

Getting Started with

# Restorative Practices

in Schools

A Guide for  
**ADMINISTRATORS  
& TEACHER LEADERS**



Center for Education Equity

## About MAEC

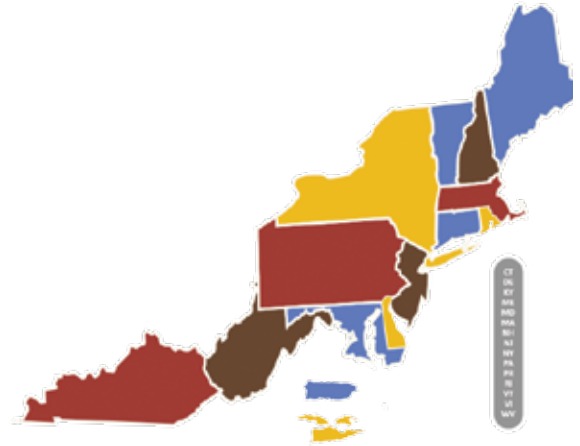
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MAEC is an education non-profit dedicated to increasing access to a high-quality education for racially, culturally, linguistically, and economically diverse learners. We work to promote excellence and equity in education to achieve social justice.

## About CEE

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MAEC established the Center for Education Equity (CEE) to address problems in public schools caused by segregation and inequities. As the Region I equity assistance center, CEE works to improve and sustain the systemic capacity of public education to increase outcomes for students regardless of race, gender, religion, and national origin. CEE is funded by the US Department of Education under Title IV of the Civil Rights Act of 1964.



## Authorship

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### Disclaimer

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MAEC is committed to the sharing of information regarding issues of equity in education. The contents of this guide were developed under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. However, these contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education, and you should not assume endorsement by the federal government.

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Gang activity is a serious challenge in my high school. And for a while, we had a zero-tolerance policy to address it: Any display of gang affiliation was an automatic three-day suspension. And at first I supported this policy.... But then, I watched one gang member after another drop out. And I realized that our policy had an unintended consequence.... If these students, or these children, had ever had any doubt in their mind about where they belonged, we were sending them a message loud and clear: The schools didn't want them; the gangs did. We wanted to send a different message, one that said we don't agree with your behavior, but we care about you and we want to help you change.

- Jean Klasovsky, Educator, Chicago Public Schools (2013)

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# Introduction

This guide is designed to help school leaders and educators use restorative approaches to build relationships and address conflict. These practices help facilitate community building and address infractions, enabling students to take responsibility for their actions and repair harm when possible.

- **Part 1: What is Restorative Practices** provides a description of restorative practices and basic information about specific practices and key processes.
- **Part 2: A Framework to Guide Practice** gives initial guidance for school leaders to explore and promote restorative practices.
- **Part 3: Managing School-wide Adoption of Practices** helps school leaders manage the school-wide adoption of restorative practices.
- **Part 4: Resources & Tools** shares resources and tools to assist with early implementation of restorative practices. There are links included with many of the works cited in the reference section.

CEE compiled additional resources from several organizations and school districts at the forefront of using restorative practices in schools. The contributing organizations include the Oakland and San Francisco Unified School Districts in California, Restorative Justice 4 Schools Ltd (UK), the Center for Restorative Process, and Public Counsel Law Center's publication, *Fix School Discipline*. These resources are provided under the resources section at the end of this guide.

The authors made conscious decisions about language throughout this guide in order to reflect the collaborative nature of restorative practices. We use the term "school leaders" instead of "administrators" because leadership is not limited to administrator roles. We use "educators," or "staff," instead of "teachers" because many adults working in schools contribute to the education of students. Everyone who works in schools should learn and use restorative practices as conflicts can occur in places outside the classroom such as lunch, recess, or the bus.

Finally, this guide frequently uses the term "we" to reflect MAEC's theory of action to increase educational equity. If we co-create an environment that enables educators and school leaders to develop a common aim and work collaboratively, we can then create optimal teaching and learning conditions.



PART 1:

# What is Restorative Practices?

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# What Is Restorative Practices?

Restorative Practices is an approach that aims to build relationships within a community as well as prevent and respond to conflict and wrongdoing. Responding to wrongdoing emphasizes bringing everyone affected by a conflict to discuss the event, how it affected those involved, and steps to restore a positive relationship. Restorative Practices, whether proactive or reactive, emphasizes every school member's responsibility to the community. Thus, it is a profoundly relational practice. A restorative practices approach is more than a collection of protocols and activities; it is a mindset and a belief in building and restoring community. As defined by the International Institute for Restorative Practices, "Restorative Practices is an emerging social science that studies how to strengthen relationships between individuals as well as social connections within communities."

Sometimes the terms "restorative practices" and "restorative justice" are used interchangeably. However, Fronius et al. (2019), describe restorative justice as "a broad term that encompasses a growing social movement to institutionalize non-punitive, relationship-centered approaches for avoiding and addressing harm, responding to violations of legal and human rights, and collaboratively solving problems" (p.1). Wachtel (2016), of the International Institute of Restorative Practices, makes the distinction that "restorative justice [is] a subset of restorative practices. Restorative justice is reactive, consisting of formal or informal responses to crime and other wrongdoing after it occurs. [R]estorative practices also include the use of informal and formal processes that precede wrongdoing, those that proactively build relationships and a sense of community to prevent conflict and wrongdoing" (p.1). This guide will use "restorative practices" unless a tool or source uses the term "restorative justice."



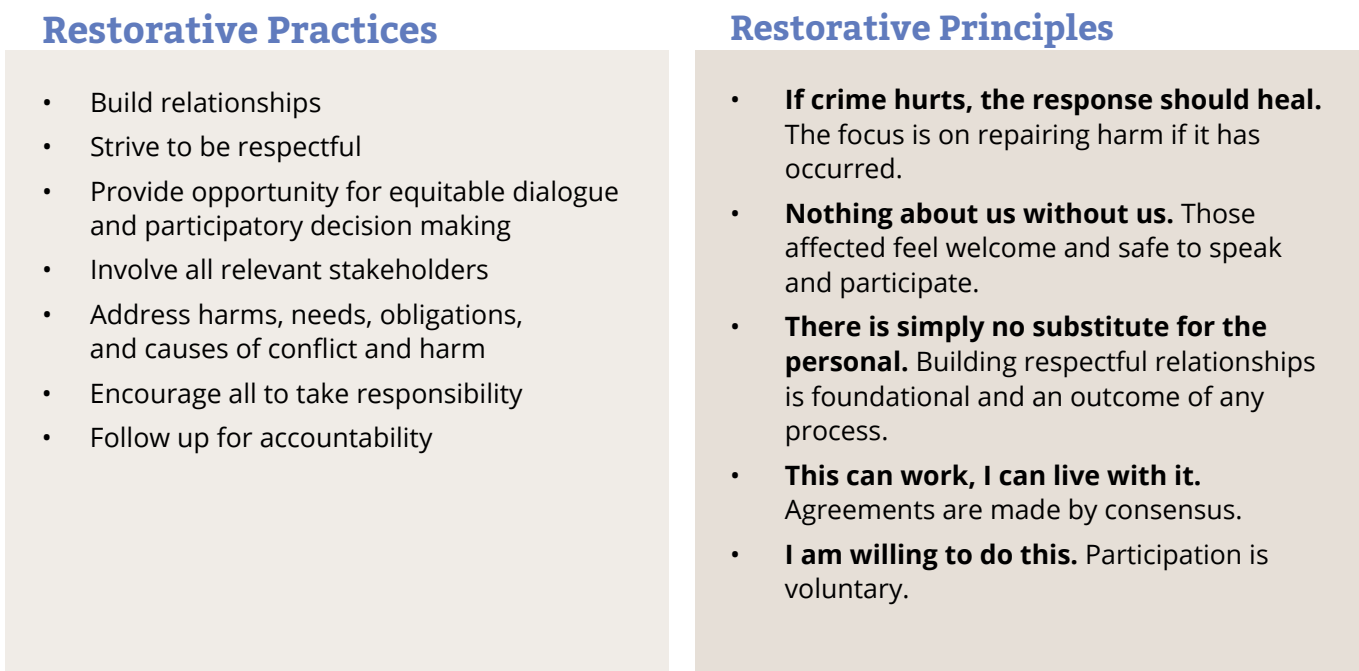
There is also a varied treatment of whether “practice” is singular or plural. For consistency, this guide refers to restorative practices or a restorative practices approach, except in titles or quotes that use the singular form.

The central idea behind restorative practices is to repair students and communities harmed by damaging behaviors. A restorative practices approach involves:

1. Respecting the opinions and experiences of all individuals involved and affected by a harmful behavior.
2. Taking responsibility for individual actions and how they harmed others.
3. Accepting obligations to others in the community and working collaboratively to identify and follow through on solutions.
4. Re-integrating the person harmed and the person who caused harm into the community using structured and supportive processes to ensure behaviors are not repeated.
5. Valuing inclusion, honesty, empathy, responsibility, and accountability, which are at the core of the restorative process.

Identifying the relationship between restorative practices and restorative principles, as shown in Figure 1 below, is a way to understand the foundational principles upon which the restorative practices are based.

Figure 1: Restorative Practices and Restorative Principles



Source: Adapted from Restorative Justice Implementation Guide: A Whole School Approach (Berkowitz, n.d.)

A restorative practices approach can apply in many contexts, including schools, families, workplaces, the justice system, and global conflict. School-based restorative practices offer an equitable, inclusive, and respectful alternative for addressing disciplinary infractions as compared with traditional school approaches. A restorative practices approach is more than managing misbehavior. It also offers a proactive strategy to create a connected, responsible school community where all members feel valued and can thrive.



## The Rationale for Restorative Practices in Schools

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### The School-to-Prison Pipeline

The school-to-prison pipeline metaphor describes school policies and procedures that place students on a pathway from the classroom to the criminal justice system. This pipeline is perpetuated through millions of student suspensions each year.

High rates of suspensions and expulsions are often the result of zero-tolerance policies, which require school officials to apply specific, consistent, and harsh punishment when students break certain rules, regardless of the seriousness of the behavior, mitigating circumstances, or situational context. According to U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights (2014), nationwide, as many as 95% of out-of-school suspensions are for nonviolent misbehaviors, such as tardiness, using bad language, or dress code violations.

And while the reasons for most suspensions are minor misbehaviors, not for violent behavior, the ramifications are often life-changing (Losen & Martinez, 2013).

As early as 2006, the American Psychological Association (APA) Zero Tolerance Task Force concluded that zero-tolerance policies fail to make schools safer. In fact, the APA found that schools with higher rates of school suspension and expulsion appear to have less satisfactory ratings of school climate, less satisfactory school governance structures, and spend a disproportionate amount of time on disciplinary matters. More importantly, the research found a negative relationship between the use of school suspension and expulsion and school-wide academic achievement, even when controlling for demographics such as socioeconomic status.

Zero-tolerance policies have led to larger numbers of youth being "pushed out" (suspended or expelled) with no evidence of a positive impact on school safety (Losen, 2014). These approaches do not deal with the root causes of misbehavior or

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"Overall, the evidence shows the following: there is no research base to support frequent suspension or expulsion in response to non-violent and mundane forms of adolescent misbehavior; large disparities by race, gender and disability status are evident in the use of these punishments; frequent suspension and expulsion are associated with negative outcomes; and better alternatives are available."

- Daniel Losen (2011)

violence and they compromise learning time, school connectedness, and meaningful opportunities for growth. Also, zero-tolerance approaches tend to hurt educator-student relationships.

For a student who is suspended even once in ninth grade, the likelihood of dropping out of school doubles, from 16% to 32% (Balfanz, 2013). Schools with large numbers of suspensions reap no gains in achievement, but they have higher dropout rates and an increased risk that their students will become involved in the juvenile justice system (Balfanz, 2013; Fabelo, 2011; Schollenberger, 2013 cited by Losen & Martinez, 2013). Data shows a link between poor education and incarceration as dropouts are 3.5 times more likely to be arrested than high school graduates. Nationally, 68% of all males in prison do not have a high school diploma (Stipek, 2014).

Specific student subgroups are suspended more frequently. According to the U.S. Department of Education's 2014 Civil Rights Data Collection, students with disabilities are more than twice as likely to receive one or more out-of-school suspensions than students without disabilities. And, students who are Black are 3.8 times more likely to receive one or more out-of-school suspensions than students who are White.

The U.S. Government Accounting Office (2019) wrote that the disparities in discipline for students who are Black, students who are boys, and students with disabilities occur regardless of the type of disciplinary action, level of school poverty, or type of public school attended.

Responses to student infractions that involve law enforcement also vary based on subpopulations of students. Students who are Black are twice as likely to receive a referral to law enforcement or be subject to a school-related arrest than students who are White (U.S. Department of Education, 2014). Additionally, a national longitudinal study found that "students who are LGBTQIA+ are at increased risk for expulsion, for encountering a hostile school climate, and for being stopped by the police and arrested" (Himmelstein & Brückner, 2011). Juvenile incarceration lowers high-school graduation rates by 13% and increases adult incarceration by 23% (Aizer & Doyle, 2015).

Bullis and Yovanoff (2005) found that about 30% of a sample of incarcerated youth in Oregon's juvenile justice system suffered from an emotional disturbance. Sometimes, they were arrested for the very behaviors that stem from their special needs.

# A Better Alternative

Some schools and districts have adopted restorative practices as a relational, community-based approach to addressing school discipline and school climate needs. A restorative practices approach requires a focus on acknowledging that a disagreement, dispute, or conflict has caused harm, asking how the harm can be repaired, and determining how people’s needs can be addressed so that relationships and community can be repaired and restored. This is a significant shift from asking what rules have been broken, who broke the rules, and how will we punish those who broke the rules. This shift in orientation is represented in Figure 2.

**Figure 2: Discipline Shifts from Traditional to Restorative Approach**

Traditional Approach	Restorative Approach
School rules violated	People and relationships violated
Focused on establishing blame or guilt	Focused on identifying needs and obligations
Accountability = punishment	Accountability = understanding impact and repairing harm
The person who caused the harm has central role; person harmed ignored	The person who caused the harm, person harmed, and school community all have direct roles
Rules and intent outweigh whether the outcome is positive/negative	The person who caused the harm is responsible for harmful behavior, repairing harm, and working toward positive outcomes
No opportunity given for remorse or amends	Opportunity given for amends and expression of remorse

Source: Adapted from Fix School Discipline Toolkit for Educators (n.d.) and Restorative Practices Whole School Implementation Guide (Public Council, n.d.)

Some people may mischaracterize restorative practices as a soft response to student misbehavior. However, schools that have achieved successful outcomes through restorative practices note that it is truly challenging for students to sit with the person they harmed. This face-to-face contact requires the misbehaving student to acknowledge that they harmed another person, accept responsibility for that harm, and be held accountable for repairing it. This process also emphasizes being responsible for positive relationships in the community is central to resolving conflict and setting things right.





## Preliminary Results on the Implementation of a Restorative Practices Approach

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By 2014, California's Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) implemented restorative justice in nearly half its schools. Results show substantial growth in the number of schools and staff implementing restorative justice. As a result, schools report a lower number of suspensions, particularly for students who are Black; closed discipline gap; and improved academic outcomes (reading levels, dropout rates, graduation rates) as compared to schools that did not implement restorative practices (Jain, Bassey, Brown, & Kalra, 2014).

Excerpts from Yusem et.al. (2014) *Restorative Justice in Oakland Public Schools Implementation and Impacts* include the following:

### Reduced referrals for disruptive behaviors

- More than 88% of the educators reported that restorative practices was very or somewhat helpful in managing difficult student behaviors in classroom.
- More than 47% reported that restorative justice helped reduce office referrals, and 53% said it helped reduce disciplinary referrals for African American students.

