Restorative Practices in Action

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Today’s objectives:

1. Understand Restorative Practices and how it will impact your school
2. Walk away with a “toolbox” of applicable materials and ideas to bring back to schools and/or districts
3. Implement community and problem-solving circles in your school.
Whittier Middle School Profile

- Communities:
  Poland (5,376), Mechanic Falls (3,031), Minot (2,607)
- Opened in 1999
- Current enrollment: 262 students
- Average class size: 18.8
- Students with IEP: 18%
- Economically disadvantaged: 37%

What is Restorative Practice?

**Goal:** The Restorative Approach uses both proactive and responsive practices to build strong relationships, a respectful climate and culture, personal accountability, engagement, empathy and honest communication.
What it’s not:

➔ replacement for disciplinary system

➔ punitive (eye for an eye)

➔ equal, both parties may not have been damaged
ASCA National Model

Weekly community circles facilitated by teachers

Restorative & Resolution Circles facilitated by school counselor and/or admin

Circles are initiated by students, staff, school counselor, admin and even parents
Data

Los Angeles, CA. 2007-2015

Instructional Days Lost to Suspension


Circles
Role/Responsibilities of the facilitator

This role **IS** about:

This role is **NOT** about:

Sharing power
  Power over others
Guiding
  Bossing
Modeling
  Bullying
Non-judgement
  Hurrying
  Avoiding

The Talking Piece

“Everything in the Circle is an invitation—when you have the talking piece you are invited to speak, but you may pass. When you do not have the talking piece you are invited to listen.”

-Greg Lewis, Teaching and Learning in Circle, 2003
Agreements

- Bring your full attention to the circle
- Everyone will have a turn to speak, equally
- It’s OK to pass, you will have another chance to speak
- Address your comments to the whole group
- Stay on topic
- Be honest, open-minded and non-judgemental
- Listen and speak with respect for others
- No interrupting the speaker or side conversations
- Respect privacy and confidentiality

Community Circles

- Builds and strengthens relationships in school community

- Structured conversation
  - Talking piece
  - Physical circle

- Breaks down barriers
  - Between staff and students
  - Authentic dialogue
  - Make personal connections
Community Circles

- **Where should you use them?**
  - classrooms, teams, clubs, small groups
  - homeroom/advisory period
  - staff meetings, parent meetings

- **Who should use them?**
  - teachers in academic classrooms or class meetings
  - school counselors for group work
  - administrators for staff meetings and democratic decision-making
Problem Solving Circles

- Form of community circles that provides a safe place for addressing difficult issues/conflicts either between teachers and students, among students and/or among staff.

- Promotes:
  - understanding
  - resolving conflict
  - processing difficult events

- Restorative
  - script provided for the circle facilitator
  - helps to process harm done and may help with healing and moving forward
Resolution Circles

- Used for in-class, when harm is done to another student, offered in place of detentions or repair after a suspension or incident

- Includes:
  - Trained facilitator with a guided script
  - any person directly harmed by the student's actions
  - other students affected by the harm done

- Agreements
  - how to say “I’m sorry”
  - signed agreements

Restorative Circles

1. WHAT HAPPENED?
2. WHAT WERE YOU THINKING OF AT THE TIME?
3. WHAT HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT SINCE?
4. WHO HAS BEEN AFFECTED BY WHAT YOU HAVE DONE AND IN WHAT WAY?
5. WHAT DO YOU THINK YOU NEED TO DO TO MAKE THINGS RIGHT?
Additional Supporting Strategies

Reminder Cards
Restorative Room
Whittier handbook
The goal: to keep kids in class!
Role Play: It’s Your Turn!

Get into groups of 5.

Choose your role: teacher/facilitator, school counselor, three students

Key Points

- Teacher out two days due to illness
- Class was disrespectful and disruptive to substitute
- Principal observed students singing, dancing, running and throwing wads of paper when she walked by and had to intervene
- Circle to discuss what happened

and GO......
Scenarios:
Work in groups of 3-4. One person will take the lead as the facilitator, the others circle participants.

Student states her best friend has stopped talking to her and is gossiping behind her back. She doesn’t know what happened.

A student posts harassing messages about another student on social media. The student took a screen-shot of the messages and brought it to you to help problem solve.

Two students get into a physical altercation in the hallway. Both are angry. Do you have a circle? If so, when? Practice.

