

# Friendship Circles

## Grades 1-5

Friendship Circles are support groups that provide support to students while teaching and reinforcing coping skills and strategies. Topics include changing families (divorce), social skills, self-esteem, stress management, anger management and bereavement.

Friendship Circles provide a therapeutic environment to students, as well as the realization that they are not alone in dealing with difficult issues. Group work provides safety and protection, builds trust in social situations, and provides opportunities for group validation.

When life skills are learned at the elementary level, it is more likely that students will use these skills in everyday situations and continue to use and expand on the strategies learned as they grow and develop. Prevention at this level can cut down on acting-out behaviors during middle and high school.

If students can manage feelings and meet with social success early on, they will find themselves more able to meet the challenges of adolescence in a positive way.

Friendship Circles are open to anyone that would like to or need to talk about their feelings and receive support in dealing with problems. A parent, teacher, and/or administrator can refer students to a group.

Friendship Circles consist of one weekly meeting that will be conducted 30 minutes each week, throughout the school year.