

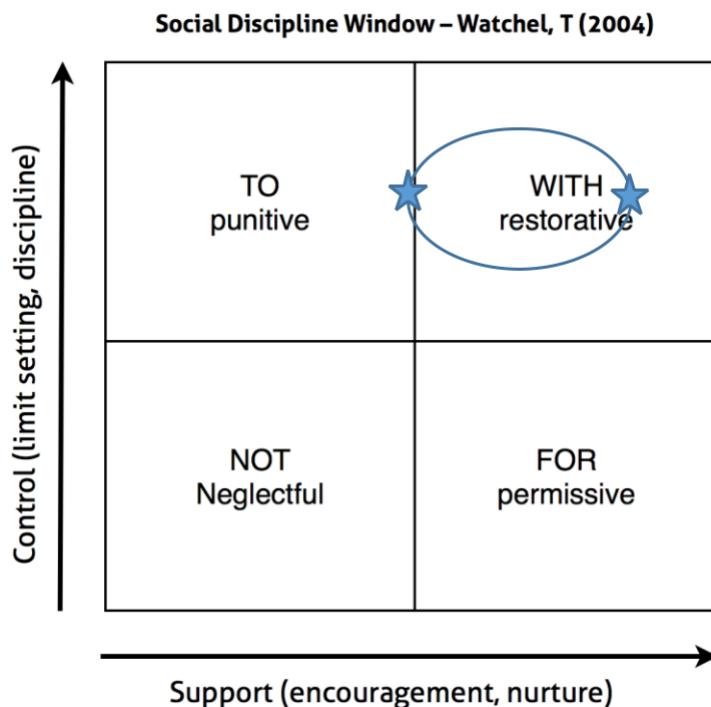
RESTORATIVE PRACTICES-OVERVIEW

Restorative Practices allow for a shift in practice that results in a culture that is inclusive, builds fair process into decision-making practices, and facilitates students learning to address the impact of their actions through an approach that allows for true accountability, skill building, cooperation, and mutual understanding. When broadly and consistently implemented, Restorative Practices will promote and strengthen positive school culture and enhance pro-social relationships within the school community.

Through Restorative Practices, members of the school community will:

- Have an opportunity to be heard
- Understand the greater impact of one's actions Learn to take responsibility
- Repair the harm one's actions may have caused
- Recognize one's role in maintaining a safe school environment
- Build upon and expand on personal relationships in the school community
- Recognize one's role as a positive contributing member of the school community

The underlying premise of Restorative Practices is that people are happier, more cooperative, more productive, and more likely to make positive changes when those in positions of authority do things with them rather than to them or for them. Ultimately, people will learn to make positive, productive, and effective choices in response to situations they may encounter in the future after engaging in a restorative practice.



A RESPONSE TO AND PREVENTION OF HARM

In schools, Restorative Practice/Approaches are multifaceted in nature. Restorative Practices include interventions when harm has happened, as well as practices that help to prevent harm and conflict by helping to build a sense of belonging, safety, and social responsibility in the school community.

Benefits of Restorative Approaches in the School Setting:

- A safer, more caring environment.
- A more effective teaching and learning environment.
- A greater commitment by everyone to taking the time to listen to one another. A reduction in bullying and other interpersonal conflicts.
- A greater awareness of the importance of connectedness to young people. The need to belong and feel valued by peers and significant adults.
- Greater emphasis on responses to inappropriate behavior that seek to reconnect, and not further disconnect young people.
- Reductions in fixed term and permanent suspensions and expulsions.
- A greater confidence in the staff team to deal with challenging situations.

The most widely known part of Restorative Practices are the circles, which can be used to build community or solve a problem.

COMMUNITY BUILDING CIRCLES

Community Building Circles are all about being seen, being heard, being known, and developing affection. They are performed by having the class sit or stand in a circle and openly shares thoughts, ideas, and feelings, in order to feel a sense of belonging within the classroom community.

Prior to the sharing, the class sets guidelines:

1. **Speak from the Heart-** This means students speaking for themselves and talking about what is true for them based on their own experiences. When students speak from the heart, they are aiming to be clear in choosing words that accurately communicate what they hold to be important.
2. **Listen from the Heart-** When students listen from the heart they are trying to set aside any judgements that they may have made about another person. This opens up the possibility of making discoveries and new connections with their peers.
3. **No Need to Rehearse-** Students do not need to mentally rehearse what they are going to say while waiting to speak. Reminding themselves “no need to rehearse” will help to bring the attention back to the speaker and puts each student in an active listening role.
4. **Lean Expression-** Keep in mind the limits of time and making room for everyone to speak. The intention is to have students express themselves with fewer words than they would normally use, as fewer words can have a greater impact.
5. **Respect the Talking Piece-** Only the person who holds the talking piece should be speaking in the circle.