Be aware... 5 Reasons Restorative Practice fails in schools

1. Lack of Planning: You can’t just “wing it”!

➢ need staff buy in
➢ inconsistent progress checks
➢ logistics not identified: the who, when, where, how
➢ no school wide roll out
2. Lack of Vision...CHANGE IS HARD!
3. Lack of Training
4. Lack of Support
5. Lack of Time and Money


10 ways you can begin using circles on Monday!

1. Envision/plan how you can arrange circles in your classroom/office
2. Select a talking piece
3. Have students brainstorm a list of agreements
4. Try a check-in Circle or fun community-building circle
5. Explain and use the reminder card (more for classroom use)
6. Try one of the “personal connection” strategies
7. When talking with students about their behavior, “drop the why” and replace with “what” or “how”
8. Schedule or have a check-in circle with colleagues
9. Try a quick restorative conversation to check in with a student who seems to need some attention
10. Try an Affective Statement, Ex. I feel disrespected when you speak over me because I don’t feel heard.

Created by the Restorative School Practices Collaborative of Maine
“Circles bring us together to share who we are beyond our appearances. They’re places of listening-of hearing what it’s like to be someone else. They’re also places for being heard- for expressing what’s on our minds and hearts and having others receive it deeply.”

*Peacemaking Circles, From Crime to Community, 2003*

“Dialogue is a process of genuine interaction through which human beings listen to each other deeply enough to be changed by what they learn.”

- Harold Saunders, *A Public Peace Process*

“People fail to get along because they fear each other; they fear each other because they do not know each other; they do not know each other because they have not communicated with each other.”

Reverend Martin Luther King
Sources

- University of Maine, Peace & Reconciliation Studies
- Restorative School Practices Collaborative of Maine
- The Little Book of Circle Processes, K. Pranis, 2005
- The Little Book of Restorative Discipline for Schools, L. Stutzman Amstutz & J. Mullet, 2005
- http://schottfoundation.org/restorative-practices
Want more info? Contact us.

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Problem-Solving Circle Script
(Substitute Teacher Scenario)

[Note to facilitator: For each question below, go around the circle so everyone can respond. If at the end of a round it seems that some people have more to say, it’s okay to go around again with the same question. It’s also fine to begin each round with a different person, which gives someone new the opportunity to start the round.]

Facilitator's introduction to the group:
"Hello everyone. We're going to role play a problem-solving circle. First, I invite each of you to step into the role of a student or the principal and respond from that perspective during the circle. Please do not "overdo" your role-playing. This is the scenario we will be using: I am a teacher who returns to class after a two-day absence due to illness, and you are my students. I have learned that this class (on the second day of my absence, yesterday) was very disruptive and disrespectful to the substitute teacher. I have also learned that the principal witnessed some of you singing, dancing, running and throwing paper wads when she/he was passing by in the hallway and had to come into the classroom to stop it. I have decided to have a circle to talk about what happened."

BEGIN ROLE PLAY HERE:

"Okay class, I've learned something about what happened in our class yesterday with the substitute teacher and we need to talk about it. You've done circles before so you know how they work. I'll just review the circle agreements before we begin."

- Everyone will have a turn to speak.
- It's okay to pass, and we will come back to you at the end of the Circle.
- Stay on the topic.
- Be as honest as possible.
- Speak for yourself only without naming or blaming anyone else.
- Be respectful of others.
- Do not interrupt a speaker or have private conversations.
- Respect privacy by keeping the dialogue confidential.

"Will everyone follow these agreements? Good. Let's begin."

Questions:
1. From your point of view, what happened yesterday in our class while the substitute was here? Again, please DO NOT point fingers of blame at anyone else. Tell us about your own behavior and experience without using other people's names.

2. How did you feel when all of this happened? [Note: The "teacher" can talk about how he/she feels now.]

3. Who has been affected by what happened? How have they been affected?

4. What does each of us in this class need to do to put things right, to repair the harm?

5. How could we, as a group, respond differently to a substitute teacher in the future?

6. Do you feel finished? If not, what else would you like to say?

"Thank you for participating in this Circle in a respectful way."

