

Communication Types

The Office of Restorative Justice Practices services are available to all the members of the UCSF community throughout the university and UCSF Health. We partner with all trainees, faculty, and staff to create a culture of connectivity that fosters mutual respect, empathy, and trust.

This table outlines different types of communication. RJP team specializes in the facilitation of Circles. While we do not offer facilitation support for the other communication types, there are other UCSF programs and resources available that might better meet your needs.

	Circle	Debate	Dialogue	Mediation
Purpose	Build, strengthen, and/or restore trust and relationships with participants with varying values, experiences and backgrounds	Prove the merit of positions on an issue through a format of argumentation	Seek understanding, learning perspective taking, and suspending judgment of others	Resolve a conflict, or work relationship tension by sharing perspectives and reaching an understanding or agreement
Focus	Focused on tending to relationships and the environmental factors in building connections to develop authentic and accountable relationships and communities	Focus on winning an argument by using available evidence to prove a stance on an issue or topic on different sides	Focus is on understanding others; holding multiple, often conflicting truths, and validating individual experiences	Focused on sharing participants' experience, perspective, and goals regarding a conflict to reach an agreement and to engage more constructively moving forward

Structure	A structured and facilitated conversation guided by storytelling and empathetic listening where each person has the opportunity to share and witness one another	A moderated conversation between two or more people where an issue is discussed and opposing arguments are put forward and rebutted	A moderated or facilitated conversation that explores thoughts and feelings, and invites differing opinions and experiences	A structured, confidential, and facilitated conversation where parties take turns speaking and listening, and collectively developing solutions/ agreements
Engagement	Participants are invited to share, witness, and relate to each other's stories in a way that honors, cultivates, and demonstrates interconnectedness with one another	Participants with opposing views to bring forth an informed argument to communicate a stance and space to challenge opposing arguments	Participants challenge their preconceived notions and identify areas of conflict and difference	Participants share and listen to each other to develop applied solutions/ agreements based on negotiation, improved understanding, and improved working relationship
Experience	Participants increase their understanding of one another and deepen their relationship by sharing and listening to individual experiences When addressing relational harm, a Circle explores impact, needs, and practices collaborative decision-making with involved individuals and the community	Participants increase their critical thinking and analytical decision-making by delivering, listening, and challenging stances on a topic	Participants broaden their own perspectives, discover differences and commonalities	Participants increase their skills in collaborative speaking, active listening, and mutual problem solving. They leave with agreements about how to engage with each other more effectively.