After the class accepts the norms, the teacher leads the students through prompts. Sample prompts are provided at the end of this section.

PROBLEM-SOLVING CIRCLES

When something negative happens, such as something being destroyed, students being unkind to one another, students talking during instruction, etc., the teacher can use that opportunity to gather the class in a circle to:

1. Think about what happened that did not work and have people take responsibility for what they did to contribute to that problem.
2. Ask what kind of atmosphere students and teachers want in their classrooms.
3. Reflect and think about what each person is going to do to help attain that ideal.

Tips for Problem-Solving Circles:

- Use nonviolent communication to avoid blame
- Keep it simple. Ask, "What harm has been caused" and "what needs to happen to make things right?"
- Circles can be sequential, popcorn, or fishbowl style.
- Teachers should not feel the need to control the conversation.
- Be vulnerable. If the teacher's feelings were hurt, the students should know that. Once the group has a good idea or solution, write it down as a poster or contract
- If the culprit is never uncovered, that person still heard the harm that was done and likely will not do it again.
- Trust the circle, "The circle is a container that is strong enough to hold just about anything that is poured into it. Discover what is possible."

RESTORATIVE CONFERENCE

A restorative conference is a structured meeting between offenders, victims, and possibly even bystanders, in which they deal with the consequences of the crime or wrong-doing and decide how best to repair the harm. Neither a counseling nor a mediation process, conferencing is a victim-sensitive, straightforward problem-solving method that demonstrates how citizens can resolve their own problems when provided with a constructive forum to do so.

The conference uses a specific questioning protocol:

Questions to Respond to Challenging Behavior:	Questions to Help Those Harmed By Others' Actions:
What happened? What were you thinking of at the time? What have you thought about since? Who has been affected by what you have done? In what way have they been affected? What do you think you need to do to make things right?	What did you think when you realized what had happened? What impact has this incident had on you and others? What has been the hardest thing for you? What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

INFORMAL RESTORATIVE PRACTICES/NON-VIOLENT COMMUNICATION

Restorative Practices can be used in many informal ways beyond the formal processes. Informal Restorative Practices include affective statements/non-violent communication, which communicate people’s feelings, as well as affective questions, causing people to reflect on how their behavior has affected others.

A teacher in a classroom might employ an affective statement/non-violent communication when a student has misbehaved, letting the student know how the teacher has been affected by the student’s behavior: “When you disrupt the class, I feel sad” or “disrespected” or “disappointed.” Hearing this, the student learns how his or her behavior is affecting others.

The use of informal Restorative Practices dramatically reduces the need for more time-consuming formal Restorative Practices. Systematic use of informal Restorative Practices has a cumulative impact and creates an environment that consistently fosters awareness, empathy, and responsibility in a way that is likely to prove far more effective in achieving social discipline than our current reliance on punishment and sanctions.

Rosenberg Non-Violent Communication Method

Clearly expressing how I am without blaming or criticizing	Empathically receiving how you are without hearing blame or criticism
OBSERVATIONS	
1. What I observe (<i>see, hear, remember, imagine, free from my evaluations</i>) that does or does not contribute to my well-being: “When I (<i>see, hear</i>) . . . ”	1. What you observe (<i>see, hear, remember, imagine, free from your evaluations</i>) that does or does not contribute to your well-being: “When you <i>see/hear</i> . . . ” <i>(Sometimes unspoken when offering empathy)</i>
FEELINGS	
2. How I feel (<i>emotion or sensation rather than thought</i>) in relation to what I observe: “I feel . . . ”	2. How you feel (<i>emotion or sensation rather than thought</i>) in relation to what you observe: “You feel . . . ”
NEEDS	
3. What I need or value (<i>rather than a preference, or a specific action</i>) that causes my feelings: “. . . because I <i>need/value</i> . . . ”	3. What you need or value (<i>rather than a preference, or a specific action</i>) that causes your feelings: “. . . because you <i>need/value</i> . . . ”
Clearly requesting that which would enrich my life without demanding	Empathically receiving that which would enrich your life without hearing any demand
REQUESTS	
4. The concrete actions I would like taken: “Would you be willing to . . . ?”	4. The concrete actions you would like taken: “Would you like . . . ?” <i>(Sometimes unspoken when offering empathy)</i>