Created by the Restorative School Practices Collaborative of Maine
# An Overview of Restorative Practices

*Restorative School Practices Collaborative of Maine*

## For Community Building
- Making personal connections
- Restorative Conversations ("What’s up?")
- Community Circles:
  - Classrooms
  - Teams
  - Clubs
- Other small groups:
  - With faculty
  - With parents

## For Low-Level Discipline, Conflicts, Problems
(addressed within the classroom)
- Restorative Reminder Cards
- Restorative Inquiry
  (one-to-one conversations during class or assigned after-school "detention" within the classroom, using restorative questions)
- Collaborative Problem-Solving (Ross Greene)
- Peer Mediation
- Problem-Solving Circles
  (for whole class issues)

## For Serious Discipline Matters
(addressed outside the classroom)
- Resolution Circles
  (group detention)
- Restorative Conferences
  (includes student, family and other key people)
- Restorative Inquiry used for office disciplinary conversations, in-school suspension, and out-of-school suspension
COMMUNITY CIRCLES
(An authentic dialogue process)

An Overview of the Model

Authentic Dialogue – A definition
"The practice of speaking one’s personal truth and listening well to others for deeper understanding."

Some interesting word origins
"Debate" comes from the Latin "dis" – "apart, against each other" and "batter" – "to fight, beat."

"Discussion" comes from the Latin "discutere" – "to smash apart" (same root as "concussion" and "percussion").

"Dialogue" comes from the Greek "dia" – "through" and "logos" – "the word, the meaning" (or the notion of "a free flow of meaning between people" – David Bohm).

Foundational Values
The Community Circles model is built around a framework of core values. As Kay Pranis notes in The Little Book of Circle Processes (2005), "Circles assume a universal human wish to be connected to others in a good way. The values of a Circle derive from this basic human impulse. Therefore values that nurture and promote good connections to others are the foundation of the Circle." These values include: the dignity and worth of each person, respect and non-judgment, inclusiveness, understanding, compassion, honesty, openheartedness, courage and trust.

Purposes for conducting Community Circles
Build and strengthen community
Promote understanding of self and others
Break down barriers between people and groups
Provide a safe space for addressing difficult issues or conflicts
Foster authentic connections and relationships
Process a particular event, video, presentation, or activity
Shift climate towards a more "relational" environment
Elicit wisdom, ideas, points of view, information
Offer a process for democratic decision-making
The Dialogue Process
This is a “structured dialogue,” not a back and forth discussion or debate.
One person speaks at a time, using a talking piece.
A facilitator guides the dialogue.
The Agreements help create a safe space.
Time is shared equally by all.
This is an opportunity to use “intentional and respectful” listening (i.e., listening for understanding, meaning and connection, not necessarily for agreement or solutions) and “honest and courageous” sharing.

The Role and Responsibilities of the Circle Facilitator
A facilitator works to maintain an atmosphere of trust and respect and to guide the sharing of experiences and insights in productive ways.

This role is about: 
- Sharing power
- Guiding
- Modeling
- Nonjudgment
- Listening

This role is NOT about:
- Power over others
- Bossing
- Bullying
- Hurrying
- Avoiding

1. Be clear on the purpose for the Circle.

2. Introduce yourself as the facilitator and briefly describe the Circle process.

3. Emphasize the importance of the talking piece: *This talking piece helps focus our attention on the person who is speaking, and gives everyone an equal chance to participate.*

4. Review the Agreements with the group. Add any new ones that come up.

5. Begin the Circle asking one question at a time. Allow silent time for reflection before passing the talking piece to the person on your right or left.

6. Make sure everyone has a turn to speak, including those who have passed.

7. Informally monitor time so no one monopolizes the Circle. Remind the group about this if necessary. (For example, “*Before we move on to the next speaker, I’d like to remind the group that we all agreed to share the speaking time. Please try to remember that. If you feel you have more to say, there is time at the end to elaborate.*”)

8. After everyone has had a chance to speak, repeat the Circle if people need to elaborate.

9. Repeat the Agreements if necessary. (For example, “*I would just like to remind the group that we agreed to....*”)

2
The Agreements
We use Agreements during Circles to help create a safe atmosphere of trust and respect. The Agreements are clearly stated and discussed at the beginning of a Circle and can be revisited at any time if the facilitator finds the participants need to be reminded of the intention of the Circle process. After reading the list, ask if anyone wants to add something or if anyone has a problem with something on the list.

