

# Lesson 3. Trust, Respect, and Agreements

SpeakOut with Advocatr Curriculum

## Learning Outcome

- Students and staff collaboratively create a set of classroom agreements for working together during the course.
- Staff and students share ideas for how to define the terms “trust,” “respect,” and “conditions.”
- Students hear possible conditions for trusting someone from peers.

## Materials

- Student Journals
- PowerPoint slides
- Talking Piece
- (opt.) poster paper
- (opt.) Circle Guidelines posted in the room

## Vocabulary

- Trust
- Respect
- Agreements

## Preparation

Arrange seats in a circle. If space doesn't permit, have an alternate plan for turn-taking that allows each student to pass to the next.

## Lesson Plan

 Total Time: 30 min

10 min

### Content

Introduce the Listening Circle (see Holding Circles handout for tips)

Review Circle Guidelines

**Prompt 1:** Name one person you have high respect for and why.

**Prompt 2:** Think of one or two people you trust. What kinds of things do they do or say that earn your trust?

### Materials/Notes

Circle Guidelines posted visibly

Sample Circle Agreements on PowerPoint Slide #2

Prompts on PowerPoint Slide #3

10 min

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**Content**

**Transition:** If possible, remain in circle, but retire the talking piece:

*“One way people gain trust in each other is by making agreements about **how** to respect each other. We’re going to make our own agreements in this class about how to treat each other. You can make requests of how you’d like me to show you respect, and I’ll do the same. We can also make suggestions about how to remind each other of our agreements if we forget.”*

**Pair-Share:** *“With a partner, take **2 minutes** to brainstorm ways we could make this class feel like a respectful and safe place.”*

Ask for volunteers to share back; record suggestions on the board or poster paper.

*What are some things that sometimes happen in a class like this that bother you or make you feel unsafe? How can we write up an agreement to prevent that?*

**Once you have a draft list of agreements:** *How can we combine what we have so far into a short list that’s easy to remember, but still captures the things that are important to us?*

**Write the final list** on the board or poster paper and ask the class if they can agree to abide by this list; they can demonstrate agreement by showing a thumbs up.

**Materials/Notes**

White board or poster paper to record suggestions.  
PowerPoint slide #4.

**NOTE: Suggest** reframes for any statement of what NOT to do into the affirmative, and help make vague statements more concrete

5-10 min

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**Content**

**Materials/Notes**

**Journal:** *In your journals, write down the quote on the screen and take 3 minutes to answer ONE of these questions:*

Student Journals

PowerPoint slide #5 and #6

- 1) What do you think this quote is saying about putting our trust in something or someone else?
- 2) If you think of your community as a branch that holds you up, what are some things that make that branch stronger? What might weaken it?
- 3) If you think of your own “wings” as the skills and abilities you can rely on to get you through difficult situations, what are those skills and abilities?

## **Extension or Alternate Activity**

 Total Time: 25 min

### **Trust Walk**

#### **Preparation**

**Read carefully through the directions for the exercise and spend some time thinking about possible challenges, pairings, and routes.**

**Materials:** Blindfolds for half the class at a time

**NOTE:** This activity could be challenging if there is not already a baseline of respect and trust in the class. Not recommended for early meetings with the class, or for subs without strong rapport with the students. Also think through any necessary accommodations for students with disabilities.

5 min

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**Content**

**Materials/Notes**

## Trust Walk

Introduce the Activity: *“We’re going to do a short Trust Walk to explore the idea of Trust and Power. Find somebody you trust at least a little bit to be your partner or let me know and I’ll pair you up with someone.”*

Hand out one blindfold to each pair and have them choose who will be first to walk and who will be first to guide. Once each pair has one student blindfolded:

1. *“The number one rule is to keep each other safe. If you are guiding, you might suddenly get a feeling of power, because you could mess with your partner; you have the power to do that and they probably can’t stop you. First question: is that really what power is? Second question, how will you want your partner to treat you when it’s their turn?”*
2. *“Each pair needs to follow the pair in front of them in a single file. If you are guiding, you need to tell your partner to do exactly the same thing the blindfolded person in front of you is doing. And if you’re first in line, your guide will have you do everything that I do. That means if I walk around a tree, you guide your partner around a tree; if I smell a flower, guide your partner to smell the flower, and so on.”*
3. *“Rule three: you may only guide your partner with your words—no touching. The only exception to this rule is if your partner is about to hurt themselves, you may touch them to keep them from harm. The main guidance here is with words, so please communicate clearly, and if you’re walking, I encourage you to ask questions if you don’t understand an instruction.”*

**Blindfolds for half the class**

**Grade level**

**differentiation:** you may need to pair younger students yourself, rather than let them choose, depending on whether you’re confident that they will be safe with each other. Sometimes pairing strangers is safer than letting friends pair up.

7-8 min

**Content**

**Materials/Notes**

**Lead them in single file around obstacles, through doors, up or down stairs, over uneven ground or through bushes. Look for hallways with unusual sounds, drinking fountains or flowers they can smell or touch.**

**NOTE:** This activity is best conducted outdoors, where other sounds, smells and sensations add to the experience.

After **7-8 minutes**, pause at some outdoor spot that will be your half-way point, have the walkers take their blindfolds off, and debrief. Some questions to ask:

- *Can I get a Walker to share how that experience was for you?*
- *How about a Guide—what was the most challenging part of leading your partner?*
- *Did anybody forget to give basic instructions like “duck” or “step down?”*
- *Did anybody give unnecessary instructions like “Watch out for that?”*
- *Did anybody’s guide abuse their power while you were blindfolded?*

If you have an aide or student who would rather help, have them bring up the rear and make sure everyone is safe. Keep an eye out for serious hazards and use your best judgment to avoid injuries while still offering a challenge.

*“Now switch roles, same partners, and if you were just the Walker you now have the opportunity to use your power to take care of your partner at least as well as they took care of you. Same rules apply, single file, Guides have your partner do exactly what the person in front of you is doing.”*

8 min

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**Content**

**Materials/Notes**

Either double back on your course to give the two groups the same experience, or complete a larger circuit, but allow enough time for debrief at the end.

5 min

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**Content**

**Materials/Notes**

Some questions to debrief:

- Was it scarier to lead or to be led, to be vulnerable yourself or to be responsible for someone else who's vulnerable?
- How do the ideas of trust and vulnerability relate to respect?
- Notice that everyone had power *over* someone else in this exercise: power to make someone else uncomfortable or even to injure someone badly, but everyone chose to use their power to help each other through this. What does that tell you about the nature of power?

Make sure to recognize how well everyone took care of each other.