



Great Public Schools for Every Student

4. Restorative Conferencing

Educator uses conferencing to facilitate and promote healthy relationships among students and colleagues

Key Method

The educator plans and implements conferencing as a restorative practices strategy in order to foster and promote healthy relationships, empower student voices, and repair harm.

Method Components

Restorative Justice

Inspired by indigenous practices, Restorative Justice (RJ) is a philosophy and theory of justice that emphasizes repairing the harm caused by conflict and wrongdoing. It provides an opportunity for everyone impacted by an incident to come together in a safe space to address their feelings and needs, and reach a resolution that repairs the harm and restores relationships.

Restorative Justice is based on the idea that “because crime hurts, justice should heal” (Braithwaite). The harm should not be matched by further harm but by restorative efforts.

Restorative Justice was introduced as part of the criminal justice system over 35 years ago, and was later adopted into the school system as an alternative to exclusionary disciplinary actions. The mission of Restorative Justice is to:

Repair: crime causes harm and justice requires repairing that harm

Encounter: the best way to determine how to do that is to have the parties decide together

Transform: this can cause fundamental changes in people, relationships and communities

(See more information in the Research section)

Guiding Principles

Restorative Justice is guided by these 7 principles. Restorative Justice:

1. Acknowledges that relationships are central to the building community
2. Builds systems that address misbehavior and harm in ways that strengthen relationships
3. Focuses on the harm done rather than only rule-breaking
4. Gives voice to the person harmed
5. Engages in collaborative problem solving
6. Empowers change and growth

7. Enhances responsibility

With the adverse impact of zero-tolerance discipline policy and the development of the school-to-prison pipeline, school districts across the country have looked for different ways to improve school climate and alternative ways for addressing misbehaviors.

Restorative Justice in Schools (often referred to as Restorative Practice) is a set of practices and values that holistically prevents and repairs harm, builds community, and relationships resulting in a positive supportive school climate.

Repairing Harm

Repairing harm is foundational to restorative practices. According to the International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP), Restorative practices is an emerging social science that studies how to strengthen relationships between individuals as well as social connections within communities. Repairing harm is the first step in strengthening relationships that have been compromised by intentional or unintentional actions or words.

School-Wide Implementation

The following beliefs are foundational to the successful implementation of Restorative Practices:

- Aim first to build classroom communities that are supported by clear agreements, authentic communication, and specific tools to bring issues and conflicts forward in a helpful way.
- Provide specific pathways to repair harm by bringing together those affected by misbehavior in a dialogue to address concerns, achieve understanding, and to come to an agreement about setting things right.

Restorative Justice (practices) school implementations also need to focus on:

- Building healthy relationships between students and school staff, as well as among adults within the school community
- Support student's healthy social and emotional development
- Create safe spaces for difficult conversations, deep emotions, and healing
- Shift the focus from intervention to the prevention of disciplinary infractions
- Shift the paradigm from punitive to restorative disciplinary practices that repair harm and reduce suspensions, expulsions and arrests.

School culture and climate is the leading factor in deciding if a student is restored or punished. The entire school community (i.e., students, teachers, administrators, parents, and community members) needs to participate in the following best practices:

- Define common expectations for student behavior
- Teach and model Restorative Practices
- Allow a space for the learners' choice and voice
- Model and allow learners to resolve conflict

Restorative Conference and Agreement

To repair harm and restore the relationship(s), Restorative Conferencing can be used to address any incident of wrongdoing where harm has occurred. You should use conferencing only after students have a clear understanding of classroom/circle guidelines expectations and values. After this understanding is developed, you should use conferencing anytime unwanted behavior is noticed.

Conferencing can be between:

- Teacher-student
- Teacher-whole class
- Student-student

The following strategies may be used during the conference:

- Think-pair-share
- Affective Language (Using intentional, positive language; Avoiding sarcasm; Noticing the students; Expressing authentic empathy)
- A reflective piece that the student or students complete silently and then discuss in the conference

Restorative Intervention Plans

These can help to successfully reintegrate the student into the classroom. The process for completing a Restorative Intervention Plan is:

- Pre-Work: ensure all participants are made aware of the conference process, agree to participate, are provided the questions to be asked, and respond to any questions they may have.
- Conduct the meeting and allow all stakeholders to contribute to the conflict resolution process
- During the meeting develop an intervention plan that provides strategies to be used to prevent further harm from occurring.
- The last step of the meeting is to develop an agreement in the form of a contract and have all stakeholders sign it.