### Repaired harm/conflict

- Over 63% of staff surveyed believed that restorative justice has improved the way students resolved conflicts with adults and with other students.
- Almost 76% of the students in harm circles successfully repaired harm/resolved conflict.



### **Improved academic outcomes**

- The most significant change in chronic absenteeism is found in middle schools with a restorative justice program. Absenteeism rates dropped by 24%, compared to a staggering increase of 62.3% in non-restorative justice middle schools.
- 9th grade reading levels, as measured by SRI (Scholastic Reading Inventory), doubled in restorative justice high schools from an average of 14% to 33%, an increase of 128%, as compared to 11% in non-restorative justice high schools.
- From 2010-2013, restorative justice high schools experienced a 56% decline in high school dropout rates in comparison to 17% for non-restorative justice high schools.

### **Improved school climate/community**

- Restorative practices has positively influenced students to build caring relationships with adults and other peers.
- Almost 70% of staff reported that restorative practices is helping to improve school climate at their school.

### **Built developmental student assets**

- Students in restorative justice circles report enhanced ability to understand peers, manage emotions, have greater empathy, resolve conflict with parents, improve home environment, and maintain positive relationships with peers. They are learning life skills, and sustainable conflict management skills.

### **Reduced suspensions and discipline gap**

- Over 60% of the staff reported that implementation of restorative practices helped reduce suspensions at the school.
- Suspensions have declined significantly in OUSD in the past three years. The most significant decline has been for African American students suspended for disruption/willful defiance, down from 1,050 to 630, a decrease of 40% or 420 fewer suspensions in only one year.

Research by Gonzalez (2012) indicated that most of the reports reviewed described the restorative justice program or model as successful whether implemented in public, private, or alternative schools, urban or suburban environments, or in one school or every school in the district. Regardless of program type or name, these reports suggest that for the restorative justice program to be effective, it should be embedded within the school culture. Some reports reviewed by Gonzales indicated that restorative justice has led to increased student connectedness, greater community and parent engagement, improved student academic achievement, and more support to students from staff. The data suggest that effective implementation of restorative practices can have multiple benefits for students.

## Other Research that Questions the Results of Restorative Practices

Although restorative practices and restorative justice have gained popularity, some researchers raise concerns about the lack of research on outcomes and that studies focus on single-school or district evaluations and not randomized, controlled trials. Song and Swearer (2016) point out that most restorative justice programs do not include on-site consultation by local educators, affecting the likelihood of implementation and sustainability of any new intervention (Song and Swearer, 2016; Foreman, 2015).

According to a literature review by Fronius et al. (2019), some challenges to the implementation of restorative justice in schools include:

- Confusion about what restorative justice is.
- Lack of consensus about the best way to implement it.
- Staff time and buy-in required.
- Training and resources needed.
- Educators performing duties outside their typical job description, including conducting circles during instructional time and more time talking individually with students.
- Perception that restorative justice is “soft on student offenses.”
- Deep shift to a restorative climate which could take three to five years. (Evans & Lester, 2013)
- Producing resources needed to sustain the initiative for three to five years.

A RAND study examined schools in the Pittsburgh Public Schools that implemented restorative practices for two school years (2015–2016 and 2016–2017) under the International Institute for Restorative Practices. This study represents one of the first randomized controlled trials of the impacts of restorative practices on classroom and school climate and suspension rates (Augustine et al., 2018). The report’s key findings are:

- Restorative practices—inclusive and non-punitive ways to respond to conflict and build community—successfully reduced student suspension in the Pittsburgh Public Schools district.
- Restorative practices reduced suspension rates of elementary grade students, African American students, students from low-income families, and female students, more than for students not in these groups.
- Restorative practices did not improve academic outcomes, nor did they reduce suspensions for middle school students or suspensions for violent offenses.
- Other school districts can learn important lessons on training, practice, support, and data collections from Pittsburgh when adopting a restorative practices program.

When districts and schools consider adopting a restorative practices approach, they need to be mindful of the questions and concerns raised and the initial single-school or district evaluations.



## **Telling the Story of Restorative Practices in Schools through Video**

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There are sixteen videos in the Resources & Tools section that may be useful to make the case for restorative practices to educators, school leaders, parents/guardians, and the community. They may help people understand restorative practices: why it is useful, and how it can affect students and schools.

The first five videos listed in Resources & Tools feature practitioners talking about the need for restorative practices and the results it achieved in their schools after implementation. There are guiding questions for these five videos that can assist educators and/or parents/guardians. There are eleven additional videos in the Resources & Tools section that feature students of various ages and in different contexts. All of the videos are useful for professional learning for staff and awareness for parents/guardians and students.



PART 2:

# **A Framework to Guide Practice**

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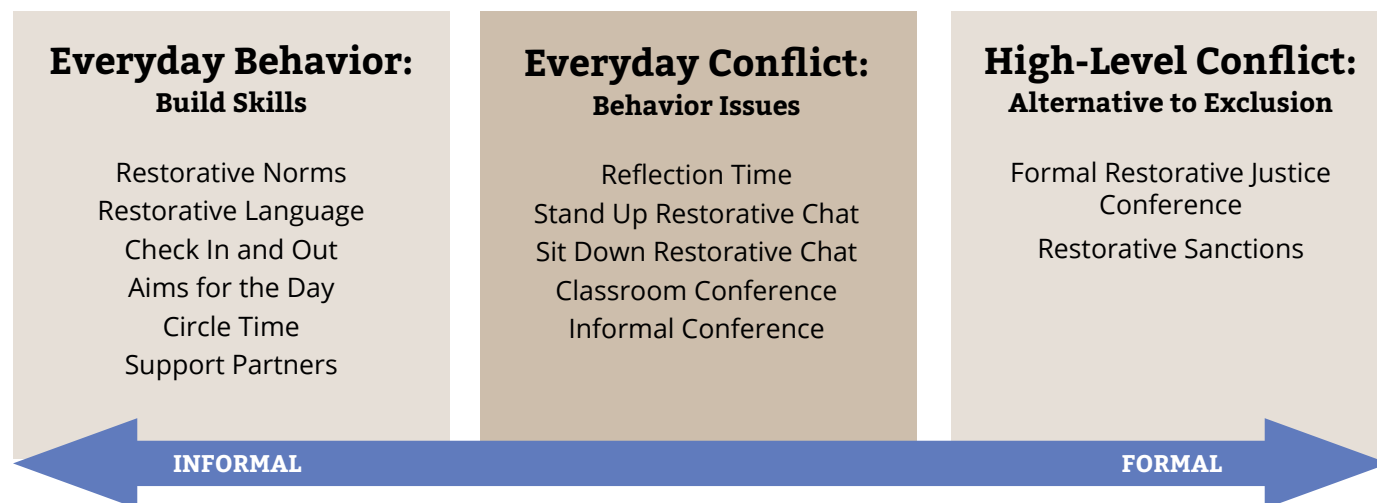


# A Framework to Guide Practice

A restorative practices approach provides a framework that organizes a range of activities into a coherent approach for classroom and school supports.

As shown in Figure 3, restorative practices runs along a continuum that ranges from informal actions to build community, social, and communication skills and resolve everyday conflict to formal practices that resolve high-end conflict that serves as an alternative to expulsion and other formal sanctions. (Restorative Justice 4 Schools Ltd., 2016). It is often the skills learned at the most informal level that allow students to engage positively with the formal restorative practices when harm has occurred.

**Figure 3: A Framework of Restorative Practices**



Source: Adapted from Restorative Justice 4 Schools Ltd. Implementation Pack (2012)

Promising practices and evidence-based programs or initiatives can fit within the overall restorative practices framework. For example, Positive Behavior Intervention and Support (PBIS), Responsive Classroom, Second Step, and other programs can be used together to strengthen a school's culture and provide a complementary set of tools to shift practice toward a more inclusive and positive approach to student behavior. Figure 4 shows a sample structure of responses that illustrates how different programs fit together.

**Figure 4: Sample Structure of Responses**

	Social Emotional Learning (SEL)	Mental Health	Positive Behavioral Intervention and Support (PBIS)	Restorative Justice	Implicit Bias
<b>Tier 3 Intensive</b>	Individual social skills instruction	Crisis counseling  Individual support teams/ plans	Wraparound services  Individual planning	Family group counseling  Community conferencing	Intensive intervention planning for staff members, including counseling and peer/ principal scaffolding
<b>Tier 2 Selective</b>	Targeted social skills instruction	Group counseling support groups  Coordinated referral process / process monitoring	Check-in/ check-out  Social/ academic instructional groups	Peer jury conferencing  Problem- solving circles	Individual action planning  Regular professional development
<b>Tier 1 Universal</b>	SEL curriculum  School climate assessment	Mental health screening  Prevention/ wellness promotion	School-wide behavioral expectations  Positive behaviors acknowledge- ment  Data planning	Circles  Restorative chats  Data-based planning	Whole staff training on eliminating implicit racial (and other) bias  Data-based planning

Source: Fix School Discipline Educator Toolkit (Public Council, n.d.)

# Key Restorative Practices and Processes

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There are several types of restorative practices commonly found in schools. The following list, modified from *Restorative Practices: Fostering Healthy Relationships & Promoting Positive Discipline in Schools* (2014), is arranged from simple practices that require little training to implement to intensive practices that require specific expertise because of the sensitive or complex nature of students' disciplinary events. Later in this guide, we provide more details and examples of these practices. The Resources & Tools section provides videos that show circles, restorative chats, restorative conferences, and peer mediation.

## Informal Restorative Practices

Small ways educators and other school personnel can influence a positive environment. Examples include the use of affective statements, which communicate people's feelings, and affective questions, which cause people to reflect on how their behavior has affected others; proactive engagement with students and families; mentor relationships; community service; and lunch table talks.

## Circles

Can be used proactively to develop relationships and build community, or reactively to respond to wrongdoing, conflicts, and problems. Circles can be used as a tool to teach social skills such as listening, respect, and problem-solving. They provide an opportunity to speak and listen to one another in a safe atmosphere and allow everyone to be heard and offer their perspectives. Circles can be used to celebrate students, begin and end the day, and discuss difficult issues.

## Restorative Chats

Used to resolve conflicts informally and quickly before they escalate. The aim of a chat is to take those involved in a conflict aside and identify a restorative solution where everyone feels heard, treated fairly, and able to move on. By the end of the chat, everyone has a clear idea of what is needed from their future actions.

## Restorative Conferences

Evidence-based practices used to diffuse conflict and reduce suspensions, expulsions, and disciplinary referrals. Conferences focus on righting a wrong and repairing harm done. The goal is to place value on relationships and focus on repairing them. The person harmed and the wrongdoer share with one another how they were harmed and how they will work to resolve the issue.

## Community Conferences

Involve the participation of each person affected by the behavior and allow all stakeholders to contribute to the conflict resolution process. This practice provides students, educators, school leaders, family members, and community members with effective ways to prevent and respond to conflict. This expanded form of restorative conferences can be used in school and community settings.

## Peer Mediation

A youth leadership model that trains students to help other students resolve disputes. Students apply their training in restorative problem-solving techniques to keep minor incidents from escalating into more serious conflicts. Peer mediation also gives students a set of skills that can be applied to future conflicts.

## Peer Juries

Also called teen, youth, or peer court, peer juries allow a student who has broken a school rule (the referred student) and trained student jurors to collectively discuss why the rule was broken, who was affected, and how the referred student can repair the harm. Cases center on low-level school misconduct, ranging from cell phone use and tardiness to more potentially serious behaviors such as gambling and fighting. Together, jurors



offer guidance and support to the referred student and develop an agreement outlining actions needed by the student to repair harm. Referred students also may be connected with community resources to address root causes of their behavior and identify positive solutions. Jurors should be representative of the student body. In fact, many students referred to a peer jury later become jurors themselves. By engaging students in leading the development, planning, and implementation of the program, peer juries place youth in a central role to address student behavior. Peer juries are overseen by an adult coordinator in the school. An example of a justice committee, slightly different than a peer jury, can be seen in Video #16, listed in the Resources.

## Processes of Restorative Practices

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The restorative process at both classroom and school levels frequently centers on using restorative circles and conferencing activities. These methods are specifically designed to develop social/emotional learning and communication skills and to build community relationships. Facilitated circles, commonly known as a Tier 1 classroom activity, enable students in a class or group to get to know each other, be inclusive, and allow for the development of mutual respect, trust, sharing, and concern. Circles provide participants with opportunities to share their feelings, ideas, and experiences in order to establish relationships and develop social norms on a non-crisis basis. When there is wrongdoing, students are prepared to play an active role in problem-solving to address the wrong and make things right.

Restorative meetings and conferences, designated as Tier 2 and 3 activities, involve students who acknowledge causing harm meeting with those they harmed. The purpose is to understand each other's perspectives and come to a mutual agreement that will repair the harm as much as possible. Often, all sides bring supporters, who have usually been affected and have something to say from a personal perspective. The person who caused the harm has opportunities to acknowledge, explain, apologize for, reflect upon, and change their behavior, thereby reducing the likelihood that the harmful behavior will occur again. In addition, people harmed by the behaviors have the opportunity to ask questions, have their say, be included in deciding how the experience will be rectified, and take back control of their situation, thereby reducing their feelings of anxiety, stress, and isolation.

The best way to determine how to restore justice when harm has occurred is to invite all involved parties to encounter others' perspectives and emotions, cooperatively negotiate a resolution that makes amends for the harm caused, and place supports and accountabilities to reintegrate those involved to their communities without stigma and re-occurrence of the behavior.

The Center for Justice and Reconciliation (n.d.), describes key aspects of restorative meetings and conferences:

- Including all stakeholders
- Encountering the other side
- Making amends and taking steps to repair the harm
- Changing behavior and reintegrating to the community

For a detailed description of these aspects, see <http://restorativejustice.org/restorative-justice/about-restorative-justice/tutorial-intro-to-restorative-justice/lesson-1-what-is-restorative-justice/encounter/#sthash.XuNmEq9S.dpbs>, which was abstracted from Van Ness & Heetderks Strong. 2003.

In the next section, we explain the role of school leaders, educators, students, parents/guardians, and community members in the implementation of a restorative practices approach. We outline ten ways to begin or strengthen a restorative practices approach, the research that supports those ideas, and six steps that school leaders can take to introduce and guide this practice.



## **Exploring, Planning, and Implementing Restorative Practices: Involve All Members of the School Community**

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### **10 Ways to Begin or Strengthen a Restorative Practices Approach**

The idea of bringing or developing a restorative practices approach for a school or district may begin with different members of a school community. School leaders, educators, students, parents/guardians, and/or community members might ask how to improve or enhance the school climate so that it is a safe place for all people, or how to make sure all members of the school community are treated equitably and with respect. They may want to think together about how to promote greater academic achievement, or how to help students learn social-emotional skills that will serve them throughout their entire lives.

The following recommendations, compiled from *Restorative Practices: Fostering Healthy Relationships & Promoting Positive Discipline in Schools* (The Advancement Project, 2014) and *Restorative Justice in Oakland Schools: Implementation and Impacts* (Jain et al., 2014), offer guidance to school leaders, educators, staff, students, parents/guardians, and community members interested in a restorative practices approach. The

purpose is to explain how to achieve a greater school-wide impact of restorative practices on students and the school community. Some of the actions may be the domain of district or school leaders, such as allocating funding, while others will require input from many different people.

