

Building for Justice:

Imagining Furniture for Restorative Justice Spaces

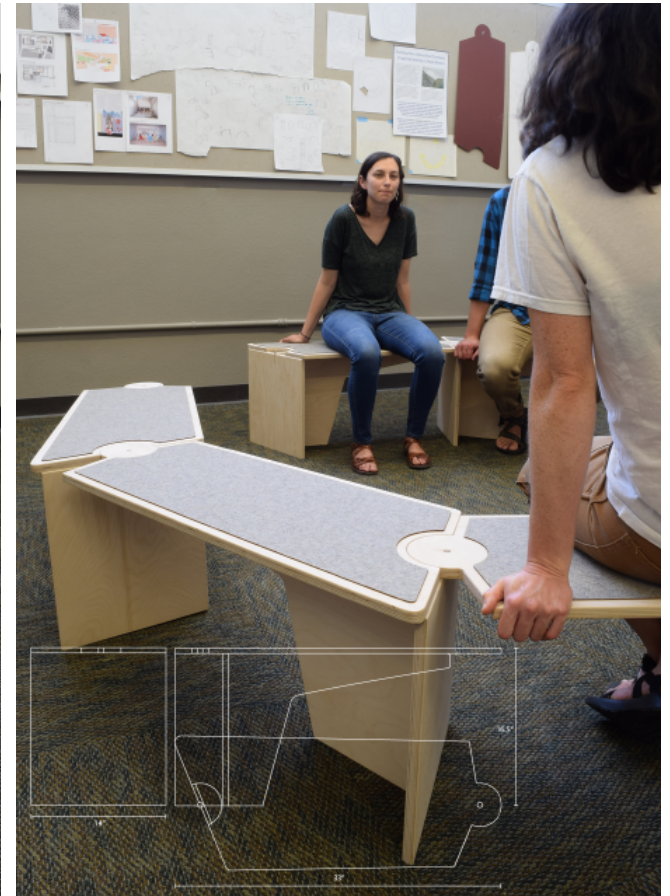
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My research for this project is predicated on the concept that furniture is more than just a place where we sit, talk, eat and relax. Furniture, like architecture, can affect hierarchies, control, and communication between people and groups in a variety of spaces including courtrooms, schools, places of worship, etc.

Inspired by two organizations in Oakland (DJ+DS and Impact/Justice) that are using design and architecture to support spaces for restorative justice (a process in which an offender, victim, families and communities can seek resolution to a harm outside of our criminal justice system), I have made and designed two seating forms that can enable feelings of trust, safety and comfort within a circle, in order to promote openness and understanding in the midst of difficult and vulnerable conversations.

“Building Your Circle” is a form that encourages participation, creates group connection and promotes





adjustability. Participants begin a meeting by building their circle with these modular, linking stools.

As the first picture shows, a stool by itself is not stable; a second is needed to provide it balance and support. So, during this process of group creation, under the guidance of the facilitator, participants can observe and understand that just as each stool relies on its neighbor, so too, every person relies on and is supported by everyone else within the circle.

Left: Building a circle: Max links his stool to the ring, while Kristin waits join

Middle: Kristin adjusting the angle of her stool

Right: Karen listening across the cricle



Additionally, at the linkage point, each stool is able to rotate to various angles. As the circle is built, the size can be adjusted to group size, shrinking or expanding to fit the needs of the meeting.



A circle for eight, Max, Kristin, and Karen laughing and conversating together.

Construction Materials:
5/8" and 3/4" Baltic Birch Plywood
3mm Wool Felt



“Finding Your Comfort” was inspired by design firm, Designing Justice + Designing Spaces. While researching restorative justice spaces in schools, they found that many students prefer to sit on the floor while in circle.

The purpose of this seating form is to accommodate that desire--not only to floor-sit, but to choose how to be in circle with your body. The stool is designed to promote choice, flexibility and agency as it enables multiple positions of sitting, and ultimately encourages participants to find their comfort during vulnerable conversations.

To accomplish this, the stool offers three different means of sitting: a person can sit on it, lean against it, or nest underneath it.

This latter position is made possible by a unique and angular side profile that gives space for knees while sitting cross-legged. Nesting underneath the stool can impart a sense of safety or privacy in one's body without detracting from full participation



or engagement in conversations.

This flexibility in position provides an opportunity to progress from a place of protection to openness through the various forms of sitting.





Future iterations will include a stackable design for easy storage, which would be particularly useful in schools, where I see this form being best used.



Construction Materials: Rift-sawn Ash, Basswood and 8mm Wool Felt