1. Bring your full attention and presence to the Circle.

2. Everyone will have a turn to speak, and we agree to share the time we have equally.

3. It’s okay to pass, and you will have another chance to speak at the end of the Circle.

4. Address your comments to the whole group or to the center of the Circle.

5. Stay on the topic.

6. Be as honest, open-minded and non-judgmental as possible.

7. Listen and speak with respect for others.

8. Please do not interrupt a speaker or have side conversations during the Circle.

9. Respect privacy by keeping the dialogue confidential.

(*Note -- When necessary, for example, during a Circle to resolve a conflict or when addressing a difficult issue, include this as another Agreement: “Use ‘I’ Statements to express your own feelings or beliefs and avoid ‘You’ Statements that blame or attack others.”)

The Importance of the Talking Piece
As previously noted, the talking piece is an important element of the Community Circles process. It encourages careful listening, patience, and thoughtful responses. It helps to maintain a sense of order and calm, especially in Circles addressing problems or conflicts. In The Little Book of Circle Processes (2005), author Kay Pranis describes the talking piece in this way:

“The talking piece is a powerful equalizer. It allows every participant an equal opportunity to speak and carries an implicit assumption that every participant has something important to offer the group. The talking piece facilitates the contributions of quiet people who are unlikely to assert themselves in a typical open dialogue. As it passes physically from hand to hand, the talking piece weaves a connecting thread among the members of the Circle.”

“Everything in the Circle is an invitation—when you have the talking piece you are invited to speak, but you may pass. When you do not have the talking piece you are invited to listen.”

Greg Lewis, Teaching and Learning in Circle, 2003
OPENING
Good afternoon. My name is ___________ and I will be facilitating the work we will be doing together. I thank those of you who have agreed to participate in this circle process for being here today. This is a process that is unfamiliar to most of us, so it is important that we establish and follow rules for our time together.

I am required to tell you that you do not have to participate in this circle, and are free to leave at any time. If you do leave, however, the matter will be referred back to the administration for further action.

Here are the rules that I would like you to consider and approve before we begin.

☑️ We will take turns talking. First I will call on each person who has been assigned to be here one at a time, then any students or teachers directly involved in that student's conflict will be asked to speak, and finally other community members, both students and adults will be called upon to share their thoughts.

☑️ We will not interrupt the person who is speaking. Should it not be possible to control interruptions, I will ask the interrupter to leave or end the circle.

☑️ Speak with I messages.

☑️ What’s said here stays here unless it’s part of your agreement to speak with someone outside this circle.

☑️ Agree to speak when holding the “talking piece”.

Do you have any questions about the process?
Will you support these rules? (Seek support from EACH participant.)

CIRCLE PROCESS
This circle will focus on what each individual did and how this unacceptable behavior has affected others. We are not here to determine if he/she is a good or bad person. Hopefully, we will work toward repairing the harm that has resulted. Is this clear to everyone?

The incident(s) shared today may be finalized in this circle subject to your positive participation and satisfactory compliance with the circle agreement. Do you understand this?

At this point, I will ask each of you to introduce yourself and your role in this circle today.

Thank you all for being here.

[Note to facilitator: Repeat the following steps #1-4 with each student who has gotten in trouble.]

Let’s start with __________ (student).
[1. Gathering information from person who caused harm:]

To help us understand who has been affected, I’d like us to start by having ____________ tell us.....
* What happened?
* What were you thinking about at the time?
* What have you thought about since?
* Who do you think has been affected by what you did?
* In what ways have they been affected?

[2. Learning how people have been affected by these actions:]

Now, let’s find out from the other members of our community ways they were affected by these actions (teacher, student representative, or community member).
* What is your reaction to what ____________ did?
* How do you feel about what happened?
* How has this behavior impacted you or others in our school community?

Do any other members of the circle have comments or questions?

[3. Creating an agreement to repair the harm—take notes:]

(Starting with those harmed among the community members present—teacher, student rep, other:)

What would you like to see happen based upon the discussion that we just had? How might (person causing harm) make this better (provide restitution)?

Now, (person causing harm), is there anything you can think of that would help make this better?

[4. Finalize a plan to repair the harm:]

(Person causing harm):
  Does the plan seem fair to you?
  Is there anything you need from your peers or adults in school to help you change your behavior?
  Can you complete the plan, and in the time specified?

CLOSING

Review formal apology script and give each student a copy to rehearse from.
The written contract should be completed and signed by members of the circle.

This will formalize the circle and serve as written record of what we have agreed upon today. A copy of this agreement will be kept by school administrators.