1. **Establish a team** of students, parents/guardians, educators, and community members who can assess the school or district's current approach to school climate, discipline, and restorative practices.
2. **Seek input** from a range of community stakeholders, including parents/guardians and students, both in the development and implementation of restorative practices. For example, give a presentation at a school board meeting or convene an evening workshop for educators and parents/guardians.
3. **Allocate funding** for restorative practices at the school and district level. Although costs vary for each school, implementation is easier when school districts, as well as county and state agencies, devote financial resources and personnel to implement and maintain restorative practices at school sites. Districts could partner with community-based organizations that may provide training at little or no cost. Districts could try using Title I funding in addition to reallocating existing resources to implement restorative practices.
4. **Dedicate time** within the school day, like an advisory period, for all in the school community to practice restorative techniques. Adopting restorative practices is an intentional process that takes time.
5. **Build a greater infrastructure** at the district and school levels:
  - Develop more structures, protocols, and documentation of best practices.
  - Convey and monitor use of formally updated, clear discipline policies and protocols.
  - Develop school-level implementation plans that include communication and information sharing procedures, roles and responsibilities, and greater educator buy-in and ownership of restorative practices.
  - Assure funding to ensure sustainability of restorative practices.
6. **Invest in training and coaching** for all involved. In *Fix School Discipline: Toolkit for Educators*, three tiers of training are outlined.
  - **Tier 1** training involves everyone in the school – educators, school security officers, support staff, school leaders – in the use of community building circles and proactive restorative strategies.
  - **Tier 2** involves training to facilitate conflict circles to repair harm. Use of conflict circles operates as an alternative to suspension. Some districts, particularly if they are very large, create a position of restorative practices facilitator or coordinator to start the implementation of restorative practices. Many districts are unable to dedicate a position to the initiative, as important as it is. Instead, they begin by training counselors or other staff to do restorative circles. Then, toward the end of the initial phase of implementation, others, such as assistant principals and additional teachers, can conduct these restorative response circles, following proper training and coaching. Trained and supported student/peer leaders may facilitate circles.
  - **Tier 3** training is specific to facilitating circles for youth who have been suspended, incarcerated, or are not feeling welcome at school. These re-entry or reintegration conferences may incorporate parents/guardians, educators, school leaders, probation officers, and case managers, as well as the student re-entering the school setting and their peers.
7. **Leverage Existing capacity** by empowering a core team of expert staff/students to train the trainers. Continue to ensure that staff members are trained on pragmatic aspects of implementation and that they possess the skills and ability to track and use data, manage difficult and diverse situations, and incorporate other system level processes.

8. **Invest in involving more parents/guardians** by familiarizing them, possibly at a Back to School Night or PTA meetings, with the restorative practices at the school and encouraging their participation and support for the program. Hold informational meetings in community centers, houses of worship, and other meeting places to increase community support for the students, school, and the program overall.
9. **Capitalize on the enormous potential of students** to help establish the program. Their capacity for restorative justice shows how much they want to create a school, system, and a community that is better than what they are currently experiencing. Invest in youth; continue to train them as leaders; systematically allow their voices to be heard so that they may influence policy and programmatic decisions.
10. **Connect with other districts and schools** that use restorative practices; seek resources, school visits, staff consultations, sample policies and guidance documents, and advice.

The recommendations above are supported by the findings of Fronius et al., 2019, in their review of the literature through 2018 and interviews with experts and key practitioners. They caution that, “It is grounded in contextual findings from real-world implementation and is not backed by rigorous scientific evidence (such as randomized controlled trials) that would support claims regarding which steps are helpful or essential for realizing the aims of RJ” (p.12).

Fronius et al. elaborate below on key aspects of planning and implementation, with some suggestions gleaned from the research.

### **Funding**

Time and resources are necessary in order to establish restorative justice programs in a school or district. (Guckenburger et al., 2016). It is possible to generate the funds needed to support this effort through successfully pursuing grant opportunities or through reallocation of existing funds within the district, such as Title I funding, to ramp up efforts to hire a full-time coordinator, leverage existing community partnerships, or pool resources between communities to fund training for staff. (Kidde & Alfred, 2011).

### **Culture, Community Building, and Staff Training**

Recent research has focused on assessing “Restorative Justice Readiness,” or “the measure of beliefs aligned with foundational RJ principles and values” concerning responding to harm, addressing needs, meeting obligations, and ensuring engagement. Perceptions that schools consistently and fairly enforced school rules statistically significantly predicted higher levels of RJ readiness (Greer, 2018, p.iii). According to some qualitative research, a trusting community is a necessary pre-condition for restorative justice to thrive. Changing school culture is a complicated process that is often possible if there is a trust among members of the school community (Brown, 2017).

### **Professional Learning**

Educators and school leaders need strong professional development programs to understand specific restorative techniques and why the shift from traditional punishment approaches to RJ approaches is important (Mayworm, Sharkey, Welsh, & Scheidel, 2016; Rubio, 2018). In their study of the first three years of restorative justice implementation in several Rhode Island schools, Liberman and Katz (2017, p.13) noted that practitioners felt that a three-week training was “effective in teaching the philosophy of restorative practices and implementing key restorative practice tools.” They also emphasized that practitioner Restorative Justice training should include ongoing work with skilled facilitators, such as one-on-one coaching, on-the-ground learning through shadowing, and learning through feedback after leading conferences. They extolled the virtues of using facilitators to run programs and indicated that effective facilitators built trust and communication by coming to the schools more frequently (four to five days a week). Fronius et al. (2019, p.13) noted that the impact of this type of professional development has not, to their knowledge, been the subject of research.



## **Integration of Programs**

Restorative justice programs need to be integrated across the school and district rather than be an add-on program (Morrison & Vaandering, 2012). Such integration is often described as “Whole School Restorative Justice,” and research in Oakland has suggested that integration throughout the school is substantially more effective, across a range of outcomes, than more limited, reaction-based restorative justice practices (Jain, Bassey, Brown, & Kalra, 2014).

## **Integration with Formal Policy and Procedures**

A district’s ability to integrate the Restorative Justice approach into its formal policy and procedures is critical to long term sustainability (The Advancement Project, 2014). From this perspective, a school or district should ensure that decisions about discipline and the policymaking process consider multiple stakeholders (educators, school leaders, students, parents, and community members) to ensure buy-in from all drivers of change (Kidde & Alfred, 2011). When implementing other school programs, educators and school leaders need to be supportive of restorative justice for it to be successfully sustained (Kidde & Alfred, 2011). Because parental permission is often required to engage in restorative practices, Liberman and Katz (2017) suggest “that to successfully engage with parents, it is important to have quick and digestible materials about the restorative approach and conferences and to clarify the differences between the restorative and traditional discipline approaches” (p.20).

## **School Leadership Buy-In**

According to analysis of restorative practices implementation by Liberman and Katz (2017), school leadership demonstrating buy-in is critical to the sustainability and effectiveness of implementation. Examples described by Liberman and Katz include “school principals and deans discussing conference referrals, sitting in on conferences, meeting regularly with facilitators and behavioral staff, and emphasizing the use of restorative practices through trainings and communication with staff,” (p.14-15) And, because school schedules are mostly inflexible to change, it is critical for leadership to support “carving out the time necessary for adequate training” (p.15).

# The Concerns-Based Adoption Model

Before introducing restorative practices, we need to understand the stages people undergo when engaging in a change process. Hord, Huling, and Hall developed the Concerns-Based Adoption Model (1987), which proposes that for any new initiative to be implemented effectively, such as restorative practices, the change process must address the evolving concerns of the people charged with implementing it. The Concerns-Based Adoption Model (Figure 5) describes seven stages that people move through when implementing new practices or innovations. Those who are in the initial stages of a change process will likely have more self-focused concerns, such as worries about what restorative practices means, how it will affect them personally, whether they can learn new approaches to foster classroom community and address student discipline, or how it will affect their ability to teach or lead effectively in the school. As individuals become more comfortable and skilled using restorative practices, their concerns will shift to focus on the impact of the new practices, such as how these new practices will affect students, school climate, or their relationships with colleagues and families.

Figure 5: Stages of Concern in Concerns-Based Adoption Model

Stage Of Concern	Typical Statement
6: Refocusing	"I have some ideas about something that would work even better."
5: Collaboration	"I'm looking forward to sharing some ideas about it with other teachers."
4: Consequence	"How will this new approach affect my students?"
3: Management	"I'm concerned about how much time it takes to get ready to teach with this new approach."
2: Personal	"I'm concerned about the changes I'll need to make in my routines."
1: Informational	"This seems interesting, and I would like to know more about it."
0: Unconcerned	"I think I heard something about it, but I'm too busy right now with other priorities to be concerned about it."

Source: Hall, G. E., & Hord, S. M. (2015).

As school leaders implement restorative practices in their schools, they can increase their effectiveness by being aware of their own and others' stages of concern, targeting actions to respond to these concerns, and adjusting supports as individuals move into new stages. The Concerns-Based Adoption Model proposes that when individuals' concerns are addressed, they will be able to move to new levels and deepen their implementation of a new initiative or change. For a concise description of actions to support change using the Concerns-Based Adoption Model, see [https://www.sedl.org/cbam/actions\\_to\\_support\\_change.html](https://www.sedl.org/cbam/actions_to_support_change.html).

## Six Actions for School Leaders: Administrators and Teacher Leaders

School leaders must be the model learners and make the first shifts in practice to introduce restorative practices to their schools. This begins with building awareness of the need for restorative practices and modeling some of the values inherent to this approach. Subsequently, school leaders can begin to facilitate and support other shifts in practice by working with staff and students to revise the school's disciplinary policy. School leaders and staff can support other shifts by reallocating school resources, supporting educators' and students' understanding and implementation of classroom-based and school-wide restorative practices, and engaging parents/guardians in using restorative language, questions, and conferences in the family context.

### Action #1: Assess the Need for Restorative Practice at Your School

School leaders can begin by assessing their need for restorative practices. Schools collect a lot of data. Deciding what to look at first can be done with a school leadership team or data inquiry team. (See MAEC's *A Data Inquiry Guide for Exploring Equity Issues and Solutions*).

1. Collect and analyze relevant baseline school climate and discipline data. Consider quantitative data on:
  - Physical altercations; detention, suspension, and expulsion rates; and the types of incidents that provoked events
  - Attendance, truancy records
  - School completion/graduation/dropout rates
  - Disparities in these data in student subgroups, including race, gender, and receipt of special education services
  - Standardized test scores
  - School climate survey data from students, staff, and parents/guardians
2. Examine qualitative interviews or survey data from students, school leaders, staff, and parents/guardians regarding how they feel about their school:
  - Do they feel a sense of safety?
  - Are they concerned that discipline is administered unfairly?
  - Are some students missing significant instruction due to out of school suspensions?
  - Do they experience a sense of belonging in the school community?
  - Are relationships positive among students and between students and adults?
  - Are relationships positive among the leadership, school staff, parents/guardians, and community?
  - Have each of these indicators improved (or declined) over time?
3. Create a graphic representation or data display (i.e., charts, graphs, illustrations) to convey the critical story revealed in the data to other school leaders and staff (see Action #2).
4. Determine with the school leadership team and staff which data you will address first.

## **Action #2: Build Awareness of the Need for Restorative Practices and Provide Introductory Professional Learning**

School leaders need to build staff and community awareness of the need for restorative practices in their schools and use new practices themselves.

1. Foster awareness of how all have been affected by behavior and encourage expression of feelings.
2. Identify compelling stories about the school community.
3. Create clear and concise graphic representations and data displays to convey why the school needs restorative practices.
4. Engage staff in responding to the data displays and sharing what they notice.
5. Facilitate, or co-facilitate, professional development sessions for school leadership teams or the entire staff. In particular, incorporate any of the online resources or fully detailed Professional Learning Activities included in Resources & Tools.

Videos to help build awareness, found in Resources & Tools, include.

- Second Chances: School Profiles
- Repairing Our Schools Through Restorative Justice
- School Suspensions Are an Adult Behavior
- Colorado High School Replaces Punishment with “Talking Circles”
- The Transformation of West Philadelphia High School: A Story of Hope

### Action #3: Model Restorative Language

School leaders need to model restorative language for staff and students, especially when they are talking about situations that are disruptive or harmful:

1. Accept ambiguity; fault and responsibility may be unclear.
2. Separate the deed from the doer, recognize students' worth and disapprove of their wrongdoing.
3. See every instance of wrongdoing and conflict as an opportunity for learning. Turn negative incidents into constructive ones by building empathy and a sense of community.
4. Use restorative dialogue questions (p. 28) when discussing student discipline problems with educators and students.
5. Post the restorative dialogue questions in the Student Code of Conduct, faculty room, and/or school office.
6. Demonstrate how to use the following qualities of restorative language in teacher/staff and student interactions:
  - Open questions: Ask open-ended questions that require an elaborated answer rather than a simple yes or no response.
  - Fairness: Ask both parties the same questions, giving everyone involved the opportunity to speak (i.e., what happened? What happened next? What could you have done differently?).
  - Non-judgmental questions: Remember not to prejudge the outcome of any conversation before it occurs.
  - Inquiring Stance: Avoid assuming you know what has happened; seek first to understand the situation.
  - Shared vocabulary: All members of the school community need to develop a fluent vocabulary to be able to participate in emotionally literate, restorative conversations. Vocabulary is developed through shared readings and discussions and is exemplified throughout this guide.
  - Restorative scripts: Sometimes restorative scripts, or protocols, can be useful to ensure that everyone involved in the harm is heard and everything that needs to be done to repair a situation happens. It may be useful to decide with staff when scripts will be most useful or ask staff to devise their own.
  - Use restorative questions when resolving conflict with staff and students:
    - o What happened and what were you thinking at the time of the incident?
    - o What have you thought about since the incident?
    - o Who has been affected by what happened and how?
    - o What about this has been the hardest for you?
    - o What do you think needs to be done to make things as right as possible?
    - o How can we repair and resolve the harm?

Source: Restorative Justice 4 Schools, Ltd., Implementation Pack (2016)



#### **Action #4: Align School Disciplinary Policies with Restorative Principles**

School leaders need to develop a process that includes educators to review and revise disciplinary policies. The new policies would demonstrate a shift away from a traditional approach and toward a restorative approach.

- Incorporate evidence-based non-punitive alternatives to traditional school discipline practices, such as school-wide positive behavior interventions and supports and social emotional skills development.
- Remove subjective offenses like “willful defiance” from the list of disciplinary offenses.
- Ensure that every offense has clear, objective parameters to help mitigate against the negative impact of implicit bias in disciplinary decision making.
- Treat suspension and expulsion as last resorts to help address the disparate impact in school discipline that students of color and students with disabilities face.
- Specifically clarify when suspensions are still in order since the line between Tier 2 and 3 practices and suspensions may blur as the school moves toward restorative commitments.
- Incorporate restorative language and questions into the school’s disciplinary processes.
- As staff and school leaders become trained and familiar with restorative principles and practice, incorporate restorative circles and conferences into the school’s disciplinary policies, specifying whether these practices should occur as Tier 1, 2, or 3 supports.

Source: Fix School Discipline Toolkit for Educators (n.d.)

## Action #5: Begin Your Practice by Facilitating a Restorative Circle or Conference with a Colleague

School leaders will want to prepare for facilitating a restorative circle or conference. They can do this by reading the first major segment of this guide to gain a big picture understanding of common restorative practices and types of circles. Getting additional training would be ideal. Use the following steps to guide your action. You may want to plan together and then one of you leads and the other observes, in preparation for a reflection and debrief afterward.

