

Course Title: Restorative Circles: Strategies for Classroom Climate, Communication, and Connection

Course Number: EDU 5900:

Section: 08

Dates: November 2-13, 2026

Instructor: Melanie Anderson

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Course Description: Mindfulness and Restorative Circles for Transformative K-12 Classrooms

This course supports K–12 educators in using mindfulness-based regulation, mindful communication, and Restorative Circle practices to strengthen classroom climate, build student connection, and create more intentional classroom communication. The course is grounded in the idea that when educators are more regulated, present, and connected in their communication, classrooms become calmer, relationships become stronger, and many conflicts are prevented before they escalate.

Participants will explore the neuroscience of mindfulness and emotional regulation in a practical, classroom-centered way, with an emphasis on how educator presence, self-awareness, and communication patterns impact student behavior, relationships, and readiness to learn.

The first part of the course introduces foundational mindfulness practices that help educators recognize stress responses, regulate their nervous system, and bring greater awareness to their interactions with students. The second part of the course applies these practices to mindful communication and Restorative Circles. Participants will learn the core components of a Restorative Circle, practice restorative questioning and listening skills, and design a circle structure that can be used with K–12 students.

This course includes online Canvas coursework and two required live Zoom sessions on November 5, 2026 and November 12, 2026. The live sessions will provide opportunities for guided practice, discussion, modeling, and application planning. By the end of the course, participants will be able to design and facilitate a mindful Restorative Circle that supports student connection, communication, accountability, and classroom community.

This course is appropriate for K–12 classroom teachers, school counselors, administrators, special area and ENL/ELL teachers, and any other educators seeking practical strategies to support classroom climate, student relationships, and restorative communication.

Suggested Reading: “The Whole Brain Child” by Dan Siegel; “Brainstorm” by Dr. Dan Siegel; “Unwinding Anxiety” by Dr. Judson Brewer; “Say What You Mean: A Mindful Approach to Non-Violent Communication” by Oren J. Sofer

Overall Course Objectives:

By the end of this course, participants will be able to:

1. Explain the connection between mindfulness, emotional regulation, and classroom climate, including basic neuroscience related to stress, attention, and educator presence.
2. Practice mindfulness-based regulation strategies that support educator self-awareness, intentional responses, and calmer classroom interactions.
3. Apply mindful communication practices to strengthen student relationships, increase connection, and support more respectful classroom dialogue.
4. Identify the essential components of a Restorative Circle, including circle structure, agreements, talking pieces, rounds, restorative questions, and reflection.
5. Design a developmentally appropriate Restorative Circle for use with K–12 students that supports classroom community, communication, accountability, and connection.
6. Develop an implementation plan for bringing Restorative Circle practices into participants’ own classroom, grade level, counseling setting, or school community.

This syllabus is an outline and assignments and links will be updated prior to the first day of class.

Format

This course will be offered online through Canvas, the Molloy College online course system. You will need to become familiar with Canvas.

- Log in using your Molloy email username and password.
- Click the “Courses” tab, located on the top left-hand side of the page, and select “Mindfulness and Restorative Circles for Transformative K-12 Classrooms” from the drop-down menu.
- Log in before the course to ensure that your account has been set up properly.
- Take the Canvas Student Tour or visit the Canvas Student Quickstart page.
- Canvas Support is accessed through the “Help” feature in the lower left-hand corner of Canvas. You can either call Canvas at (844) 408-6455 or use the online chat feature. Both services are available 24/7. Technology Support Services is located in Kellenberg 022 and can be reached via phone at 516-323-4800, email at helpdesk@molloy.edu, or Twitter at @molloyTSS. The Information Commons is located on the second floor of Public Square and can be reached via phone at 516-323-4817 or email at slewis2@molloy.edu. Check their website for hours: <http://molloy.edu/tss>.

Dates and Times to Remember

While an online course gives you the flexibility to complete the work when it is most convenient for you, please remember you must submit your work by the dates and times listed in the “Assignment/Due Date” section in Canvas. All assignments are due by 11:59 PM EST on the date listed. Dates in this syllabus are subject to change/adjustment. Final dates and assignments will be posted in Canvas prior to the start of class.