Benefits of Conferencing

- Students learn active listening skills and acceptable language.
- Student are held accountable for their words and actions.
- Students experience various levels of support offered within the school and restore relationship(s) that may have been damaged by a negative incident that occurred. Allows students opportunities to problem solve and create a plan of action for prevention of the same negative outcome

Supporting Research

Cavanagh, T. (2009) Restorative Practices in Schools: Breaking the Cycle of Student Involvement in Child Welfare and Legal Systems. American Humane. 24:9. Retrieved on July 27, 2018

<http://www.ucdenver.edu/academics/colleges/medicalschoo/departments/pediatrics/subs/can/FGDM/Documents/FGDM%24-4.pdf#page=54>

Costello, B; Wachtel, T. & Wachtel J. (2009). The Restorative Practices Handbook for Teachers, Disciplinarians and Administrators. International Institute for Restorative Practices: Bethlehem, PA.

A practical guide for educators interested in implementing restorative practices. The book discusses restorative techniques, implementation guidelines, and how and why the processes work.

Wachtel, T.; O'Connell, T. & Wachtel, B. (2010). Restorative Justice Conferencing: Real Justice and the Conferencing Handbook. International Institute for Restorative Practices; Piper Press: Pipersville, PA.

A seminal book in training of Restorative Practices around Conferencing techniques, including a procedural guide and actual stories of restorative justice conferences.

Drewery, W., & Winslade, J. (2003) "Developing Restorative Practices in Schools: Flavour of the month or saviour of the

system?" Presented at AARE/NZARE Conference, Auckland, Australia. Retrieved on July 27, 2018 from <http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.214.7827&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

Fronius, T.; Persson, H.; Guckenburg, Sara; Hurley, Nancy & Petrosino, A. (2016). Restorative Justice in U.S. Schools: A Research Review. West Ed and Prevention Research Center. Retrieved on July 27, 2018 from https://jprc.wested.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/RJ_Literature-Review_20160217.pdf

González, Thalia, Socializing Schools: Addressing Racial Disparities in Discipline Through Restorative Justice (January 24, 2015). Thalia González, Socializing Schools: Addressing Racial Disparities in Discipline Through Restorative Justice, in CLOSING THE SCHOOL DISCIPLINE GAP: EQUITABLE REMEDIES FOR EXCESSIVE EXCLUSION (Daniel J. Losen ed., 2014). Retrieved on July 27 from https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2728960

Morrison, B; Blood, P. & Thorsborne, M. (2005). Practice Restorative Justice in School Communities: The Challenge of Culture Change. Public Organization Review: A Global Journal, 5: 335-357, #2006. Retrieved on July 27, 2018 from <http://www.ibarj.org/docs/morrison.pdf>

Resources

General

International Institute of Restorative Practices.
<https://www.iirp.edu/>

Restorative Practices: Fostering Healthy Relationships & Promoting Positive Discipline in Schools
<http://supported.nea.org/resource/restorative-practices-fostering-healthy-relationships-promoting-positive-discipline-schools/>

Discipline with dignity: Oakland classrooms try healing instead of punishment. Reclaiming Children and Youth,
<http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/education-uprising/where-dignity-is-part-of-the-school-day>

Davis, Matt. (2015) "Restorative Justice: Resources for Schools: Explore resources and case studies that demonstrate how to bring restorative justice to your school or classroom. Retrieved on July 27, 2018 from <https://www.edutopia.org/blog/restorative-justice-resources-matt-davis>

Conferencing

Center for Justice and Reconciliation - Introduction to Conferencing <http://restorativejustice.org/restorative-justice/about-restorative-justice/tutorial-intro-to-restorative-justice/lesson-3-programs/conferencing/#sthash.8E3XmTaA.dpbs>

Restorative Response Baltimore – <https://www.restativeresponse.org/>

Restorative Conferencing
<https://inclusive-solutions.com/restorative-conferencing/>

Restorative Conferencing
<https://www.iirp.edu/defining-restorative/restorative-conference>

Restorative Conferencing
<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/1357527022000040408?journalCode=cccp20>

Restorative Practices meeting video
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?reload=9&v=q1io7YH2yTU>

Conference Script Examples

Restorative Conference Script
<https://www.iirp.edu/eforum-archive/reflections-on-the-restorative-conference-facilitator-s-script>

Person Responsible Script
https://www.sandi.net/staff/sites/default/files_link/staff/docs/restorative-practices/toolkit/conferencing/Person-Responsible%20Pre-conference-Script.pdf

Restorative Group Conferencing
<https://sites.google.com/a/cceb.org/rtips/rtips-in-schools/resources-for-administrators/restorative-group-conferencing>

Affective Language

Making Affective Statements More Effective in Restorative Practices
<http://www.joebrummer.com/2015/04/24/making-affective-statements-more-effective-in-restorative-practices/>

Adversarial vs Restorative Language
http://www.iirp.edu/pdf/beth06_davey2.pdf

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

Using Restorative Language for Student Self Reflection
<https://www.iirp.edu/news-from-iirp/time-to-think-using-restorative-questions>

Submission Guidelines & Evaluation Criteria

To earn the micro-credential, you must receive a passing score in Parts 1 and 3, and receive a proficient for all components in Part 2.