1. Schedule a one-to-two hour learning session to practice with a colleague who is interested in learning about restorative practices and agrees to co-plan and facilitate a restorative circle or conference with you.
2. View and discuss some or all of the videos in Resources & Tools.
3. Decide what type of restorative process will be most relevant to your current needs and context. We recommend that you choose a relatively low-risk conference for your first attempt. School leaders typically facilitate restorative discipline by using processes such as circles, mediation, or family-group conferencing to respond to conflict that has escalated and caused harm to members of the school community.
4. Plan how you will lead or co-facilitate a restorative circle or conference with a student and their peers or family members. Preview the *Restorative Conference Facilitator Script* from the International Institute for Restorative Practices as one possible guide: <http://www.iirp.edu/eforum-archive/4434-restorative-conference-facilitator-script>
5. Determine who should be part of the restorative conference; consider students, staff, others in the school community, family members, and/or others in the larger community.
6. Decide what tools and/or charts you will prepare in advance and where you will meet. For example:
  - Circle Guidelines (p. 68)
  - Restorative Dialogue Questions (p. 28)
  - Agreement Forms (p. 29-30)
7. Record the steps that you will follow to facilitate the process and the role each of you will play.
8. Determine how and what to communicate to participants before, during, and after the restorative conference.
9. Determine how the final agreement will be recorded, shared with participants, and followed up on to ensure the harm has been resolved.
10. Debrief the experience with your colleague after conducting the restorative conference. Discuss:
  - What went well?
  - What was challenging?
  - What would you do differently the next time?
  - What do you want to improve on or learn more about?
  - When is your next opportunity to facilitate or co-facilitate another restorative circle or conference?

## Action #5 continued:

### *Restorative Dialogue Questions*

This dialogue is for use in restorative conferences or meetings when there is a clear distinction between the person harmed and the person who harmed. Follow this sequence unless the person harmed states they would prefer to respond first.

- 1. To the person who has done the harm:**
  - What happened?
  - Who else was there/around when it happened?
  - What were you thinking at the time?
  - Who has been affected/upset/harmed by your actions?
  - How do you think they have been affected?
- 2. To the person who has been harmed:**
  - What was your reaction at the time of the incident?
  - How do you feel about what happened?
  - What did you think at the time?
  - What have you thought about since?
  - How has it upset/hurt/harmed you?
  - What has been the worst or hardest thing for you?
- 3. To the person who has done the harm:**
  - Is there anything else you want to say?
- 4. To each person who was harmed, including any observers:**
  - What would you like to see happen to repair the harm?
  - Is that okay? Do you agree? Is that fair?
  - Is this realistic and achievable?
  - How can we make sure this doesn't happen again? Is there anything I can do to help?
  - Is there anything else you would like to say?
- 5. Conclusion:**
  - Formally record the agreement.
  - Congratulate the students for working it out.
  - Designate a time(s) and place(s) to follow-up/meet again to see how things are going regarding the agreement
- 6. To each person:**
  - Is there anything else you would like to say?

Source: St. Leonard's College, Melbourne, Australia

## Action #5 continued:

### *Restorative Agreements or Contracts*

**Aim:** Restorative agreements or contracts are an opportunity to consider and agree to a strategy for future positive behavior and relationships. Agreements formalize the act of resolution and responsibility into a written document. They clearly set out the changes that need to take place, how they are going to happen, and who is going to support this process. Restorative agreements are instrumental in creating accountability to ensure that there is no return to conflict. They look at how relationships will be managed in the future in a positive, solution-focused manner. Participants in a restorative conference need to build their own agreement rather than having one imposed on them by the school, parents, or the facilitator. You should review the agreement at the follow-up stage and add to it if necessary.

**Conference Preparation:** Special consideration should be given to the content of the agreement at the preparation stage. We recommend that the facilitator explore with each participant what they could put on the agreement and what they think others may wish the agreement to contain. To prepare the best agreements, use restorative language, i.e. open, non-judgmental questions whose purpose is to engage each participant in considering their needs and the likely needs of others.

**Questions:** It is possible to make this part of the preparation process by asking the participants a series of questions:

1. What do you think could go on the agreement?
2. What else would help?
3. What else could go on the agreement?
4. What do you think (the harmer/harmed person/teacher/parents) might want to have in this agreement?
5. What else might they want to go on the contract?
6. Once participants have exhausted their own initial ideas, it may be useful to ask questions that prompt consideration of circumstances relevant to the conflict:
  - What could you do when ...?
    - o you see each other in the school hallways or common areas?
    - o you see each other in class?
    - o you see each other out in the community?
    - o you are on Facebook, Instagram, or other social media?
  - What could you do if something goes wrong and [peer] breaks the agreement?
  - Who needs to support this agreement in school?

Source: Restorative Justice 4 Schools Ltd Implementation Pack (UK)

**Action #5 continued:**

*Sample Restorative Agreement Form*

Restorative Conference Contract/Agreement	
Incident Date:	Conference Date:
Description of incident:	
Participant 1:	Participant 2:
Participant 3:	Participant 4:
We have agreed to the following: 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7.	
Signed by participants	
Participant 1:	Participant 2:
Participant 3:	Participant 4:
Date(s) for follow-up:	



## Action #6: Immerse the Whole School in Community and Skill Building Activities

School leaders will want to immerse the whole school community in community-building and skill-building activities that focus on relationships and creating shared values. The overall goal is to build a caring, intentional, and equitable community with conditions conducive to learning. Restorative chats and classroom circles can contribute to building community following a behavioral disruption.

### *Knowledge Building*

School leaders who want to teach restorative practices to their staff will use structured opportunities, such as staff meetings, professional development sessions, and/or educators' team meetings. Explain that classroom problem-solving that incorporates restorative practices includes:

1. Developing trusting and caring relationships between and among adults and students.
2. Fostering skills to resolve conflicts, such as listening, empathy, critical thinking, and self-control.
3. Determining what has happened and why by asking questions and listening to the answers.
4. Maximizing student involvement in deciding how to resolve problems.
5. Resolving problems with open-ended questions, exploring different responses, reflecting on motives, and allowing for disagreement.
6. Assisting students in considering ways to make amends for misbehavior, such as replacing, repairing, cleaning, and/or apologizing.
7. Following up to determine whether amends were made and whether the problem was solved or more work needs to be done.
8. Encouraging reflection.
9. Allowing flexibility for different students, needs, and situations.
10. Minimizing the punitive impact when control is necessary to repair the relationship and address underlying issues.

Adapted from: Implementing Restorative Justice: A Guide for Schools (IL)

### *Skill Building*

Classroom-based restorative practices can help students develop emotionally articulate communication skills. These practices include:

1. **Restorative Norms:** Establishing Restorative Norms, or Circle Guidelines (p. 68), helps develop negotiation skills and the ability to verbalize concepts and define needs.
2. **Icebreakers:** Brief warm-up activities help students focus attention, enjoy learning, and practice social skills.
3. **Restorative Check-In and Check-Out:** Brief restorative check-ins help students practice circle skills, turn taking, and listening to others, as well as develop community. Participants can "check-in" to talk about how they are feeling physically, mentally, or emotionally and can "check-out" to discuss how they are feel as the circle ends.
4. **Restorative Chats:** Restorative chats are impromptu conversations that aim to take those involved in conflict to a quick restorative solution before issues escalate. Chats are most effective when a restorative practices approach is an integral part of the school's culture and students' classroom and school experience. Participants, whether student-to-student, staff-to-staff, student-to-staff, or parents/guardians-to-staff, feel heard, treated fairly, able to move on, and have a clear idea of what is needed from their future actions. Chats are effective in developing empathy and building on established restorative practices within the school. They can help resolve issues quickly before they escalate. When having a restorative chat, remember to ask open ended questions using restorative language, use active listening skills, and attend to body language. You may not need to conduct a formal follow-up, but you should check-in with those involved and ask if the solution(s) have been honored by those involved.

5. **Classroom Conferencing:** Classroom conferencing is a flexible yet structured, facilitated meeting that brings together a group of pupils/staff who have been affected by harm to listen to how each person has been affected and decide how to repair the harm caused. It is a highly effective tool to develop and maintain an emotionally literate, self-regulating environment. Conferences can be used to resolve friendship issues, low-level disruptive behavior during lessons, low-level bullying, and may involve larger numbers of participants, up to an entire class or even a grade level. Because of their larger numbers, these circles usually have fewer questions and use a less formal script. Classroom conferencing helps students develop truth-telling skills, responsibility, accountability, and empathy. When planning a classroom conference, it may be useful to consider:
  - Do I need to prepare anyone individually beforehand?
  - Do we need to agree on ground rules at the start?
  - What are we trying to achieve?
  - What questions am I going to use?
  - Where and how will I sit the participants?
  - Where in the circle shall I start the questions?
6. **Restorative Circle Time:** Circles, sometimes also called peacemaking circles, bring people together to talk about issues and resolve conflict. Circles may involve small groups of students or an entire class. A facilitator, often called the “circle keeper,” encourages willing participants to share information, points of view, and personal feelings. The facilitator may use a talking piece, an object that allows the person in possession the opportunity to speak without interruption. Others in the circle are encouraged to remain silent and listen to what is being shared until they receive the talking piece.

By offering safe and open communication opportunities, circles help resolve conflict, strengthen relationships between participants, emphasize respect and understanding, and empower all parties involved. With the permission of school leaders, circle facilitators can also invite family and community members to participate, if there is a particular reason to do so and the facilitator is certain that it wouldn't threaten the feeling of safety in the circle or intimidate any student(s). Circle participants could be asked in advance how they felt about inviting other people to their circle. People joining the circle would need to understand and agree to the circle guidelines and confidentiality.

Respect for what people share and an agreement not to take things shared in a circle outside of the group is how participants create a safe environment for open sharing. Educators and students need to be mindful that respecting the confidentiality of things shared in circles is expected but cannot be enforced. Different age levels present their own challenges regarding students' understanding or willingness to comply with the expectation that things shared in the circle are not to be shared with anyone else, except with a designated adult in a case of something involving safety.

# Videos that Demonstrate Different Types of Restorative Circles

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## Restorative Practices

Peel District School Board (Middle School), Ontario, CA • Viewing time: 7:03

Restorative practices are a part of the Peel District School Board's Climate for Learning and Working framework. Practitioners speak of purposes, benefits, and examples of circles and restoring relationships and there are videos of circles in action in different school settings. It concludes by naming the restorative mindset and the focus on repairing the harm.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3vJTl7Dt60k>

## Restorative Circles: Creating a Safe Environment for Students to Reflect

Pearl-Cohn Nashville, TN. • Viewing time: 3:44

The Zone is a facilitated experience for students in lieu of suspension. It occurs daily, at 7:00-9:00 am.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1-RZYSTJAAo>

## Mesquite ISD Restorative Practices - Large Circle

John Horn High School, Mesquite ISD, TX. • Viewing time: 18:47

An extensive view of GTKY (Get to Know You) during a German class.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mGcy31\\_aPPU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mGcy31_aPPU)

## Restorative Justice in Oakland Schools: Tier One. Community Building Circle

Oakland, CA. Student Co-facilitator, Cassidy Friedman (2012) • Viewing time: 9:31

An example of a student-led circle

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RdKhcQrLD1w>

## *Restorative Circles in Practice*

### Scenario:

During the first month of school, you observed that John's use of profane language and putdowns towards his sixth-grade peers has increased significantly. You notice an increase in inappropriate and hurtful language and a greater number of heated verbal altercations in general among the students in your class.

Source: Adapted from Restorative Practices Application Scenario, San Francisco Unified School District

<https://www.healthiersf.org/RestorativePractices/Resources/documents/Range%20of%20Restorative%20Practices/Restorative%20Practices%20Application%20Scenario.pdf>



## *Example of a Community Building Circle with Entire Class*

**Introduction for first circle:** “Class, in thinking about all the time we spend together and all the time you work together on classwork and projects, it’s really important that we also spend some of our time building strong relationships. I would like to get to know each of you better and I would like for you all to have an opportunity to get to know one another and to get to know me a bit better too. To do this, we are going to come together in a circle, and I will present a question that we can each have a turn to respond to.”

**Guidelines:** Review the Circle Guidelines and make sure all students agree to follow the guidelines before continuing. Introduce the talking piece you have to use (e.g., a squishy ball, a short stick, a ball of yarn).

1. Respect the talking piece
2. Speak from the heart
  - Share only your experiences, perspectives, feelings – not those of others
  - Be truthful
3. Listen from the heart
  - Trust you will know what to say: no need to rehearse
  - Just say enough: Be considerate of the time when sharing

Source: Adapted from Restorative Practices Whole School Implementation Guide (n.d.)

**Circle Rounds:** (Recommendation: start with low-risk questions for the warmup)

- Round 1: If you had an unexpected day off from school, what are two things you would do with your day?” or “What is something you are learning or would like to learn about outside of school?”
- Round 2: How do you or others support your classmates to take risks and persist in their learning? Feel free to give specific examples.
- Round 3: How do you feel when someone helps you when you’re struggling with your work?
- Round 4 (closing): Fist to Five – How did we do adhering to our Circle Guidelines? Show me a fist if we did not at all follow our guidelines, 1 finger if we did just a little, and on up to all 5 fingers if we fully followed our guidelines.

**Recommendation:** Have students write out questions about what they are interested in knowing about one another. You may want to consider having a conversation about level of risk first. Collect them, check for appropriateness and level of risk, and place the questions in a jar. For the next circle, ask a student to select one of the questions and it will be the next circle prompt.

If all agreed the guidelines were followed and you agree with them, congratulate them for following the guidelines. If there’s disagreement that the guidelines were being followed, ask which ones weren’t followed, what was challenging about following them, and end with another circle round asking each student to make one commitment that they will follow during the next circle to help ensure all the guidelines are followed.

## *Examples of Impromptu Restorative Dialogues*

**With John alone:** John was particularly rude and inappropriate in class one day. You decide that you would like to have a discussion with him after class about it.

**You say to John towards the end of class,** “John, I’ve been noticing something different about your communication with others lately and I would really like to understand what your experience is like in our class. I have some time right after our class today or immediately after 3rd period. Which time would work better for you?” When you meet with John you say: “I’ve noticed that you are putting a lot of the students

down and also getting into quite a few heated arguments. In order for me to better understand where you are coming from and what you are thinking, I have a few questions:"

1. When you put other students down in our class and get into heated verbal altercations, what is going on for you in that moment? What are you thinking about while it's happening?
2. After you say something hurtful to someone else, what do you think and feel about it afterward?
3. Who do you think is affected by you calling out putdowns in the class? How are the other students affected by it? How are you affected by it? How do you think I am affected by it?
4. What feels like the hardest thing about stopping to put others in our class down?
5. What do you think needs to happen to make things as right as possible moving forward in our class?
6. Is there something you can commit to doing to cut out the putdowns in the class?

**With John and another student in class:** John got into a verbal altercation with another student during class while you were teaching the lesson. You weren't able to address the situation in that moment, so you separated the students and gave each of them the Restorative Questions Reflection Form to complete and told them to expect to come together to discuss the situation as soon as you had a moment to meet with them.

In the restorative meeting with both John and other student later in the day (only if both students are NOT escalated).

**You say,** "I can tell you both were really upset during class today and I heard some language that sounded very hurtful to each one of you as well as to the other students and me. We must work through what happened to ensure the situation is dealt with and therefore doesn't happen again. I am going to ask each of you to share your responses with one another to the Restorative Questions Reflection Form I asked you to complete." Ask who wants to begin, and then proceed to ask the first question to each student.

