Missing Link to Fostering Community: How to Use Circles to Enhance your Existing Programs and Services

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ASACCU 2019 Program Proposal

Presenters:

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Title:

The Missing Link to Fostering Community: How to Use Circles to Enhance your Existing Programs and Services

Description:

The principles of Restorative Justice as a means of harm reduction and healing are fairly well established. Many institutions have taken significant steps to incorporate restorative practices into conduct procedures. Such practices place new demands not only on institutional structures, but on students, and the overall culture of connection. Without opportunities to practice these new skills of relating, our communities are ill equipped to engage in restorative work when harm arises. This session provides an overview of some small steps taken at Loyola University Maryland to foster a community congruent with the Restorative Justice paradigm within existing programs and structures. For us, this process begins with student onboarding in the first year, strengthens within leadership training practices, and culminates with the senior transition into our broader world.

Connection to conference theme:

According to Susan Sharpe, Advisor on Restorative Justice at the University of Notre Dame, “Restorative justice focuses...on how to repair the harm that wrongful behavior does...correction and prevention are best accomplished through relationship-building, meaningful accountability and amends. The focus here is on the *common good*, seeking a resolution that will be just and productive for all parties involved and for the community as a whole.” At Loyola University Maryland, relationship-building is a key foundation to this work of restorative justice. In building community, one becomes significantly less likely to harm those in that community. And when harm has been done, restoring that relationship and rebuilding trust becomes a priority for all those involved. Using circles to foster community is ideal in developing a restorative culture. In learning how to live restoratively, our students can transition out of Loyola as leaders for the *common good*.

Outline:

In our session, we will discuss how we got started in circle work, the practices we are currently using, our future aspirations, why we think circles are vital to student development, and advice to help bring circles to your campus. We will first talk about how we ground our work in Zehr’s 10 Ways to Live Restoratively, Pranis’s 7 Core Assumptions, and our own Jesuit tenets. Next, we’ll focus on our circles practices in transitioning into and out of Loyola as well as uses within leadership training practices. We’ll speak on our future work in formalizing restorative justice into our conduct process and expanding our circle work into other existing areas. Finally, we’ll discuss why this work is so important, how it works to create leaders for the common good, and how you can adopt similar practices. Our format and delivery will be through interactive PowerPoint presentation.

Intended audience:

Any student affairs practitioners in Catholic Higher Education

Presentation requirements:

Audio visual needs – none besides with given computer/LCD projector

Room set-up – lecture style

Co-presenter information –

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