MMUF WRITING WORKSHOP
Talking Circles

Traditional Talking Circles represent a communication format used to gather strength by closing off distractions, establishing connection, and interrupting linearity. Every speaker is equally important. Many times an object is designated as the signifier to move the voices in the circle, as it is passed from one person to the next. **The talking circle is a traditional and sacred format in indigenous communities; each member's voice is equally considered and respected, and each person participating in the circle has the freedom to offer support in word or action.**

A modified Talking Circle is implemented in the academic setting to provide an opportunity for students at early stages of their thinking to speak about their research projects. There is no expectation of a formal presentation or even a completely formulated research question. It is exploratory and open to every level of the research process.

Our *Virtual Talking Circles* will take place on the last day of the Writing Workshop, and are intended to be an open process. Groups will have between 7-9 participants. Although the beginning of the *Virtual Talking Circle* is structured, ultimately, participants are responsible for the direction of the dialogue.

The *Virtual Talking Circle* Facilitator: First of all, thank you for engaging this process! There are 75 minutes allotted for talking circles—the last 15 minutes is for completing the session survey.

Here are the guidelines for your role as facilitator:

- Briefly review the definition of the Talking Circle (bold text above)

- Introduce yourself and talk about your own "research question(s)" or your general areas of interest or practice (2-3 minutes) OR share a brief personal story that you used or would use for a Personal Statement narrative.

- As the *Virtual Talking Circle* continues, invite participants to introduce themselves (make sure to write down the students' names as they introduce themselves, so that you can address them by name, as much as possible, during the Wrap-up).

- Participants will then take over the dialogue. There is no predetermined speaker order. The students will organically allow this to emerge. *At this point, as the facilitator, you will turn off your video. **You will listen to the students for the first 30 minutes (unless there is dead silence for more than 3 minutes)**. If you have to check on the silence, please turn your video back on and then just re-enter the circle" and be visible. Otherwise, as directed above, keep yourself invisible and muted for the entire 30 minutes before you rejoin and observe for the remainder of the time.

- Gentle Timekeeping and Interventions: Please carefully watch the time. Also, if you note the conversation is lagging please intervene with some prompts to move it along:

  For example, 1) refer specifically to the last comment that someone said, and then offer a brief thought or pose a related question 2) Offer an observation that follows the general theme of the last few comments.

- ● Wrap-up: If it seems that the conversation has come to an end, then announce that you will be sharing some thoughts from your notes. Your thoughts can include references to articles or authors, further questions to consider, general observations for "next steps" in the research process, website or library collections recommendations, etc.

Talking Circle Objectives

Participant will increase their appreciation for academic peer dialogue

Participant will have a broad indication of a research question or will have deepened their research question

Participant will be able to identify resources (through dialogue or recommendations) to enhance their research process.

Process for the virtual sphere

- ● *Virtual Talking Circles* will be hosted in Zoom Break-out rooms
- ● EVERYONE is unmuted for the duration
- ● No need to use any virtual hand-raising or chat features (reiterating inclusion and speaking freely)
- ● EVERYONE (except the facilitator) leaves their video on per the description

THE LAST 15 minutes will be when participants fill out the Post-Session Survey on the APP. Notifications and reminders will be sent. At the scheduled ending time, all participants will be automatically rejoined with the larger group for a conference wrap-up.