1. What happened between the two of you and what were you thinking as it was happening?
2. Now that a little time has passed, what are you thinking about what happened?
3. Who are all the people that were affected by the heated altercation you had and how were they affected?" (make sure they address how the other students in the class were affected, and you as the educator. Feel free to share how you, personally were affected).
4. What about this situation has been hardest for you?
5. What needs to happen to make things as right as possible for both of you as well as the entire class?

**With John and another student in the hallway:** During passing period, you notice John and another student raising their voices and yelling at one another. Other students are starting to gather around them to watch what is happening. It does not seem like a friendly interaction and you are concerned that it will continue to escalate. You approach the group of students and tell all the other students to keep moving on to class.

**With John and the other student, you say:** "I notice that you are both looking very agitated right now."

1. What just happened that led towards you raising your voices at one another?
2. How are you both feeling affected by it? How do you think the other students heading to class are affected by hearing that type of negative language yelled in the hallways?
3. What is feeling the hardest for each of you right now?
4. What needs to happen to make things as right as possible moving forward?

Adapted from: Restorative Justice 4 Schools Ltd Implementation Pac



## Restorative Questions Reflection Form

What happened?

What were you thinking at the time?

How are you feeling about it?

What feels the hardest for you right now?

What do you think needs to happen to make things as right as possible?

## Students Role in the Success of Restorative Practices

Involving students in the planning and implementation of a restorative practices approach will help ensure that restorative practices are not just a collection of activities, but become a mindset that is relevant to students and will support their skills throughout their enrollment in school.

### Peer Jury

The following is an example of a peer jury, from *Implementing Restorative Justice: A Guidebook for Schools*  
<https://studentsatthecenterhub.org/resource/implementing-restorative-justice-a-guide-for-schools/>

#### Scenario:

A young man named Jose threw his shoe across the auditorium at another student in front of his music teacher and the school principal. Embarrassed and exasperated, the teacher referred Jose to the discipline office. Jose was then referred to the school peer jury program.

As the jurors talked to Jose, they learned that he wanted to go to art school after graduation and was having problems with his music teacher. The jurors decided with Jose that they would assist the teacher in setting up for a concert the following week so he could meet the teacher outside the classroom and get to know them better. In addition, Jose agreed to use his artistic talents to make a poster to publicize and recruit students for the school jazz band club. The poster was enlarged, copied, and posted around the school.

The student and teacher made peace. Jose saw the error of his ways, and his talents were put to use in repairing harm to the school and the music program. The poster was later included in Jose's art portfolio and he was admitted to an art school upon graduation.

Adapted from: Restorative Justice 4 Schools Ltd Implementation Pack



#### Guiding Questions:

1. How might a peer jury process work in your school?
2. What would you need in order to implement the peer jury practice?



### *Restorative Peer Courts*

#### **Students Keeping Students in School**

Davidson Middle School

Fix School Discipline • Viewing time: 53:08

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aCEbSCwscAw>

This Fix School Discipline Webinar provides description and advice about diverting school suspension through voluntary peer courts.



### *Justice Committee*

#### **Using Restorative Practices to Resolve Conflicts**

Pittsfield Middle School

• Viewing Time: 4:31

<https://www.edutopia.org/video/justice-committee-using-restorative-practices-resolve-conflicts>

Students at Pittsfield Middle High School are trained to mediate conflicts between their fellow students—and between students and educators. “It’s not about punishing the person responsible,” says Jenny Wellington, a Justice Committee teacher mediator. “It’s about bridging understanding, helping students take personal responsibility for their actions, and getting both parties what they need to resolve the issue.” Mock mediation is shown, with commentary, and the transcript is included.

PART 3:

# **Managing School-Wide Adoption of Restorative Practices**

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# Managing School-Wide Adoption of Restorative Practices

Following initial awareness-building and shifts in practice described, school leaders and staff may be interested in growing restorative practices as a school-wide commitment. The most sustainable way to accomplish this is to engage key stakeholders, ensure necessary funding and supports, and gradually increase restorative practices over time. Place more emphasis on prevention (Tier 1) to establish strong relationships in classrooms. This will eliminate some behavior issues before they even start, de-escalate others, build adults' and students' capacity to handle conflict restoratively, and create a climate that allows students to focus on learning.



## Figure 6: Gradual Introduction to Restorative Practices

Gradually introducing restorative practices to replace retributive practices will decrease behavior incidents.

100% RETRIBUTIVE	80% RETRIBUTIVE 20% RJ	50% RETRIBUTIVE 50% RJ	20% RETRIBUTIVE 80% RJ
Little structured time for community building is provided	A few teachers use community building circles in classrooms	Regular community building circles are held in the classrooms	A peer RJ group is used to address most conflicts
Rules are established by adults with no input from students	RJ Coordinator addresses some behavior issues	Teachers use circles to address harm and restore relationships as issues occur	Retributive practices are used infrequently and are reserved for severe instances of harm
Time outs, phone calls home and suspension are primary disciplinary tactics	Sometimes circles are used to address harm and healing with families and community	Most times circles are used to address harm and healing with families and community	Circles are always used to address harm and healing with families and community

Source: Restorative Justice Implementation Guide: A Whole School Approach (n.d.)

# School Districts Using a Restorative Practices Approach

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Districts are described as follows in *Restorative Practices: Fostering Healthy Relationships and Promoting Positive Discipline in Schools, A Guide for Educators* (The Advancement Project, 2014):

## **Baltimore City Public Schools, Maryland**

The school district reformed its school discipline code to reflect an institutional approach towards restorative practices by dividing inappropriate behavior into four levels and ensuring that many low-level offenses can never result in an out-of-school suspension. In the years following the reform, suspensions decreased, and the school district saw an increase in graduation rates for students who are Black, and graduation rates overall.

## **Boston Public Schools, Massachusetts**

Since 2012, numerous schools in the Boston Public School System have used restorative circles, conflict resolution, and mediation trainings in partnership with youth and community groups as positive alternatives to school suspensions.

## **Chicago Public Schools, Illinois**

Peace circles are predominantly the restorative practices used. In addition, the person harmed and the person who caused the harm may engage in mediation, family group conferencing, and peer juries. The Chicago Public School System has seen a significant decrease in misconduct reports. The system-wide peer jury program helped prevent over 2,000 suspension days per year.

## **Cleveland Metropolitan School District, Ohio**

Schools and educators in Cleveland have emphasized social and emotional learning strategies as a form of restorative practices to reduce suspensions. The HumanWare Initiative promotes student safety, support, and social and emotional development by using instructional planning centers to replace in-school suspension. Educators at these centers work with children, helping them cool down during difficult times, and consider positive responses to problems.

## **Denver Public Schools, Colorado**

The Denver Public Schools Restorative Justice (RJ) Project was implemented to address the growing number of out-of-school suspensions, which reached 15,000 in 2004. In addition to focusing on culture and climate, restorative circles are used as the primary form of restorative practices.

## **Madison Public Schools, Wisconsin**

The Young Women's Christian Association of Madison uses the circle process to teach restorative justice curriculum to middle and high school students in eight public schools in the area. After completing the curriculum, students become Circle Keepers in their schools for their peers, staff, and educators.

## **Minneapolis Public Schools, Minnesota**

The Minneapolis Public Schools have offered restorative practices as a service for students recommended for expulsion, in partnership with community organizations such as the Legal Rights Center of Minneapolis.

## **New Orleans, Louisiana**

The Center for Restorative Approaches, as part of Neighborhood Housing Services, partners with local schools to provide restorative training and professional development to educators and staff, and provides direct services through dialogue. The discipline team regularly uses restorative practices (restorative communication, accountability plans, circles, and conferences) to intervene in student conflicts. These practices are an alternative to suspension, in-school suspension, and expulsion, and are a tool for re-entry after suspension and as a behavior intervention strategy.

**New York City Public Schools, New York**

The New York City Department of Education partnered with the United Federation of Teachers and Cornell University and launched the Institute for Understanding Behavior (IUB) in order to assist public and private schools in preventing crises from occurring, manage disruptive behavior, and teach students the skills they need to cope with stress. The Institute creates an individual plan for each school based on available data, staff surveys, and administrative meetings. Participating schools receive training for all staff (school leaders, educators, paraprofessionals, school-aides, cafeteria workers, etc.) in proven support strategies, and direct coaching from a behavior specialist to implement new strategies and positive behavior systems.

**Oakland Public Schools, California**

The Oakland Public Schools launched a system-wide initiative to institute restorative practices as a proactive approach to student behavior. The initiative includes professional development for school leaders and school staff, redesign of district discipline structures and practices, and promotion of alternatives to suspension at every school.

**Peoria Public Schools, Illinois**

Schools are preventing altercations, improving school climate, and using peer juries as part of the Balanced and Restorative Justice Program to address and mediate conflict.

The next section provides online resources and tools. There are guidebooks, articles, case studies, and videos. The videos are annotated, and some include guiding questions. A two-hour professional development session design is offered, with a facilitator's guide that includes what to do and the materials needed.



PART 4:

# Resources & Tools

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# Resources and Tools

## Toolkits, Guides, and Tutorials

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### **Alameda County Health Care Services Agency. RJ: A Working Guide for Our Schools (2011)**

The purpose of this publication is to provide support and guidance for educators, health workers, community leaders, and school personnel who seek to implement restorative justice in their schools and to shed light on its implementation.

<https://www.skidmore.edu/campusrj/documents/Kidde-and-Alfred-2011.pdf>

### **Centre for Justice & Reconciliation. Tutorial: Introduction to Restorative Justice**

Although this center is rooted in the criminal justice system, this brief six-lesson tutorial provides a useful introduction to restorative practices that may be informative for those who work with more serious offenses in high schools.

<http://restorativejustice.org/restorative-justice/about-restorative-justice/tutorial-intro-to-restorative-justice/>

### **Fix School Discipline Toolkit for Educators**

Fix School Discipline, a project of Public Counsel, is a comprehensive toolkit for anyone interested in learning how to establish or advocate for supportive, inclusive discipline policies that hold students accountable and improve school climate and safety for all members of the school community. A community member toolkit is also available.

<http://www.fixschooldiscipline.org>



### **Implementing Restorative Justice: A Guide for Schools (2010)**

This guide advocates for restorative justice over punitive models of behavior modification. The authors note that restorative justice is supported by research in schools in the United Kingdom, Scotland, and the state of Pennsylvania. According to the authors, skills that are taught through restorative justice, such as conflict resolution and critical thinking, are valuable in preparing students for college and careers. The website includes additional resources on restorative justice, as well as this guide.

<https://schoolturnaroundsupport.org/resources/implementing-restorative-justice-guide>

### **Implementation Guides for Restorative Practices in Schools**

This link features a list of practical guides for school leaders, including several in this section of resources.

<http://restorativesolutions.us/implementation-guides-for-restorative-practices-in-schools>

### **Restorative Justice 4 Schools Implementation Pack**

Users are prompted to submit their name and email to be sent this comprehensive resource of tools, including: 1) guides to restorative practices in different areas of the school, using different techniques, 2) resources and sample documents, such as: scripts, forms, reflection sheets, vocabulary lists, agreements/contracts, evaluation forms and questions, action plans, policies, leaflets, and training resources.

[http://www.restorativejustice4schools.co.uk/wp/?page\\_id=36](http://www.restorativejustice4schools.co.uk/wp/?page_id=36)

### **Restorative Practices: Fostering Healthy Relationships and Promoting Positive Discipline in Schools: A Guide for Educators (2014)**

The Advancement Project, AFT, NEA, and National Opportunity to Learn Project partnered to write this guide. This toolkit includes models, frameworks, and action steps for school-wide implementation, accompanied by guiding questions to support reflection for practitioners looking to make restorative methods part of the fabric of daily life in schools. It also recognizes the significant role all education professionals play in maintaining a school community that models respectful, trusting, and caring relationships.

<http://www.schottfoundation.org/sites/default/files/restorative-practices-guide.pdf>

### **Restorative Justice Implementation Guide: A Whole School Approach**

The Oakland Unified School District (CA) guide is designed for Restorative Practices Facilitators to support their schools by establishing restorative justice practices and creating a school-wide implementation plan.

<https://www.ousd.org/Page/1054>

### **Restorative Practices Resource Project (2017)**

The Restorative Practice Consortium, in Ontario, Canada, created this guide that contains research, tools and references that are free from copyright unless otherwise indicated.

[https://www.iirp.edu/images/pdf/ObqnNj\\_38e965\\_ad7507e9e2474f8aaa3b903afcb1ecf7\\_2.pdf](https://www.iirp.edu/images/pdf/ObqnNj_38e965_ad7507e9e2474f8aaa3b903afcb1ecf7_2.pdf)

### **Restorative Practices Whole-School Implementation Guide**

This guide by the San Francisco Unified School District is designed to offer a step by step evidence-based approach that ensures an inclusive, comprehensive, successful and sustainable change effort by implementing restorative practices.

<http://www.tinyurl.com/SFUSD-Implementation-Guide>

### **School-Wide Restorative Practices: Step by Step**

The Denver School-Based Restorative Practices Partnership is a coalition that includes Advancement Project, Denver Classroom Teachers Association, Denver Public Schools, National Education Association, and Padres & Jóvenes Unidos. This guide was written in working groups made up of representatives of the partner organizations, allies in the community, and the staff of North High School, Skinner Middle School, and Hallett Fundamental Academy in Denver, CO.

<https://www.skidmore.edu/campusrj/documents/Denver-2017-School-Wide-RP-Implementation-Guide.pdf>

### **Teaching Restorative Practices with Classroom Circles (2013)**

This downloadable manual describes the process for holding restorative circles in classrooms. It contains step-by-step instructions for circles that build community, teach restorative concepts and skills, and harness the power of restorative circles to set things right when there is conflict.

<http://www.centerforrestorativeprocess.com/>

## **Articles**

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### **Key Elements of a Restorative Justice Peacemaking Circle Create More than Conversation**

From Blog Post by Kris Miner (August 8th, 2013).

<http://www.circle-space.org/2013/08/08/how-key-elements-of-a-restorative-justice-peacemaking-circle-create-more-than-conversation/>

### **Restorative Discipline Makes Huge Impact in Texas Elementary and Middle Schools**

From NEA Today (August 2016).

<http://neatoday.org/2016/08/25/restorative-discipline/>

**Restorative Works Magazine**, published by International Institute for Restorative Practices; most recent issue available for download from:

<https://www.iirp.edu/restorative-practices/restorative-works-magazine>

**How Well Are American Students Learning?** The Brown Center Report on American Education (2017).

<https://www.brookings.edu/multi-chapter-report/the-2017-brown-center-report-on-american-education/>

## **Case Studies**

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### **Restorative Justice Project, Loyola Marymount University**

Case studies illustrate how Community Building Circles and Community Conference work.

<https://academics.lmu.edu/cures/coreprograms/restorativejustice/>

## **From Fix School Discipline Toolkit for Educators (n.d.)**

<http://www.fixschooldiscipline.org/educator-toolkit/>

## **Case: Building Safe, Supportive and Restorative School Communities in New York City**

[https://teachersunite.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/DSC-NY\\_CaseStudyVol.III\\_2015.pdf](https://teachersunite.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/DSC-NY_CaseStudyVol.III_2015.pdf)

### **Oakland Unified School District, CA**

Oakland Unified School District first implemented its restorative justice program at one school in 2007. Since then, it has expanded, and the district has seen promising reductions in suspensions, in addition to increased attendance. The program includes three tiers. In the first tier, entire classrooms come together in community-building circles to talk about problems and voice their concerns, encouraging peer-to-peer respect. In the second tier, smaller groups are used for specific conflicts, which bring together the harmed student, the person or persons causing the harm, and a group of their peers or adults. A third tier is reserved for more serious behavioral issues and also for student reintegration following suspension.