Part 1. Overview Questions

400 - 500 word limit

Please answer the following contextual questions to help our assessor understand your current situation. Please do not include any information that will make you identifiable to your reviewers.

- 1. Describe your current classroom setting and demographics?

2. What are your current challenges around building healthy relationships among staff, students, and community?

3. What are your current school and classroom policies, expectations, and procedures?

4. How do you currently address conflict or misbehavior in your classroom?

5. Why did you choose to work on restorative conferencing?
- **Passing:** Feedback provides evidence of comprehension of restorative practices as the reason for choosing this micro-credential to address specific needs. Current context is described fully. Challenges are articulated. Classroom policies, procedures, and expectations are described. Current responses to conflict and misbehavior are explained.

Part 2. Work Examples / Artifacts

To earn this micro-credential, please submit the following **three artifacts** as evidence of your learning. *Please do not include any information that will make you or your students identifiable to your reviewers.*

Artifact 1: Conference Referral Document

Submit a completed Conference Referral Document.

- If your school/district does not already have one, design a one-page referral document for your classroom/school to report harm in the school community.
- Upload a completed referral form that was submitted by one of your students.

Artifact 2: Conference Script

Create and submit a script for facilitating a conference for the above referral.

Components that should be included:

- Welcome
- Setting the Intention and stating potential benefits
- Introductions
- Ground rules
- Format
- Information sharing
- Restorative Plan
- Agreements and Approvals

See resource section for examples of conference script

Artifact 3: Conference Video

(5-10 minutes)

Provide a video or audio recording of you facilitating a conference and using the script you have created.

	Proficient	Basic	Developing
Artifact 1: Conference Referral Document	Referral is completely filled out by the person who was harmed. Both parties agree to	Referral is partially filled out by the person who was harmed. Both parties agree to	Referral is not filled out by the person who was harmed. Both parties did not

	the conference.	the conference	agree to the conference
Artifact 2: Conference Script	<p>Conference script includes all of the following components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Welcome -Setting the Intention and stating potential benefits -Introductions -Ground rules -Format -Information sharing -Restorative Plan -Agreements and Approvals <p>Affective language is used in all parts of the script.</p> <p>Script is clear and easy to follow.</p> <p>Script allows for all voices to be heard.</p>	<p>Conference script includes most of the following components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Welcome -Setting the Intention and stating potential benefits -Introductions -Ground rules -Format -Information sharing -Restorative Plan -Agreements and Approvals <p>Affective language is included in some parts of the script.</p> <p>Script is not easy to follow.</p> <p>Script allows for some voices to be heard.</p>	<p>Conference script includes a few of the following components:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Welcome -Setting the Intention and stating potential benefits -Introductions -Ground rules -Format -Information sharing -Restorative Plan -Agreements and Approvals <p>Affective language is not included in the script.</p> <p>Script is not clear enough to follow.</p> <p>Script allows for only the facilitators voice to be heard.</p>
Artifact 3: Conference Video	<p>Audio or Video is clear enough for the reviewers to be able to follow what is going on.</p> <p>Script is followed closely.</p> <p>All parties have an opportunity to express themselves.</p> <p>Affective language is consistently used by the facilitator.</p> <p>An agreement was made and all participants approved it.</p>	<p>Audio or Video is clear enough for the reviewers to be able to follow some of what is going on.</p> <p>Script is followed loosely.</p> <p>Some parties have an opportunity to express themselves.</p> <p>Affective language is used some of the time by the facilitator.</p> <p>An agreement was made and most participants approved it.</p>	<p>Audio or Video is missing or not viewable.</p> <p>Script is not followed.</p> <p>Only the facilitator has an opportunity to express themselves.</p> <p>Affective language is not used by the facilitator.</p> <p>An agreement was not made.</p>

Part 3 Reflection

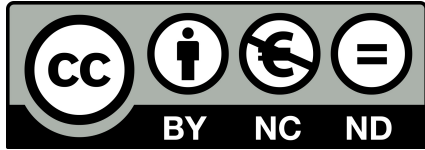
400 - 500 words

Please answer the following reflective questions. Please do not include any information that will make you identifiable to your reviewers.

1. How did the reality of using the script match with your expectations?

2. What were the challenges that you had to overcome?
3. What worked well?
4. What didn't work well?
5. What are your next steps?
6. Have you noticed a difference in the relationships among and between stakeholder groups? Why or why not?

- **Passing:** Reflection provides evidence that this activity has had a positive impact on relationships among and between stakeholder groups, or thoughtfully reflects on why not. Specific examples are cited directly from personal or work-related experiences to support claims. Also included are specific actionable steps that demonstrate how new learning will be integrated into future practices.



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