Restorative Schools

Promoting Academic Achievement and Positive Behavior through a Welcoming and Safe Relational Learning Environment

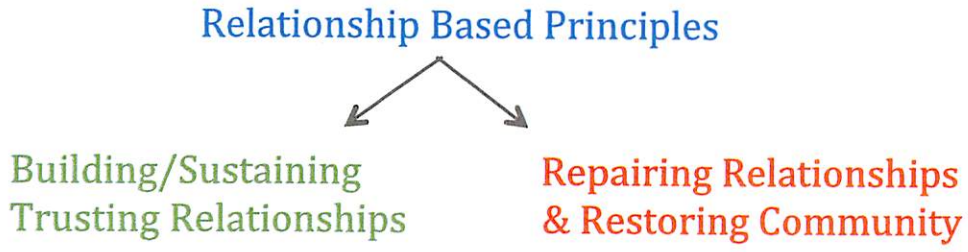
What is School-based Restorative Justice Practices?

Indigenous Values → *Restorative Justice System* → *School-Based Restorative Justice Practices*

In schools, Restorative Practices are multifaceted in nature. The roots of its understanding and practice are grounded in the traditional practices of Indigenous cultures around the world that underscore the value of respect, compassion, dignity, and inclusion of all members of the community.
This approach rests with the belief that everyone is a valuable member of society and has an important contribution to make.

Key Definition:

Restorative Justice Practices are based on principles and processes that emphasize the importance of trusting relationships as central to building community and repairs/restores relationships when harm has occurred.



Restorative Justice Practices, when broadly and consistently implemented, will promote and strengthen positive school culture and enhance pro-social relationships within the school community. It includes interventions when harm has occurred, as well as practices that help to prevent harm and conflict by building a sense of belonging, safety, and shared social responsibility throughout the school community.

Restorative Justice Lens:
Behavior infractions are viewed through the lens of restorative justice philosophy. One that brings all parties affected by an incident together in an inclusive process to discover the root cause/s of challenging behavior and determines resulting impact/harms with the intention to repair relationships and restore the community.

This approach views behavior infractions as an offense against individuals and the greater community, and places greater emphasis on the harm/s caused and reparation of relationships/community above the need for assigning blame and dispensing punishment.

"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."

Ted Watchel, The International Institute for Restorative Practices

© K. Berkowitz (2017)

kerriberkowitz@gmail.com

Restorative Practices allow for a shift in practice that results in a culture which is inclusive, builds fair process into decision-making practices, and facilitates learning through an approach that allows for true accountability, skill building, cooperation, and mutual understanding.

At the core, Restorative Practices is about building and restoring relationships.

Through restorative practices, members of the school community will:

- Have opportunities to be heard
- Form connections and stronger relationships
- Understand the greater impact of one's actions
- Learn and practice taking 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.

POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR SCHOOL COMMUNITIES

Evidence from practice suggests that by implementing Restorative Practices, schools can expect:

- Improvements in attitudes and relationships across the whole school community.
- An increase in the engagement and learning of students in the classroom.
- Growth in relational and problem-solving skills, both for adults and students across the school community.
- A calmer school environment, with less classroom disruption and more time for teaching.
- Decrease in out-of-school suspension.
- Decrease in school expulsions.
- Decrease in tardies and absences.
- Reduction in racial disproportionate discipline practices.

San Francisco Unified School District, Restorative Practices, www.healthiersf.org/restorativepractices/
Oakland Unified School District, http://www.ousd.k12.ca.us/restorativejustice
Dr. Armour, Marilyn, University of Texas at Austin, Ed White Middle School Restorative Discipline Evaluation, Year 2, 2014
Positive Behavior For Learning, New Zealand Ministry of Education, Restorative Practice Kete Book 1, www.education.govt.nz

© K. Berkowitz (2017)
kerriberkowitz@gmail.com

Relationship-based Restorative Principles

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.