*Restorative Justice Programs Take Root in Schools*

by Patricia Leigh Brown, The New York Times (2013)

*Restorative Justice: One High School's Path to Reducing Suspensions by Half*

by Stacy Teicher Khadaroo, Christian Science Monitor (2013)

### **Ypsilanti High School, MI**

The restorative justice program at Ypsilanti High School engages students in peer mediation in a Conflict Resolution Center. These interventions are designed to help resolve conflicts before they turn into more significant issues. For conflicts that have already happened, for example, a fight, all students involved, as well as their peers, participate in a restorative circle, which allows the student(s) who caused the harm to hear the views of peers.

*School Hopes Talking It Out Keeps Kids From Dropping Out*

by Jennifer Guerra, National Public Radio (2013)

*Dispute Resolution Center to Mentor Staff, Students at Ypsilanti High*

by Danielle Arndt, The Ann Arbor News (2012)

# Videos

## Practitioner and Student Perspectives in Videos, with Guiding Questions

Consider the following brief stories from those who are working with restorative practices in varied educational contexts, preschool to high school. Practitioners in these videos focus on how the attitudes of adults and students frame the school climate, promote student agency, and how the restorative practices of “talking circles” and “peer juries” can facilitate relationships in the school community, as well as accountability for repairing harm when conflict disrupts these relationships. When students themselves become committed to restorative practices and begin to lead the conversations, schools report positive changes for student discipline and learning.

There are guiding questions suggested for each video. Respond to them individually or with a colleague.



### *Second Chances: School Profiles*

Wide Angle Youth Media

Viewing time: 9:57

<https://vimeo.com/125481122>

City Springs Elementary Middle School

Viewing times: 0-2:43

Restorative Practices as an Alternative to Suspension.

“After training the entire staff and a full year of implementation of restorative practices, including things like circles, suspensions dropped from 86 to 10.” -Principal Rhonda Richetta.

George Washing Carver Center for the Arts and Technology

Viewing times: 2:44-6:52

A Model for Reframing In-School Suspension. “To be told you can’t come can be heartbreaking. In some cases, that school day is their only stable place. I think it chips away at their sense of hope.” - Principal Karen Steele

Anchor Point Academy

Viewing times: 8:08-9:56

Anchor Point Academy is a voluntary program for students suspended for 4-10 days from other schools. “At the [other] high school, they automatically jump to yelling at the kid, and trying to get rid of the kid, basically. [Here] they try to address the kid’s problems [and find out] what is bothering the kid.” -Student

### **Guiding Questions:**

1. What is unique about each of these schools?
2. What belief systems were held by people in the video that resulted in the uniqueness of the programs?
3. What structures supported their belief systems?
4. How are these programs places of hope, learning, friendships, and respect?
5. What could be applicable in your school or district?

## *Repairing Our Schools through Restorative Justice*

Jean Klasovsky, TEDxWellsStreetED (2013)

Viewing time: 13:26

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tqktOiYG5NM>

In 2012, Chicago Public Schools issued almost 70,000 out-of-school suspensions. Educator Jean Klasovsky states, "This figure seems overwhelming and it is, but there are things that even a classroom teacher can do on an individual level to start shifting the focus from rules to relationships, from punishment to repairing harm." Klasovsky argues that zero tolerance policies did not work at her school and describes how restorative practices did. She provides a concrete description of her school's approach to improving climate and discipline by using restorative practices techniques, such as peace circles, peer juries, and a "care room." She notes that advocates sometimes struggle with getting buy-in from educators and school leaders, some students do not respond to restorative techniques, resources are spent for school security guards and police officers, and there is not enough money to pay for a restorative practices coordinator. "But what if every school had a care room?" Klasovsky asks. "What if every teacher was trained on how to lead a peace circle or conduct a restorative conversation? What if every student was trained as a peer juror?" She concludes by stating that schools that do implement school-wide restorative practices and other similar positive behavior supports show significant decreases in discipline referrals, increased attendance, a more positive school climate, and improved test scores.



### **Guiding Questions:**

1. What training would you need on restorative practices?
2. How might you begin to implement restorative practices in your classroom?
3. What do you think about students being trained as peer jurors?



## *School Suspensions Are an Adult Behavior*

Dr. Rosemarie Allen, TEDxMileHigh (2016)

Viewing time: 12:23

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8nkcRMZKV4>

In a TEDxMileHigh presentation, Dr. Rosemarie Allen (2016) argues that challenging student behaviors would be significantly reduced, and the pre-school-to-prison pipeline dismantled, if policymakers and educators focused more centrally on the adult's role, rather than on the student's misbehavior. She stresses, "Children do not suspend themselves; it takes an adult to do that. When we focus on our own behavior, give children the tools they need to regulate theirs, look for what's good, right, and amazing in every single child, we can stop suspensions and we can keep our babies in school."

### **Guiding Questions:**

1. What cultural norms guide the way you observe and interpret student behavior?
2. What biases about student behavior do you hold?
3. Might your standards for student behavior be difficult for some students without skill building? If so, how could they learn?
4. What labels do you use for students?
5. How do the labels you use for students contribute to or hinder their success and the perceived supports you provide?
6. In what ways might you observe and interpret student behavior differently by developing greater racial, ethnic, cultural consciousness /awareness?
7. Are the decisions you make about student behavior guided by unconscious biases? If so, how might you identify them (perhaps with the help of a colleague) and work to address them?

"Children do not suspend themselves; it takes an adult to do that. When we focus on our own behavior, give children the tools they need to regulate theirs, look for what's good, right, and amazing in every single child, we can stop suspensions and we can keep our babies in school."





## *Colorado High School Replaces Punishment with "Talking Circles"*

Hinkley High School • PBS Newshour (2014)

Viewing time: 7:30

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g8\\_94O4ExSA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g8_94O4ExSA)

Colorado's legislature eliminated zero-tolerance punishments in schools in 2012. Principal Matthew Willis explains the impact of their subsequent transition to restorative practices:

The ideas of traditional discipline don't exist anymore. In the old days, when the students or a kid got into trouble, we would spank them and we moved away from spanking because it no longer met the values of our society. The same is true with traditional discipline where it's all about punishment, punishment, punishment; it's not about restoring relationships, it's not about taking responsibility for your actions. It's about punishment. So that no longer fits the society of our future. What fits the society of our future is people coming together and working and solving problems together.

Bonnie Martinez, Dean of Students, describes the school's restorative talking circles as a means of restoring relationships when conflict or wrongdoing has occurred. She shares an example of a circle that was called because two students who are girls were in a physical altercation:

For those students to come together and for their families to come together and talk about it and to really express truly what happened, how did it affect me and others, what am I responsible for, and how do I solve it; that's deeper than just writing up paperwork and one person goes their way and the other person goes their way and nothing is ever communicated.

Expanding on this example, Willis cites school-wide progress. "We saw a 48% reduction in out-of-school suspensions. In 2007-08, the school had approximately 263 physical altercations and in 2008-09, so far, there were only 31. Every single year over the last three full years that we've been doing restorative justice, you see significant declines in defiance, disobedience, and use of profanity."

### **Guiding Questions:**

1. Is there something in this video example that compels you to want to learn more about ways restorative practices might be important for your school? What was it and why did it have that impact on you?
2. How would you recommend beginning such an endeavor, and which people/role would you select to get it started?

## *The Transformation of West Philadelphia High School: A Story of Hope*

IIRP Graduate School (2009)

Viewing time: 9:00

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HatSI1lu\\_PM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HatSI1lu_PM)

Assistant Principal Russel Gallagher described West Philadelphia High School as one of the few schools in Pennsylvania on the “persistently dangerous list” due to violence, crime, and general problems at the school. Following the implementation of restorative practices, he proudly states that by the end of 2008, “our violent acts and serious incidents were down 52%, the largest change in the city. In 2009, initially they were down an additional 45%.” Principal Saliyah Cruz explains, “No one is teaching students the social skills that my kids, for the most part, don’t have. So, they understand that I shouldn’t break this rule, but they only understand it as far as, “Because you said so.” In this video, school leaders and educators explain the shifts they made as the school began to focus on building a positive social climate with students. One educator noted, “Content and material mean nothing without relationships,” adding, “Ninety-five percent of the problems we have are miscommunications, so the act of communicating without using violence is a powerful act.”

Teacher Marsha Walker reflected, “I needed to find something that would help me have a different kind of relationship with my students. The main thing that I liked initially about restorative practices was that whole idea of building community. I found that I liked it, and I found that my students liked it, as well. And I can feel that we have more of a family interaction ... I can see the difference in my students. I also see the difference in my behavior. Because I can be very aggressive, and I am very aggressive with my students, but I needed not to be.”

The students’ voices are clear in this video. They convey that participating in restorative talking circles calms and focuses interactions and communications at the school, often de-escalating and resolving conflicts that would previously have resulted in violence. One school leader concluded, “Restorative practice can work in tough urban schools and it doesn’t get any tougher than West Philadelphia High School.”



### **Guiding Questions:**

1. What are the opinions of three educators featured in the video? Do you see a connection between their role and their perspective?
2. What did students mention about changes in their high school as a result of restorative practices?
3. What surprised you about specific things people said?
4. What did you hear that would be applicable in your school?

## Recommended Videos

- 1. Second Chances: School Profiles**  
Wide Angle Youth Media • Viewing time: 9:57. See page 50 for quotes and guiding questions.  
<https://vimeo.com/125481122>
- 2. Repairing Our Schools through Restorative Justice**  
Jean Klasovsky, TEDxWellsStreetED (2013) • Viewing time: 13:26. See page 51 for quotes and guiding questions. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tqktOiYG5NM>
- 3. School Suspensions Are an Adult Behavior**  
Dr. Rosemarie Allen, TEDxMileHigh (2016) • Viewing time: 12:23. See page 52 for quotes and guiding questions. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f8nkcRMZKV4>
- 4. Colorado High School Replaces Punishment with “Talking Circles”**  
Hinkley High School • PBS Newshour (2014) • Viewing time: 7:30. See page 53 for quotes and guiding questions. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g8\\_94O4ExSA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g8_94O4ExSA)
- 5. The Transformation of West Philadelphia High School: A Story of Hope**  
IIRP Graduate School (2009) • Viewing time: 9:00. See page 54 for quotes and guiding questions.  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HatSI1lu\\_PM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HatSI1lu_PM)
- 6. Restorative Practices**  
Pinellas County, Florida • Viewing time: 7:03. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oby3a-Rfkxs>  
Early and middle elementary and middle school teachers discuss the purposes and benefits of restorative practices.
- 7. A Restorative Approach to Discipline**  
Sullivan High School and Parker Community Academy Chicago Public Schools. • Viewing Time: 5:02  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5r1yvyP141U>  
“When you talk about restorative justice and reduction of suspension, the biggest misconception is that when kids make mistakes and we don’t suspend, we’re letting them off the hook...that’s their whole life—wrong someone and run from it, wrong someone and then not talk about it. I would think we are actually making them more on the hook.” Chad Adams, Principal Sullivan High School.
- 8. Restorative Practices and San Francisco Public Schools**  
San Francisco Unified School District (2013) • Viewing time: 15:26  
<https://vimeo.com/47159849>  
Comments about restorative practices from students and adults, and then a description of restorative practices. Comments include: “Restorative practices has really changed the school environment.” “There is a calmness and a consideration that is coming out that wasn’t there before.” “I think the kids are really, really responding to it.” “It helps me think about what other people really like about the world.” “It’s all about building relationships.” “They are able to believe in their own feelings and to share their own feelings.” “It truly is something that is allowing our students to believe that they feel safe and believe they are part of the community.” “I think it has really transformed our school. We are working towards building the kind of school we really want.”
- 9. Restorative Justice in Oakland Schools: Tier One. Community Building Circle**  
Oakland Unified School District (2012) • Viewing time: 9:31  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RdKhcQrLD1w>  
Student Co-facilitator Cassidy Friedman discusses the circle and how she and another student plan it, in a voiceover of the video showing the circle she is conducting. Sarah Glasband, a ninth grade educator comments, “They come in, they’re giggling, they’re laughing...and there’s a lot of giddy, intense energy...The circle, and their relationships with each other, kinda’ quiet something in them and allow them to be more present with each other.”

## 10. Restorative Practices

Peel District School Board (Middle School), Ontario, CA. • Viewing time: 7:03

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3vjTI7Dt60k>

Restorative practices are a part of the Peel District School Board's Climate for Learning and Working framework. Commentary by practitioners who speak of purposes, benefits, and examples of circles and restoring relationships and videos of circles in action in different school settings. It concludes by naming the restorative mindset and the focus on repairing the harm.

## 11. Restorative Circles: Creating a Safe Environment for Students to Reflect

Pearl-Cohn Nashville, TN. • Viewing time: 3:44

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1-RZYSTJAAo>

The Zone is a facilitated experience in place of suspension. It occurs daily, at 7:00-9:00 am. The facilitator explains: "The Zone is a collaborative space where kids get into a circle and discuss what their behaviors were and how to correct it. We are here today to talk about how to make things right." "To succeed you must first improve, to improve you must first practice. To learn you must first fail." "Young people have to be given space to grow, to feel, OK, I made a mistake. From this learning experience I continue to grow."

## 12. Mesquite ISD Restorative Practices - Large Circle

John Horn High School, Mesquite ISD, TX. • Viewing time: 18:47

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mGcy31\\_aPPU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mGcy31_aPPU)

An extensive view of GTKY (Get to Know You) that was implemented during a German class.

## 13. Students Keeping Students in School: Restorative Peer Courts Fix School Discipline

Fix School Discipline (2015) • Viewing time: 53:08

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aCEbSCwscAw>

This Fix School Discipline Webinar provides a practical description and advice about diverting school suspension through voluntary peer courts. Students Keeping Students in School is included in the Fix School Discipline YouTube Channel.

## 14. Fix School Discipline YouTube Channel

<https://www.youtube.com/user/FixSchoolDiscipline/videos>

## 15. Restorative Practices to Resolve Conflict/Build Relationships

Katy Hutchison at TEDxWestVancouverED. • Viewing Time: 18:20

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wcLuVeHlrSs>

Katy Hutchison became a Restorative Justice advocate following the murder of her first husband. After ten years of sharing her story internationally to over five hundred schools and community groups, she views the education system as the structure with the most potential to affect positive social change. Katy sits on the Boards of Restorative Practices International & Glenlyon Norfolk School and volunteers for Leave Out Violence (LOVE).

## 16. Justice Committee: Using Restorative Practices to Resolve Conflicts

Edutopia • Viewing Time: 4:31

<https://www.edutopia.org/video/justice-committee-using-restorative-practices-resolve-conflicts>

Students at Pittsfield Middle High School are trained to mediate conflicts between their fellow students—and between students and educators. "It's not about punishing the person responsible," says Jenny Wellington, a Justice Committee teacher mediator. "It's about bridging understanding, helping students take personal responsibility for their actions and getting both parties what they need to resolve the issue." Mock mediation is shown, with commentary, and the transcript is included.

# Professional Learning Activities

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## Activity #1:

### Shared Learning and Discussion

School leaders can use text or video-based protocols (samples below) to structure small group discussions based on any text or video-based resources listed on the preceding pages, as part of ongoing staff meetings or professional development sessions. Additional protocols are available free of charge at the National School Reform Faculty website: <https://nsrfharmony.org/>

#### Activity Handouts: Text Discussion Protocols

The two protocols below are printed with permission.