Before we close, is there anything anyone wants to say?

I thank you for participating as you have in this circle. I congratulate you for the ways you have worked through these issues and for reaching these agreements.
How to say I'm Sorry

Step 1: Say “I'm sorry for.........”

Step 2: State what you did wrong that you are sorry about.

Example: “I'm sorry for writing on your planner.”

Step 3: State how your actions harmed the other person(s).

Example: “I understand this made you feel sad because you wanted to keep it looking new.”

Step 4: Offer a way of giving back or making up for what you did.

Example: “I would be willing to buy you another planner if you would like a new one.”

Step 5: Ask the person you harmed for forgiveness.

Example: “Can you forgive me?”
Resolution Circle Agreement

Name of Student: ___________________________ Circle Date: ___________________

Name of Person(s) Harmed: ___________________________________________________

Student Offense: ___________________________________________________________

As a result of my participation in the Resolution Circle, I agree to the following:

_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

Something(s) I need from the community that will help me change my behavior:

_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________

I, __________________________, agree to fulfill this agreement by ______________________

I understand my failure to complete the above satisfactorily could result in another resolution circle or other actions.

_________________________________________________________________________

Student Causing Harm  Person(s) Harmed or Representative

Facilitator

Community Participant(s):

_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________________
Reflection Sheet

Name __________________________ Date ________________

Think about these questions and then answer thoughtfully.

1) What did you do that was wrong?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

2) What were you trying to make happen?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

3) What happened as a result of your actions?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

4) How did this affect those around you?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

5) Look at question #2. What would be a better way to make that happen?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________

6) What should you do to fix the harm done?

________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________________
Purpose of the Restorative Room

1. Provide the student with a break from the “trigger” or the environment.
2. Provide the teacher support with student behavior.
3. Provide space for student processing of behaviors and relationship repair.
4. Data Collection on school-wide behaviors.
5. Build relationships with supporting staff.

Goal of the Restorative Room

The Ultimate Goals of the Restorative Room are to allow the student to:

1. Acknowledge the problem behavior.
2. Identify the impact their behavior had upon others.
3. Process the events leading up to the behavior.
4. Identify alternative strategies to use in the classroom when they are faced with a similar situation.
5. Restore the relationship(s)/Repair the harm that was caused.
6. GET THE STUDENTS BACK TO CLASS, READY TO LEARN!

After sharing this information with students, talk with students about the importance of using their time in the Restorative Room to examine their behavior and problem solve potential solutions to avoid having this happen in the future.

Pass out the copies of the completed Restorative Room Forms.
Have the students examine the differences between the two examples provided. What do they notice? Who seems to really be demonstrating that they understand the impact that their behavior had on others?

Read the following scenario to your students:

*Margaret has been coming to late to class each day and has not bringing her agenda with her each day. Her teacher allowed her to go to her locker to get her agenda the first few times, but Margaret continues to leave her agenda in her locker. When Margaret arrives late, her teacher asks for a late pass but Margaret explains she has difficulty getting into her locker. Her teacher explains that if she arrives late, and continues to leave her agenda in her locker, she will be sent to the Restorative Room. The next day, Margaret is late to her locker and is asked to go to the Restorative Room.*

After reading the scenario, have the students imagine that they are the student (Margaret) described in this scenario. Distribute the blank copies of the processing form and have the students work with a partner to complete their form. Have the students share their responses to the questions.

KEY: The goal is to clearly identify their behavior, state the impact on others, and identify ways to repair the impact on others. If student responses to do not indicate these things, they will be asked to fill the form out again or further disciplinary actions may be taken. They will be introduced to these later on in the week.
REMINDER

What are you doing?
Who is being affected by this?
How are they being affected?
What do you need to do now?
Disciplinary Mission Statement

• The school community should be Respectful, Responsible, Honest, Caring, and Just.
• All students deserve to be educated in a safe and secure environment.
• All students are responsible for the decisions they make and need to be held accountable for their actions.
• All students deserve an opportunity to wipe their disciplinary slate clean through long-term positive behavior.

Discipline Procedure

Building a positive and inclusive school climate is our primary goal. Every student deserves to attend a school where they are known and respected and experience a sense of belonging. Such positive climates are the foundation of the strong academic achievement we seek for all students. The staff at Whittier are committed to making our school such a place for all of our students. This year, we continue to work with the Restorative Practices Collaborative through the University of Maine to integrate processes and discipline practices that support our community building efforts. The key goals of restorative practices are to:

Build community
• Create caring climates to support a healthy learning environment.
• Teach and model communication and empathy skills.
• Listen and respond to the needs of others.

