



So you want to run a...Community Roundtable?

This youth-created and youth-led activity will activate and engage students in dialogues about important school culture issues. Roundtable discussions are a way for your SAVE Promise Club to reach out to a broader student audience and capture the community’s attention about the violence prevention issues students care deeply about. You can host a Community Roundtable in-person or virtually – both are effective

Grade Level

- Elementary
- Middle School
- High School

What’s the purpose of a Community Roundtable?

- Lift Up Student voice: hear and understand diverse views and perspectives on various school culture issues.
- Generate interest and solutions: to the issues your Club is concerned about.

Why are Community Roundtables a great activity for SAVE Promise Clubs to host?

A Save Promise Club may be interested in hosting a Community Roundtable in order to educate themselves, their peers, and their administration on how students feel in school. Roundtable discussions are also a great way to gather feedback from students on recent changes in their school and community and broaden their understanding by listening to different perspectives on violence prevention.

This format is a great forum to share power and youth voice because students are provided with an organized setting where they can safely share their opinions on a specific topic. Students get the questions ahead of time so they can be best prepared to articulate their opinions and emotions towards the topic at hand.



This activity will boost student leaders’ social and emotional learning skills:

- Social Awareness
- Relationship Skills
- Responsible Decision-Making



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Community Roundtable Checklist

Step 1: Reach out, Connect, Network

- Gain consensus on the Roundtable topic with your SAVE Promise Club members.
- Present your topic to administration and inform them about your Club hosting the event.
- Reach out to other school clubs and invite them to participate or collaborate on the event.

Step 2: Approval and Consensus

- Circle up with your SAVE Promise Club student members to brainstorm questions for the discussion.
- Select 5 questions that everyone agrees will be beneficial and keep the conversation going about the important topic.

Step 3: Logistics and Participants

- Who will participate in the Roundtable?
 - Roles can be Moderator, Speakers, Audience Members, Notetaker.
- Decide on the size and scope
 - Will this be a first come, first serve event? For example, the first 20 students who sign-up will participate in the dialogue.
 - Will the entire school community be invited to observe and listen, or will you use live streaming or recording capabilities to share-out the discussion later?
- Recruit a diverse group of meeting participants
 - Build a forum that is representative of the larger school community.
 - How will you make sure the group is diverse in: socioeconomic status, age, and opinions?
- Find a location
 - Will this meeting take place virtually or in-person?
 - How much space do you have?
 - Are you able to set-up a circle formation in the space?
 - How many students will be able to observe the discussion?
- Time Allocation
 - 60 minutes is the preferred time frame: 45 minutes for a dialogue and 15 minutes for the reflection.
- Materials and Resources
 - Have a timer and timekeeper available (phone will work just fine).
 - Create a slideshow that has each question written clearly on a different slide.





Community Roundtable Checklist

Step 4: Roles

- Select moderators: the moderators will be the people that run the discussion and present the questions to the group. Ideally, assign 2 moderators.
 - o Tips for the Moderators: practice reading or stating the questions prior to the discussion. Be confident and project your voice loudly.
- Select a notetaker: seek a volunteer to take notes throughout the meeting, preferably using a shareable platform like Google Docs.
 - o Tips for the notetaker: come prepared with all the questions typed out and ready to write down separate responses to the questions. Ask the SAVE Promise Club members to review notes for accuracy and then send them out to everyone who participated within the week.

Step 5: Before the Meeting

- Send participants the questions a day in advance to allow them time to prepare and organize their thoughts.
- Inform participants' teachers that their students will be involved in this important Roundtable and invite them to attend.

Step 6: Introductions & Icebreaker

- Introduce the moderator(s), notetaker, and SAVE Promise Club members.
- Ask each participant to introduce themselves by stating their name, fun fact about themselves, why this issue is important to them personally.



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Town Hall Checklist Continued:

Step 7: The Meeting

- Inform the participants and audiences the exact length of the meeting (45 – 60 minutes).
- Encourage participants to jump in when they want to respond to a question, rather than formally raise their hand. The goal is to create a comfortable atmosphere for students to have a free flowing dialogue.
- The goal is to get through 3 – 5 rounds of the prepared questions.
- Instruct participants that they will have 2 minutes to respond to each question.
- Pose the first question.
- Set a timer.
- If the timer is not visible to everyone, ask the timekeeper to show a card that states '20 seconds' that gives the speaker a cue of how much time they have left.
- Once the moderator poses a question, encourage the conversation by telling students to jump in.
 - o For virtual settings, speakers can use the 'raise hand' function or hold up their hand or a talking piece that indicates they'd like to respond to the question.
 - o For in-person Town Halls, It is up to the moderator if they want to have people raise their hands, but it's preferable for students to jump into the conversation willingly to make it feel more like a conversation and less like a class.
- Cap each question at 12 minutes.
- If someone is not participating, the moderator should pose questions like "has anyone who has not yet spoken want to add something to the conversation?"

Step 8: Reflection Time

- After the 45 mins is up you will then have a 15 min reflection time. Tell the group that you are now going to set a timer for 15 minutes and this is designated time to uncover what you all got out of the conversation.
- Ask questions like "what now?" "is there anything we can do to change this?" "do you think that this conversation was beneficial to our understanding of [insert your topic here]?"
- The notetaker should jot down ideas and opinions from the reflection period, as sometimes this is the time many suggestions and solutions are generated.

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Community Roundtable Checklist

Step 9: Optimistic Closure

- After the reflection period is up, the moderator should explain briefly how impactful the conversation was and thank everyone for their time and effort.

Step 10: After the meeting

- Share notes with the administration and participants.
- Meet with key stakeholders, students and trusted adults, to discuss outcomes of the Roundtable, student responses and perspectives, and answer the question “what now?”
- Remember that change can happen in small steps. The first Community Roundtable may lead to hosting a second one, change in a school policy, or inch closer to creating an inclusive community where youth feel comfortable sharing their voices.



Possible Community Roundtable Questions

High School:

- How is our school doing to create an inclusive and affirming community? What grade would you give our school on a report card for inclusiveness and connectedness?
- What issues are high school students facing that other age groups are not facing to the same degree?
- How is our school doing when it comes to providing mental health services and resources?
- What are the most pressing school climate issues we want to take to the Board of Education for improvement?
- What is our school community proactively doing to be an antiracist school?
- For remote learning: What extra efforts can all students make to build connections and reach out and help others when virtual school is in-session, but buildings and campuses are closed?





Possible Community Roundtable Questions

Middle School:

- What do you worry about most when it comes to school safety?
- How can the trusted adults in your school continually show they are there and care?
- What types of warning signs have helped you recognize if a peer is considering harming themselves, being harmed, or harming others?
- What issues are middle schools facing at this moment that trusted adults could help with?
- For remote learning: What types of fun activities can students organize to build stronger connections and friendships with each other?

Elementary School:

- What activities can our school do to make a safe, welcoming, and friendly community?
- How can we celebrate the trusted adults in our school community?
- How can students support each other during difficult or challenging times and situations?
- For remote learning: Lemonade time, lunch bunch, or chat-n-chew: what special time can we set aside during the school day to connect, laugh, have fun, and share our stories?

Thanks to the authors of this activity!

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Community Roundtable Planning Guide

Topic: _____
Location: _____ Time: _____

Roles

Moderators:

Time Keeper:

Note Taker:

Questions

1-

2-

3-

4-

5-

Icebreaker:

Follow Up and Closure

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