- National School Reform Faculty (NSRF), Four A's Protocol, Bloomington, IN
- National School Reform Faculty (NSRF), Save the Last Word for Me Protocol, Bloomington, IN


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## Four A's Text Protocol

NSRF, Spring 2015  
With optional modifications

Facilitation Difficulty: 

 40 min.

 Any size group

 No preconference

**Purpose** — To listen deeply to others' thoughts and beliefs around a text and to share one's own beliefs and thoughts. This protocol requires participants to use critical thinking skills to tease out the author's assumptions followed by the sharing of their own opinions and aspirations related to the text material.

**Group size** — Any size group. In a group of 10 or fewer, you may choose to skip subdividing into quads.

**Facilitation tips** — The Four A's is slightly trickier to facilitate than other text protocols. If the groups begin actively discussing when they should be silently listening, or discussing content randomly, remind everyone of the protocol structure and ask them to trust in the value of working within the protocol rather than having an everyday conversation.

**Preparation** — Instruct participants to read the text ahead of time highlighting it and writing notes in the margins in answer to the following four "A" questions:

- *What Assumptions* does the author of the text hold (whether I agree with the assumption or not)?
- What do you *Agree* with in the text?
- What do you want to *Argue* with in the text?
- What parts of the text do you *Aspire* to?

**Modifications** — See next page.

### Steps:

1. **Setup** — (2 min.) Give the group some time to skim the article, reviewing their marked sections.
2. **Divide** — (2 min.) Count off or otherwise divide the large group into groups of four (quads). Review Steps 2-4 with everyone. Instruct each quad to choose a facilitator/time keeper who will also be a full participant.
3. **Begin rounds** — (4 min. per round) The facilitator/time keeper instructs a volunteer to identify one assumption in the text, citing the text (with page numbers, if appropriate) as evidence. The participant will briefly talk about why they chose that passage (up to 1 min.). The other participants should actively listen, but not respond. If they would like to comment on what others in their group say, they should make a note to do so during Step 5, the discussion round. Go around the quad until each has had their turn to discuss an assumption they believe the author holds.
4. **Continue rounds** — (Up to 4 min. per round for 3 rounds = up to 12 min.) Repeat, starting with a new participant for each question. Learn what members of your quad "want to argue with," "agree with," and "aspire to." Move seamlessly from one "A" to the next.
5. **Discuss** — (20 min. or longer, depending on time available) End the session with an open discussion framed around a question such as: *What does the learning we've gleaned from this protocol mean for our work with students?*
6. **Debrief and reflect** — (5 min.)

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# Save the Last Word for Me

NSRF, Spring 2015  
With optional **Final Word** modification

Facilitation Difficulty:



40-55 min.



Any size, divided  
into groups of 4



No preconference

**Purpose** — To clarify and expand our thinking around a text or document. To build on each other's thinking without entering into a dialogue.

**Group size** — Any size group, divided into smaller groups of 4 (quads).

**Preparation** — Send the text to all participants in advance. Instruct them to read the article before the meeting, identify the most significant idea, and highlight segments that support those ideas. Advise them to also mark one or two “backup” ideas in case others choose the same passages. Make copies in advance of the meeting. At the meeting, distribute the Save the Last Word Handout to all participants.

## Steps:

1. **Divide** — Split group into quads of four participants each. Each quad should choose a timekeeper/facilitator with a timer (who also participates) and determine which person will present first, second, third, and fourth. (Next steps will all be governed by the small group timekeepers individually.)
2. **Present** — (~1 min.) The first volunteer reads a meaningful passage but offers no explanation about why they chose that particular passage.
3. **Reflect** — (30 sec.) Reflect for a moment on the passage before moving to the next step.
4. **Respond** — (3 min.) The other three participants each have **up to one minute** to respond individually, without discussion: what thoughts and feelings arise from hearing the presenter's idea, what questions they may have, how they might agree or disagree with that idea, etc. The presenter does not reply at this time. If a participant is finished before their time is up, the facilitator/timekeeper may move onto the next participant. However, no participant should take more than their allotted time.
5. **Last word** — (3 min.) The presenter then has “the last word,” **up to three minutes** to tell why they chose that idea, and to respond to or build upon what they heard from the others in the group.
6. **Repeat** — (Total of 8 min. per round for three more rounds = 24 min.) Repeat Steps 2-5 until all four members of the quad have presented and then had “the last word.”
7. **Group discussion** — (10 min.) If time is available, invite all the quads to come back together and open a group discussion about everyone's ideas.
8. **Debrief** — (5 min.)
  - How was this a useful way to explore the ideas in the text and to expand your own thinking?
  - Did your perspective on “the most important” idea shift during or after this protocol?
  - How did you feel about the requirement to use the text to support your specific idea?

**Option — “The Final Word” modification:** If desired, extend Step 2 to three minutes so the presenter reads their selection from the text and uses the additional time to explain why they selected that quote. Steps 3 and 4 are completed as written. Step 5 reduces to one minute for “the final word,” when the presenter can reinforce their original idea or reflect on what was said in Steps 3 and 4.

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## *Save the Last Word Handout*

*NSRF, Spring 2015*

*Use with the Save The Last Word for Me Protocol*

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### **Steps for participants:**

1. Each quad chooses a timekeeper/facilitator who has a timer (who also participates). Determine which person will go first, second, third, and fourth.
2. Have timekeeper start the timer for one minute, and have the first volunteer read the passage they feel is the most significant idea. The person speaking offers no explanation about why they chose that particular passage. (1 min.)
3. Reflect silently for a moment on the passage before moving to the next step. (30 sec.)
4. The other three participants each have one minute to respond to the passage individually, without discussion: what thoughts and feelings arise from hearing the presenter's idea, what questions they may have for the presenter or the author, how they might agree or disagree with that idea, etc. The presenter does not reply at this time. If the participants finish before their minute is up, the timekeeper/facilitator may move on to the next participant. However, participants should not go over their allotted times. (3 min. total)
5. The presenter then has "the last word" – up to three minutes to elaborate on why they chose that idea, and to respond to or build upon what they heard from the others in the group. (3 min.)

Repeat Steps 2-5 until all four members of the quad have had a chance to present and then have "the last word."

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## Activity #2:

# Introduction to Restorative Practices Workshop

### *Sample Facilitator's Agenda (2 hrs.)*

Adapted from San Francisco Unified School District 2012 August Professional Development

Original available at: <http://www.healthiersf.org/RestorativePractices/Resources/>

The purpose of this Restorative Practices Professional Learning workshop is to:

1. Share data about student discipline trends at our school
2. Understand why restorative practices may be relevant to our school
3. Provide a brief overview of restorative principles and practices included through video(s) and staff discussion
4. Introduce the Restorative Practices Questions
5. Solicit the staff's thoughts and questions about use of restorative practices at our school

\*Please keep in mind this is a brief introduction to restorative practices, not an extensive training. The following script is detailed and designed for someone with minimal knowledge of restorative practices.

### **Workshop Objectives:**

As a result of this professional learning, participants will:

1. Build and strengthen a sense of community among staff
2. Experience the circle process
3. Examine the definition, principles, and paradigm shift of restorative practices
4. Review the restorative practices questions

### **Agenda:**

- Large group circle: community building (25 min)
- Videos (30 min)
- Restorative practices principles (15 min)
- Paradigm shift (5 min)
- Restorative language and questions (10 min)
- Responding to harm: Restorative practices questions (25 min)
- Closing and feedback (10 min)

### **Required Materials:**

1. Talking piece (find one that is meaningful to you)
2. LCD projector connected to internet; open access to YouTube channel
3. 6 Handouts: 4-Square Reflections, Principles of Restorative Practices, Restorative Practices Paradigm Shift, Restorative Practices Language and Questions, Circle Guidelines, Restorative Practices Workshop Feedback
  - Post charts of: Workshop Agenda and Objectives, Circle Guidelines
  - Source box for playing music; additional speakers hooked up for clear sound projection (if you choose to do Milling to Music community builder)

**Room Set-Up:**

Prior to the workshop, set up the room as follows:

1. Arrange chairs in a large circle for all participants (preferably no furniture in the middle).
2. Post on the wall:
  - Agenda and objectives
  - Circle Guidelines
  - Part 2 final reflection questions
  - Part 4 discussion questions
3. Place handout packets on the table for pick up or place on chairs in the circle (6 handouts for each participant).
4. Hang post-it chart papers around the room, one for each small group of three to four participants; place two colored markers with each chart paper.
5. Set up LCD projector for viewing on a large screen that all can see; connect additional speakers so all can hear.
6. Pull shades or cover windows to ensure clear viewing.

## *Professional Learning Script:*

### **Part 1. Welcome and Introduction (5 min)**

1. Introduce yourself.
2. Share the purpose of the workshop.
  - Today we will spend the next 2 hours learning about restorative practices.
  - The purpose of this workshop is to introduce you to the concepts and principles of restorative practices. We will also be experiencing a couple of the main practices: the circle and the restorative practices questions.
3. Review Objectives and Agenda on the poster.

### **Part 2. Staff Community Circle (20 min)**

1. Share purpose for initial circle.
  - We will experience a couple of community building circles to strengthen our staff community by reconnecting with one another after our summer break and meet any new members of our community.
  - Keep in mind that these circles can be taken back into your classrooms to do with your students as well.
2. Introduce yourself as the circle keeper.
3. Share the role of the circle keeper.
  - It is not to facilitate the circle, but to act as guide that introduces the circle prompts and ensures that the circle remains a safe space by reviewing the Circle Guidelines.
4. Share the Circle Guidelines.
  - Before any circle begins, it is critical to review the Circle Guidelines to express the importance of the circle being a safe space to share.
  - The circle is a container that can hold as much or as little as people feel comfortable sharing.
  - The guidelines will help to ensure a safe space for connection and learning.
5. Point to the poster and read the Circle Guidelines.
  - Respect the talking piece.
  - Speak from the heart: share your own experiences, perspectives, feelings -- not those of others.
  - Listen from the heart: let go of stories that make it hard to hear one another. Be open and non-judgmental.
  - Trust you will know what to say: no need to rehearse.
  - Say just enough: be considerate of the time when sharing.

Ask: Are these guidelines something we can all agree to?

Ask: Is there anything missing from this list that we need to add?

### *Circle Round 1:*

Using a talking piece.

#### Instructions

1. Introduce the talking piece.
  - Share the reason you selected the talking piece for today's circles.
2. Introduce the first circle prompt.
3. For our first Circle Round, please take no more than 15 seconds to share:
  - your name
  - your position
  - the number of years you have been a member of this school community
  - one thing you did over the summer that you would like to share, [or come up with your own interesting question] for the prompt
4. Ask for a volunteer to start who, before answering the prompt, will state the direction the talking piece will be passed.

*Circle Round 2:* (Select one of the two options...or do both if you have the time)

Option 1: "I love my neighbor who..." (a fun activity that gets people moving around, and allows everyone to get to know one another better). It is helpful for the circle keeper to model the first round.

#### Instructions

1. Explain that "I love my neighbor" is an interactive circle activity.
2. Remove one chair from the circle.
3. One person stands in the middle of the circle and states something they relate to by first adding "I love my neighbor who..." (ex. enjoys going for walks on the beach).
4. If the statement applies to the other circle participants, they have to get up from their seat and find a free seat somewhere else in the circle.
5. They cannot move to their direct right or left.
6. The last person standing with no seat left is the new person who stands in the middle and states "I love my neighbor who..."
7. Continue for several more rounds.

Option 2: Milling to Music (a sound system/boombox needed to play music).

#### Instructions:

1. Explain that when the music starts everyone begins "milling" around the inside of the circle silently but greeting each other as they pass by.
2. When the music stops (after about 10 seconds) they are to form triads with the people closest to them.
3. A question will be read out loud and each person will take a short turn to respond to the question.
4. After each person has had an opportunity to respond, the music will start over and everyone will resume milling around the circle again.
5. This will continue for approximately 10 minutes with different questions being presented.

#### Milling questions:

1. Describe three cities, towns, or neighborhoods that you have lived in.
2. Share one way you like to relax or spend vacation time.
3. Share a favorite educator you had/have and why the educator was or is a favorite.
4. What was your favorite subject in school and why?
5. What is one reason you decided to become an educator?
6. What is one thing you look forward to about a new school year?
7. What is one school-related goal you would like to set for yourself?
8. Share one appreciation you have for the school community.

Have everyone return to their seats after this last question.



### *Circle Reflection:*

Ask the following reflection questions (not necessary to pass around the talking piece).

1. What did you notice/observe during the circles?
2. How did it feel?
3. What do activities like this do for our community?
4. In what ways can we apply this?

### **Part 3: Introduction to Restorative Practices: Video (30 min)**

1. Introduce the video:
  - This video provides an overview of restorative practices in the San Francisco Public Schools.
  - You will hear from school leaders, educators, students, and family caregivers as they describe the process and impact of restorative circles, conferences, and other practices.
  - During the video, please take notes in the four quadrants of the 4-Square Reflection Sheet handout in your packet.
  - Following the video, you will discuss your notes in each square in small groups, then report out the big ideas that emerged from your discussions.
2. Project the video: Restorative Practices and San Francisco Public Schools (2013) <https://vimeo.com/47159849> Viewing time: 15:26
3. After video:
  - Ask the group to turn to their small groups of three or four.
  - Ask each group to assign a recorder in the group to chart the group's big ideas in each 5-minute discussion and to be prepared to report these out to the larger group, if prompted by the facilitator and time allows.
  - Ask the groups to discuss the second box (Questions, Wonderings, Doubts) for five minutes.
  - Ask the groups to discuss the fourth box (Restorative Practices I Can Get Behind – YES!) for the final five minutes.

### **Part 4: Restorative Principles (15 min)**

#### Introduction

- Ask participants to turn to Handout: Restorative Principles.
- Explain: These principles lay the foundation for the actions/strategies of restorative practices by highlighting the philosophy, values, and outcomes of using a restorative approach.

#### Small group discussion and reflection

- Say: For the next couple of minutes, please review the principles silently. Then find 3 other people to discuss the following questions:
  - What stood out most about the principles (thoughts/feelings/personal experiences?)
  - In what ways are they applied in the school setting?
  - Imagine a school setting where all of these principles are applied consistently. What would that look like, feel like, sound like?
  - What is one thing you can commit to doing (or continue to do) to incorporate these principles into your classroom or school practice?

#### Large Group Reflection (3 min):

- Ask: Who will start us off by sharing what stood out to you about the principles, or key points of the discussion that came up in your group?

### **Part 5: Restorative Paradigm Shift (5 min)**

1. Say: Restorative practices is not a program or a curriculum. It is a shift in our approach, our way of doing things and reacting to situations that come up.
  - Request a volunteer to read aloud the quote at the top of Handout: Paradigm Shift.
2. Make these points:
  - Your handout also includes a chart listing some key differences between traditional and restorative models of discipline.
  - It is essential to have strong guidelines that clearly define the behavior expectations of ALL members of our school and family community.
  - The paradigm shift rests with what is emphasized when the guidelines/rules are not followed.
    - o If a student is receiving a consequence or punishment specifically for breaking the rules, then that is a traditional, punitive approach to discipline.
    - o If the students are brought into the conversation about how their actions affected and potentially harmed the community as a result of not following the school behavior expectations, and all parties involved in the incident come together to discuss how this harm affected them and decide what actions and responsibility need to be taken to repair the harm and restore the community, then a restorative approach to discipline is occurring.