Solve problems
• Support and encourage accountability and responsibility.
• Teach and employ collaborative processes to address issues.
• Foster independent thinking and problem-solving skills through practice and guided experience.

Establish and nurture a positive and safe school climate
• Use inclusive and collaborative processes to repair relationships and community.
• Promote personal accountability and understanding of one's actions upon others.
• Practice self-discipline, manage time responsibly, and meet obligations.
Our goal is to build community, promote growth and empathy, and build students’ capacity to be positive contributors to our school.

*Classroom Management:* The teachers manage their own classrooms to help all students maximize their educational experiences. Teachers encourage students to make good choices and take personal responsibility for their behavior and to help create an educational environment that serves all well.

- As necessary, teachers address disruptive behavior especially when the behavior of a student interferes with the learning of others. If problems are persistent, teachers will notify both the student’s advisor and parents, and may issue an after school detention. When a student’s behavior seriously disrupts the learning environment, the student will be sent out of class either to another teacher or to an administrator, at the discretion of the teacher.

- When a student is sent out of class, that student reports with a pass from his/her teacher either to their buddy class or to an administrator. Repeat offenses involving teachers and/or the administration will be communicated to the parents.
- Serious infractions such as harassment, smoking, threats, profanity, fighting, and insubordination, will be referred directly to the administration. Parents will be notified, law enforcement personnel involved when appropriate, and the student may be expected to leave school as the start of his/her suspension.

**Disciplinary Flow Chart:**

**Disciplinary Response at Whittier**

- Inappropriate behavior
- Office managed behavior: send directly to administration
- Remember: the reminder card may be used as a toolbox strategy at this point
- Teacher toolbox: i.e., proximity, change of seat, parent contact, have student stand, etc.
- Issue persists
- Reminder card: Teacher follows up—in class, in the hall, end of class
- Issue persists
- Removal from class to office or buddy teacher. Student completes reflection sheet
- Follow up assigned by teacher. Decides whether to assign detention
- Enters infraction into IC.
- Delivers reflection sheet to the office for filing. If detention is assigned, calls student's parent
- When a detention is assigned, the teacher may assign and proctor own restorative focused detention
- When a detention is assigned, the teacher may ask to have a circle detention facilitated. Contact the office to schedule.

Resolved!
Buddy break/office break procedures

Any time a student is sent from the classroom, it must be logged into IC.

Sending teacher calls
Buddy teacher/office to alert of student movement

Student quietly enters
room, sits in designated
area, and completes
reflection

When student is finished,
buddy teacher initiates form
and sends student back to
class.

If student is
disruptive, refuses
to enter buddy
teacher class, or
to fill out form,
student is referred
to office

Detention assigned

Unsatisfactory
debrief/form, or
problem continues

Student gives form to
sending teacher

Student debriefs
satisfactorily with
sending teacher

Detention assigned

Resolved!

If a student continues to have
similar issues even after
successful resolution cycles,
detention should be assigned
to more fully discuss and
explore the issue.
Office Managed Behavioral Response

Office referrals are appropriate under the following circumstances:

Fighting (to be distinguished from rough-housing, or lower-level pushing/shoving issues)

Swearing: Hate language, blatant disrespectful language directed at a student or peer; public, visible

Unsafe physical behavior: reasonable potential to hurt self or others

Possession or suspicion of weapons, substances, or substance use

Defiance/insubordination: prolonged, unable to redirect, heated, public

Theft

Harassment

Cumulative events: staff has exhausted all classroom interventions, including family involvement, RT advisor notification, seat changes, redirections, buddy break, detentions, etc, but behavior continues

Suspension level offenses

Suspensions may be issued as a consequence for the following infractions

Fighting
Flagrant insubordination or rudeness to adults or peers
Stealing
Use, possession, sale, or other provision of alcohol, drugs, or cigarettes or look-alike substances
Weapons possession
Repeated harassment or bullying
Repeated offenses from above columns
Vandalism
Detentions at Whittier Middle School

Teacher Proctored

1:1
Teacher engages in two-way dialogue with student about incident (wouldn't be circle format)