Grading

Students are expected to participate by responding to all discussion prompts and to the instructor and classmates with thoughtful, professional responses. Please be sure to respond to **at least one other person's response for all discussion prompts**. You are encouraged to share resources and ask questions. Any assignments submitted after the allotted due date and time will have a point deducted for each day it is incomplete. Participants are expected to attend both live Zoom calls. Points may be deducted for not attending live.

60% of the grade is based upon daily posting and responding to prompts with thoughtful, professional discussions, and attending and participating in, both of the live Zoom calls. Participants are expected to post and respond to another's post at least once per day.

40% of the grade is based upon a completed, final project.

Communication Procedures and Contact Hours

I look forward to working with you and guiding you through this course. If you have any questions or concerns, please email me at MAnderson1@molloy.edu. I will respond within 24 hours. Please note the #1 in my email address. I will hold the **two required** live Zoom sessions on November 5, 2026 and November 12, 2026 from 7:30-8:30 pm. Additional office hours can be scheduled with me. Use the Zoom link in Canvas.

Course Learning Objectives:

LO 1. Participants will understand and explore what mindfulness is and learn about the neuroscience of mindfulness.

LO 2. Participants will learn how to practice mindfulness as a part of their own self-care and wellness journey.

LO 3. Participants will learn what mindful communication is and how it can help transform their relationship with students.

LO 4. Participants will learn the components of a Restorative Circle and have all the tools necessary to implement a Mindful Restorative Circle with their K-12 students.

Final Project

By the end of this course, you will submit a Restorative Circle lesson. [Click here for Canvas link to template and description.](#)

Quiz Assignments and Due Dates:

Syllabus Quiz Due 11/3/26

Neuroscience of Mindfulness Quiz due 11/8/26

Components of a Restorative Circle Quiz due 11/13/26

End of Course Evaluation Survey due 11/13/26

All Discussion (Reflect and Respond) assignments require you to respond to at least one other person's response. They should be detailed, thoughtful, and reflective in order to receive full credit.

Module 0 Assignments: The following are graded Module 0 Assignments

Due 11/3/26 Syllabus Quiz

Module 1 Assignments: The following are graded Module 1 Assignments

Due 11/8/26 Respond to the "Getting to Know Your Professor" talk.

Due 11/8/26 Introduction Discussion and Response

Due 11/8/26 Module 1 Experiential Meditation with Reflection and Response

Due 11/8/26 What is Mindfulness Reflection and Response

Module 2 Assignments: The following are graded Module 2 Assignments

Due 11/8/26 Engage in Meditation and Reflect and Respond

Due Any point in Module 2 Respond to the Module 2 Professor Talk

Due 11/8/26 Neuroscience of Mindfulness Reflection and Response

Due 11/8/26 Just Breathe Video Reflection and Response

Due 11/8/26 Neuroscience of Mindfulness Quiz

Module 3 Assignments: The following are graded Module 3 Assignments

Due 11/12/26 Grounded in Presence Meditation- Reflection and Respond

Due 11/12/26 Listen to the Module 3 Professor Talk, "What Is Mindful Communication". Reflect and Respond

Due 11/12/26 View the Mindful Communication Video Series Part 1- Reflect and Respond

Due 11/12/26 View the Mindful Communication Video Series Part 2- Reflect and Respond

Due 11/12/26 Grounded in Presence Meditation- Reflection and Respond

Module 4 Assignments: The following are graded Module 4 Assignments

Due 11/12/26 Reflect and Respond to the 'What are the Components to a Restorative Circle' Professor Talk

Due 11/12/26 The Circle Process- Reflect and Respond to the content presented.

Due 11/12/26 Write 5 low risk, medium risk, and high risk restorative circle questions. Reflect and Respond to the content provided.

Due 11/13/26 Components of a Restorative Circle Quiz

Module 5 Assignments: The following Assignments are Graded Module 5 Assignments

Due 11/13/26 Final Project- You will create a Restorative Circle for a group of students with all of the components learned in this course.

Due 11/13/26 End of Course Survey. This is for my purposes and separate from what you will need to do for Molloy.