### **Part 6: Restorative Language and Questions (10 min)**

1. Ask: Please turn to the Handout: Restorative Language and Questions
  - Say: Using restorative language is one of the most simple and effective ways to bring restorative practices into our classrooms and school community. It can be very powerful if the entire school community reinforces the same values and uses the same language.
  - For the next 5 minutes, review the handout independently and quietly.
    - o Place a checkmark next to ideas that you think are important to remember or you want to think more about.
    - o Mark a question mark (?) next to words or ideas you don't really understand or disagree with.
    - o Mark a star next to practices or recommendations you want to use in your classroom.
  - Say: For the next 5 minutes, informally share and discuss some of the most useful ideas you will take away from this document for use in your own classroom.

### **Part 7: Responding to Harm: Restorative Questions (20 min)**

1. Say: When harm occurs, it's important to consider how the relationships between the individuals involved and the school community are affected, and provide an opportunity to allow for those involved in the incident to express themselves, be held accountable and take responsibility to determine what needs to happen to repair the harm and prevent it from happening again.
2. Ask: How do the restorative questions reflect the principles of restorative practices we just reviewed?
3. Say: You will now have an opportunity to practice using the questions with a partner.
  - One person will ask the questions and the other person will answer, and then you will switch, so both people practice asking and responding.
4. Explain: Think about a time you sent a student out of your class for misbehavior (or a time you had a negative interaction with a student).
  - You will have 7 minutes each to interview one another about that particular experience using the full sequence of restorative questions on your handout. Each person asks the entire set of questions before switching.
5. Prompt: After 7 minutes, tell participants that it's time to switch.
6. Group Reflection: After everyone has finished interviewing their partners, ask:
  - How did it feel asking the questions?
  - How did it feel being asked the questions?

- How can these questions be used in daily interactions in the classroom or around the school community?

**Part 8: Closing Circle Round (10 min)**

1. Re-form a large circle
2. Circle Prompt with talking piece:
  - Share one thing you learned, were surprised by, or appreciate about the restorative practices workshop today.
3. Thank everyone for their participation.



## Workshop Handout 1: *Circle Guidelines*

### Circle Guidelines:

- Respect the talking piece
- Speak from the heart
  - o Share only your experiences, perspectives, feelings - not those of others
  - o Be truthful
- Listen from the heart
  - o Let go of stories and blame that make it hard to hear one another
  - o Be open and non-judgmental
- Trust you will know what to say: no need to rehearse
- Say just enough: Be considerate of the time when sharing

Source: Adapted from Restorative Practices Whole School Implementation Guide (n.d.)

Workshop Handout 2: *4-Square Reflections*

Note taking template for video: *Restorative Practices and San Francisco Public Schools* (2013)

<b>Key Concepts &amp; Big Ideas, Wonderings, Doubts</b>	<b>Questions</b>
<b>Restorative Practices</b>	<b>Restorative Practices and Ideas I Can Get Behind – YES!</b>

### Workshop Handout 3: *Principles of Restorative Practices*

The following principles reflect the values and concepts for implementing restorative practices in the school setting. Under each principle are some of its important implications.

1. Acknowledge that relationships are central to building community.
  - Restorative practices seek to strengthen relationships and build community by encouraging a caring school climate.
  - Every student, educator, school leader, staff member, and parent/guardian is a valued member of the school community.
  - Students should be involved in a process of naming the values and principles to live by within their school community.
2. Build systems that address misbehavior and harm in a way that strengthens relationships.
  - Schools establish policies to provide a safe place for learning. Real safety, however, comes from fostering and maintaining caring relationships.
  - Policies should reflect the values and principles agreed to by the school community.
  - Policies need to address the root causes of discipline problems rather than only the symptoms. The causes of misbehavior may be multiple, and each should be addressed.
3. Focus on the harm done rather than the breaking of the rules.
  - Misbehavior is an offense against people and relationships, not just rule breaking.
  - The solution to the offense needs to involve all of those harmed by the misbehavior.
  - The person harmed is the center of the primary relationship that needs to be addressed. Secondary relationships that may have been affected might include other students, educators, staff, parents/guardians, the administration, and the surrounding community.
  - Much misbehavior arises out of attempts to address a perceived injustice. Those who have been harmed also feel they have been treated unjustly. Discipline processes must leave room for addressing these perceptions.
4. Give voice to the person harmed.
  - The harmed person or people must be given an opportunity to have a voice in the resolution of the harm.
5. Engage in collaborative problem-solving.
  - All of us act to satisfy our human needs (for belonging, freedom, power, and fun). Students choose behaviors to meet these underlying needs.
  - Family, students, and communities are encouraged to help identify problems and solutions that meet needs.
  - Misbehavior can become a teachable moment if everyone is involved.
6. Empower change and growth.
  - For students to change and grow, we must help them identify their needs and assist them in finding alternative, life giving ways of meeting those needs.
  - Interpersonal conflict is a part of living in relationship with others.
  - Conflict presents an opportunity for change if the process includes careful listening, reflecting, shared problem-solving, trust, and accountability structures that support commitments to work at relationship building.



7. Enhance responsibility.

- Real responsibility requires understanding the impact of one's actions on others, along with an attempt to acknowledge and put things right when that impact is negative.
- Consequences should be evaluated based on whether they are reasonable, related to the offense, restorative, and respectful.
- Students should continually be invited to become responsible and cooperative.
- Some students choose to resist participation in a process that will allow for change and may need adults to support and guide them in decision-making concerning their accountability.

Source: Restorative Practices Whole School Implementation Guide (n.d.)



“What’s fundamental about restorative justice [practice] is a shift away from thinking about laws being broken, who broke the law, and how we punish the people who broke the laws. There’s a shift to: there was harm caused, or there’s disagreement or dispute, there’s conflict, and how do we repair the harm, address the conflict, meet the needs, so that relationships and community can be repaired and restored? It’s a different orientation. It is a shift.”

- Cheryl Graves, Community Justice for Youth Institute  
Source: Restorative Practices Whole School Implementation Guide (n.d.)

<https://www.pittsburg.k12.ca.us/cms/lib/CA01902661/Centricity/Domain/58/RP%20Paradigm%20shift%20quote.pdf>

Traditional Approach	Restorative Approach
School rules violated	People and relationships violated
Focused on establishing blame or guilt	Focused on identifying needs and obligations
Accountability = punishment	Accountability = understanding impact and repairing harm
The person who caused the harm has central role; person harmed ignored	Offender, person harmed, and school community all have direct roles
Rules and intent outweigh whether the outcome is positive/negative	The person who caused the harm is responsible for harmful behavior, repairing harm, and working toward positive outcomes
No opportunity given for remorse or amends	Opportunity given for amends and expression of remorse

Source: Adapted from Fix School Discipline Toolkit for Educators (n.d.) and Restorative Practices Whole School Implementation Guide (n.d.)

## Workshop Handout 5: *Restorative Practices Language and Questions*

When school staff and parents/guardians consistently use the language of restorative practices, the core values of relationships, responsibility, accountability, and community are effectively reinforced.

### **We are a community.**

This language recognizes that the strength and health of the community (among students, staff, and families) directly affects school climate and academic achievement. Every member of the community is important and contributes greatly. Each person's actions affect the health of the community.

Recommendation:

- Constantly refer to the student, staff, and family groups as a "community," and stress the importance of having a strong, healthy community.

### **What is the relationship like?**

Reinforcing the importance of positive relationships is essential to the development of a strong community. Positive relationships lay the foundation for cooperation, skill development, and learning.

Recommendations:

- Constantly inquire about the strength of the "relationship/s" between/among students, staff, and families.
- Celebrate positive relationships, and when challenged, specifically ask, "What is the relationship like between... (students, yourself and your students, particularly students and their classroom peers, staff members...etc.)?"
- Self-reflect on your own relationships with school community members and ask others to reflect on their relationships.

### **What happened?**

Ask open-ended questions that allow for a genuine retelling of an experience.

Recommendations:

- Do not ask the "why" question.
- Instead, ask "What happened?" when inquiring about specific actions or behaviors.

### **Who was affected (harmed) by what happened?**

For both positive and negative actions, recognizing impact helps to teach that one's actions affect the greater community. It is equally important to reinforce positive impact as it is to teach that negative behavior harms relationships and the health of the community.

Recommendation:

- Consider age-appropriate language to use in response to students and staff actions/behaviors, reinforcing the importance of positive relationships and community.

### **What needs do those involved have?**

When conflict or harm occurs, it is important to recognize that ALL parties involved have resulting needs. Often the needs of those "harmed" and those who "harmed" have similar needs. Giving individuals an opportunity to voice their needs is an important step towards identifying what must happen to repair the relationships.

Recommendation:

- Using age-appropriate language, ask ALL individuals involved in an incident (including the educator/ staff/family member) to share/reflect on what needs they have/had (both during the time of the incident and afterward ).

**What needs to happen to repair the harm (make things as right as possible)?**

Reinforcing the importance of repairing harm (when one's actions have negatively affected the community) is critical for the restoration of community/relationships when harm has occurred. Giving those involved in the incident an opportunity to identify what they are going to do to make things right teaches responsibility and holds them accountable for their actions.

Recommendations:

- Allow for the people involved in an incident to share what they need to see happen to address and repair the harm caused by hurtful/negative behavior.
- Accountability stems from following-through with the identified plan after considering that everyone needs to feel satisfied with the situation.

Source: Restorative Practices Whole School Implementation Guide (n.d.)

## Workshop Handout 6: *Restorative Practices Workshop Feedback Form*

**School Name:**

**Date:**

*Please take a couple minutes to complete this reflection form. Your feedback will be considered when deciding on a plan for how to move forward with restorative practices in our school.*

1. What do you know now about restorative practices that you did not know prior to this workshop?
2. What aspects of restorative practices seem most promising when you consider student behavior in your classroom community?
3. What would you like to learn more about or have support to try in your classroom?
4. What questions did this workshop raise for you about restorative practices in schools?
5. You now know that restorative practices are about building/strengthening the school community and repairing harm to restore relationships and community when conflict occurs. In what ways do you foresee restorative practices could make a difference at your school community?
6. Please share any additional thoughts, questions, concerns, or compliments you may have.

*Thank you! Your feedback is important to our next planning!*

Source: Restorative Practices Whole School Implementation Guide (n.d.)

## Activity #3: Student Fishbowl Instructions

**Time:** This activity requires approximately 60 minutes.

**Purpose:** The student fishbowl activity allows staff/faculty to listen actively to the experiences and perspectives of a select group from the student community. Educators will have an opportunity to hear the experiences, ideas, and feedback of current students while giving the students an opportunity to be active in the dialogue on educational equity.

**Room Set-up:** Prior to students and staff entering the room, have one small circle with enough chairs for all students and the facilitator set up in the middle of the room with a larger circle of chairs surrounding the inner circle for staff/faculty. Place a clipboard and pencil with a fishbowl note-taking and reflection form on every staff chair for staff to complete during the activity.

Post the following Fishbowl Guidelines for all to see: Staff/faculty and “observers” are to remain silent and attentive to students during the fishbowl activity. Post the Circle Guidelines where students can see them (see Handout 1 from Professional Learning Activity #2).

**Structure of Fishbowl:** The fishbowl students sit in a circle in the middle of the room facing each other with the staff/faculty “observers” sitting in a larger circle surrounding the students.

### Pre-Fishbowl Preparation:

1. Identify a staff member to facilitate the fishbowl activity.
2. Confirm the date and time for the fishbowl activity with the site administrator.
3. Invite a group of about 6-8 students to participate in the fishbowl and meet them ahead of the activity. It is important to select a diverse group of students with varying experiences and to confirm that all students are interested and willing to participate. Explain how the fishbowl will work and that you are looking for their very honest responses; the staff is trying to learn from listening carefully to the group’s perspectives.
4. Select several questions to ask of students during the fishbowl. Sample questions:
  - a. Describe a classroom that you enjoyed being in and why.
  - b. Describe a classroom in which you learned to your best ability. What did it look like? Sound like? Feel like? Why did you do your best in this classroom?
  - c. What can your educators do to help you learn better?
  - d. Share a story about when one of your educators did something that made you feel especially included in the learning process.
  - e. Share a story about when you felt especially excluded from the learning process.
  - f. Describe what a school is like in which you feel safe and respected. What does it look and sound like? What kinds of relationships do you have with your educators and school staff?
  - g. To what extent do you feel that your school listens to students and acts on the information students give? How do you know when the staff and your peers are really listening?
5. In a second meeting with the student participants, the facilitator shares the questions that will be asked and allows them an opportunity to consider their responses ahead of time. (It is encouraged to meet with the students on two occasions prior to the fishbowl to ensure readiness of the students). If possible, assign one of the fishbowl students the role of facilitator. It will be their responsibility to ask questions, facilitate the fishbowl discussion, and make sure everyone has an opportunity to talk. If necessary, you can play the role of facilitator.



6. At the start of the fishbowl, after students and staff are seated, the facilitator explains the guidelines and process of the fishbowl activity: Staff members and any guests are observers and learners today and are here to listen carefully to student experiences, perspectives, and feedback. Explain that staff and guests will remain silent during the fishbowl activity, but they will have an opportunity to ask questions at the end if time allows. Once a question is read out loud, each student will have an opportunity to respond to the question. Remind the staff participants that the students have been asked to be fully honest in their responses. Consider using a talking piece to help ensure that one person speaks at a time.
7. Students enter the room and take a seat in the middle circle. The facilitator asks each student to introduce themselves. Review the Circle Guidelines poster and ensure that all students agree to follow the guidelines. Introduce the talking piece.
8. Fishbowl Rounds: Begin fishbowl circle rounds (one focus question for each round) using a round robin format. Make sure everybody in the fishbowl has an opportunity to talk and allow students to pass if they want to. Give opportunities for additional responses from students after each question round.
9. Allow the fishbowl discussion to continue for at least 30 minutes. You can allow it to continue longer if time permits.
10. Inviting Staff into the Fishbowl. After the students have shared responses to all the questions, add one additional chair into the student circle. Open the invitation for any staff member to enter the student circle only to ask a follow-up question. Once the staff member has asked the question, they are to return to their seat and the students take turns responding to the follow-up question. Continue to invite additional staff questions if time permits.
11. Thank the students for their participation.
12. Group Reflection and Processing: Be sure to have someone scribing the responses. A variety of questions can guide staff conversation lead by the facilitator:
  - To the observers: Was it difficult to not respond or react to the fishbowl students' comments during the fishbowl? Why?
  - To the fishbowl students: How did it feel to share your feelings about school, knowing that these educators were listening closely?
  - To the fishbowl students: Do you usually have opportunities to share your perspectives on school and your education?
  - To the observers: Did you hear anything from the fishbowl that surprised you?
  - To both the students and observers: What is one thing you have learned from this experience?

**Facilitator Notes:**

A few simple strategies will help you facilitate this activity smoothly.

First, remember that this activity is about reminding educators that students are their most important resource and is about providing the staff an educational experience. As mentioned above, it is thus crucial that observers show maximum respect to the fishbowl students by following the silence ground rule. It may take some effort to enforce this ground rule, as many educators are not fully ready to play the role of learner from people who may be their own students. Consider writing something on a poster such as "We are all educators. We are all learners."

Source: Restorative Practices Whole School Implementation Guide (n.d.) Content of this fishbowl activity write-up was originally modified from: <http://www.edchange.org/multicultural/activities/fishbowl.html>

Student Fishbowl Handout: *Notes and Reflections*

Name: (optional)

Date:

Please use this sheet to take notes during the fishbowl activity. Your responses will be collected and used as a contribution to the leadership team’s reflection process.

<b>Common Themes:</b>	<b>Questions for Students during Q&amp;A Portion of the Fishbowl Activity:</b>
<b>Personal Reflections, Wonderings, Feelings, Lessons Learned:</b>	<b>Other Notes:</b>

PART 5:

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