In all but extreme cases (students unable/unwilling to engage in process, take responsibility for behavior), focuses on restoring damage and building relationship

Students unwilling/unable to engage in process, may be asked to simply complete work or other task related to offense (e.g., clean up a mess)

Circle detention with facilitator

Minimum of 3 people: student, teacher, and facilitator, may include others (including other students there for separate incidents)

Utilizes a script to explore what happened, the impact on others, and develop a plan to restore damages

The emphasis is on helping students to make meaning of the event, understand the impact of their behavior, and take responsibility for their actions

To the student:
We're here to talk about...
What happened?
What were you thinking/feeling at the time?
Who do you think has been affected?
How can we be sure this doesn't happen again?
What can I do to help you?

To the teacher/other harmed:
What happened?
What did you think/feel when it happened?
What have you thought about since?
How did this affect you?
What's needed to make things right?
How can we make sure this doesn't happen again?

When stuck...
Was it the right or wrong thing to do?
Was it fair or unfair?
What exactly are you sorry for?
You didn't answer my question.
Students Learn Important Lessons through Restorative School Practices

By Barb Blazej

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Well, once again summer has raced by and fall is upon us! (Does the summer season get shorter each year or is it just me?) As we settle into the school year, our focus turns to teaching and learning—to helping our students understand important ideas and different ways of thinking, and gain competence in various practices and skills. For a while now I’ve been describing our work with the Restorative Approach as a form of literacy—“relational literacy”—so at this time I’d like to reflect a bit on several lessons our students can learn when we embrace and practice this approach, particularly in the area of discipline.

Discipline, of course, is fundamentally about “educating,” and typically we hope to teach students how to interact with others in a good way, how to understand and follow rules, how to be responsible for their actions and how to change their behavior when necessary. Too often it seems that discipline has, instead, become synonymous with punishing those who break the rules, rather than helping young people grow from their mistakes and imparting valuable life lessons. This piece from The Restorative Practices Handbook describes this well (Costello, et al, 2009, pages 62-3):

Schools and societies have come to the conclusion that if those who misbehave or commit crimes are made to suffer with a punishment, they will be less likely to repeat the harmful behavior. If this were true, then the job of the school disciplinarian or the criminal court judge would be easy. With each infraction, he or she would impose a certain amount of discomfort. If that punishment failed to change an offender’s behavior, then the disciplinarian or judge would simply increase the level of suffering until the inappropriate behavior stopped.

The belief that punishment changes behavior is the basis for school discipline policies around the world. Yet the belief is not supported by evidence. Punishment works only superficially, primarily when the misbehaving students are in view of those in authority. But punishment does not create empathy in students and encourage them to internalize a commitment to behave properly, so as soon as they are out of sight the inappropriate behavior surfaces again. When we punish students by excluding or humiliating them, they do not feel connected to school administrators, teachers or their well-behaved peers. Rather, they feel alienated and instead seek out and bond with others who have been excluded from the mainstream, creating their own negative subculture in the school.

Alternatively, the Restorative Approach seeks to build strong, caring school communities founded on such values as honesty, respect, trust, inclusion, cooperation and true accountability. In this kind of learning environment, we see misbehavior and discipline as an opportunity for students to learn and internalize several important lessons (and my comments are in [brackets]):

1. I am more than my mistakes, and I am not a “bad person.” [We recognize that it is very human to make mistakes and we focus on challenging and changing student behaviors, not on judging students as good or bad people.]

2. My actions (misbehaviors) affect people and relationships. [Over time, this understanding can help students think through their actions before they act!]

3. There are consequences for breaking rules. [In a restorative community, the consequences make sense, involve the student who misbehaves (and others when appropriate) in finding solutions and making reparations,
and help students maintain dignity and self-respect. Responding to misbehaving students restoratively means we want to avoid inviting feelings of shame, anger, victimization and disconnection in our students.]

4. **“Owning” my mistakes is worth doing.** [Too often in our schools and society, we resist taking responsibility for our actions. In a restorative environment, we help students become comfortable and willing to hold themselves accountable for their actions through ongoing efforts to build a sense of trust, respect, care and community in our classrooms and schools. Students come to understand that true accountability—owning our mistakes, understanding how our actions affect others, and repairing the harm caused—is expected, encouraged and acknowledged, and they also feel good about themselves when they can fix what they have done in a positive way.]

5. **I can change my behavior in the future, and am more likely to do so once I understand how my actions hurt others, the community and myself.** [This is the powerful lesson of “empathy” that is at the heart of restorative discipline.]

6. **If I make mistakes (some slight, others more serious), I am still part of the community and I will have opportunities to repair the harm I have caused.** [The Restorative Approach emphasizes the importance of relationships within a community, and asks us to find ways of disciplining that avoid exclusion whenever possible, or that use exclusion (such as detention or suspension) to guide students in being accountable and “making right” what they have done, so they can still feel part of the community.]

7. **I am capable of finding ways to fix what I have done.** [Rather than assuming we must impose punishment or consequences on misbehaving students, restorative discipline encourages us to see students as competent and creative in finding ways to solve conflicts and repair harm, if given the chance to do so.]

8. **I will be supported and guided by adults in repairing the harm and changing my behavior. Adults care about me and will not give up on me when I make mistakes.** [Children need adults to grow, learn and mature in a positive way, and this is especially so when they misbehave. Of course, those may be the most difficult times to stay connected with students! This is a challenge that restorative discipline asks us to engage in.]

As a relational worldview, the Restorative Approach is about “restoring” several things: the well-being of those who have been hurt by misbehavior, the damaged or broken relationships, the self-respect of the misbehaving student, and “a feeling of security and peace in the school community, which then makes it possible for teachers to teach and students to learn” (Costello, pg. 56). Shifting from a punitive discipline system to one that is restorative is certainly not an easy task, but it seems worth doing in that it brings together all members of a school community to collectively teach and learn some powerful lessons—in accountability, in the importance of relationships, and in how we want to “be” with others in school, at home, and throughout our lives.

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Community Circle Prompts
(For Students)

1. What's your favorite style of music?
2. What's your favorite flavor of ice cream?
3. What's your least favorite type of candy?
4. What's your favorite television show?
5. What's your favorite class?
6. What's your favorite color?
7. What's your least favorite food?
8. If you could move anywhere, where would you live?
9. What's your favorite movie?
10. What's your favorite vacation spot?
11. What's your favorite sport?
12. What do you want to be when you grow up?
13. Where do you want to go to college?
14. What's your favorite hobby?
15. What's your dream job?
16. Who is most inspiring to you?
17. If you could go to any point of history, where would you go?
18. Who is your favorite historical figure?
19. What's your favorite car?
20. If you could be an animal, what would you be?
21. If you could change gender would you? Why or why not?
22. If you could change one thing about the world what would it be?
23. If you could have one animal as a pet what would it be?
24. If you could improve on any talent what would it be?
25. If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?
26. If someone could predict your future, would you want yours predicted? Why or why not?
27. If you could change one event in history, what would it be?
28. What's your favorite type of food?
29. What are you most afraid of?
30. What's your favorite bear?
31. What's your biggest regret in life?
32. What's your greatest accomplishment so far?
33. What would you change about today?
34. What's your favorite soda?
35. What motivates you?
36. What's your favorite book or movie?
37. What is something that you really want to do in your lifetime?
38. What would be one of the first things you would do if you became president?
39. What's your first memory?
40. What is one thing that you like about yourself?
41. What is something you do that bothers other people?
42. If you had three wishes what would they be?
43. What are three things that you do everyday?
44. What is your favorite fairytale?
45. What do you like to do on a rainy day?
46. Name one thing you would like to have in the future?
47. What is a positive quality that you have?
48. Name something that you've done recently for the first time.
49. Name something that you've never done, but would like to try.
50. Name something that you're thankful for.
51. If this week of your life were a movie of a book, what would the title be and why?
52. If you were a plant, what kind would you be and why?
53. If you could be someone else for a day, who would it be and why?
54. If you could have dinner with someone living or dead, who would it be and why?
55. If you were to have a picture drawn on your forehead for a week, what would it be and why?
56. If you could give constructive criticism to a celebrity, what would you say?
57. Close your eyes and imagine yourself ten years from now. Where are you? What are you doing?
58. Pick a word to describe your future. Why did you choose that word?
59. Talk about something happening in the world that concerns you?
60. Talk about something happening in the world today that excites or inspires you?
61. Talk about your favorite season and what you love about it.
62. What superpower would you like to have and why?
63. If you could change your name would you? What would you change it to?
64. Talk about a funny or scary adventure you had with a friend.
65.