Restorative Practices:

1. **Acknowledges that relationships are central to building community.**
    - Considerable effort and time is spent on building and sustaining positive, trusting relationships among ALL members of the school community.
    - Every student, teacher, administrator, staff member, and parent/guardian is a valued member of the school community.
    - All members of the school community are involved in a process of naming the values and principles to live by within their school community.

2. **Ensures equity of voice among all members of the community. All voices are valued; everyone is heard.**
    - Systems and structures are established to ensure that all members of the school community have equal opportunities for meaningful participation.
    - A culture of non-judgmental, authentic listening and sharing is encouraged and reinforced.
    - Inclusive decision making practices are utilized to ensure that those impacted by decisions have a voice in the process by providing opportunities for input. Once decisions are made the reason for the decision and new expectations are clearly communicated.
    - Negotiation and cooperation are key components towards building a collaborative classroom and school environment.

3. **Establishes a culture of high expectations with high support, emphasizing doing things "WITH" not "TO" or "FOR".**
    - Supports high standards and expectations for both learning and behavior in the school and classroom community, AND offers high levels of support to create positive change = Doing "WITH".

4. **Builds systems that address misbehavior and harm in a way that strengthens relationships and focuses on the harm done rather than only rule-breaking.**
    - Schools establish policies to provide a safe place for learning. Real safety however comes from fostering and maintaining caring relationships.
    - Misbehavior is recognized as an offense against people and relationships, not just rule-breaking.
    - Policies need to address the root causes of discipline concerns rather than only the symptoms. The causes of misbehavior may be multiple and should be addressed by all members of the school community equally asserting high levels of expectation within a supportive environment.
    - The person/s harmed is the center of the primary relationship that needs to be addressed. Secondary relationships that may have been impacted might include other students, teachers, parents, the administration, and the surrounding community.

© K. Berkowitz (2017)

kerriberkowitz@gmail.com

5. **Engages in collaborative problem solving.**
    - There is a shared responsibility and participation among all members of the school community to contribute to the sustainability of positive relationships by working together to identify potential problems and determine solutions.
    - Misbehavior can become a teachable moment and the community/relationships can be restored when all those impacted/harmed by an incident are involved in a collaborative process of determining unmet needs and solutions to make things as right as possible.
    - Recognizes all of us act to satisfy our human needs (ex. belonging, freedom, power, and fun). Behaviors are chosen to meet these underlying needs.

6. **Enhances accountability, responsibility and empowers change and growth for all members of the community.**
    - All members of the school community are responsible for contributing to the establishment and sustaining of a positive school culture by taking personal responsibility to follow through and hold one another accountable to the collective values and principles that define the community.
    - Conflict presents opportunity for change if the process includes careful listening, reflecting, shared problem-solving, and trust.
    - High accountability occurs when systems and structures are in place that allow for one to take responsibility for their actions by providing them the opportunity to learn and understand the impact of their actions, determine how to make things as right as possible, AND follow through with the plan.
    - Consequences as part of the restorative process should be evaluated based on whether they are reasonable, related to the offense, and respectful.
    - 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.

Acknowledgements:
Material adapted from Amstutz, L., & Mullet, J., (2005), pg. 29-32.*The Little Book of Restorative Discipline*, pg. 26-28
Wachtel & Costello (2009), The Restorative Practices Handbook, International Institute for Restorative Practices, pg. 50
San Francisco Unified School District: www. healthiersf.org/restorativepractices/

© K. Berkowitz (2017)

kerriberkowitz@gmail.com

Restorative Paradigm Shift

"What's fundamental about restorative justice (practices) 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

© K. Berkowitz (2017)
kerriberkowitz@gmail.com

Three Different Questions

Criminal Justice	Restorative Justice
What laws/rules have been broken?	Who has been hurt?
Who did it?	What are their needs?
What do they deserve?	Whose obligations are these?

A Different Approach

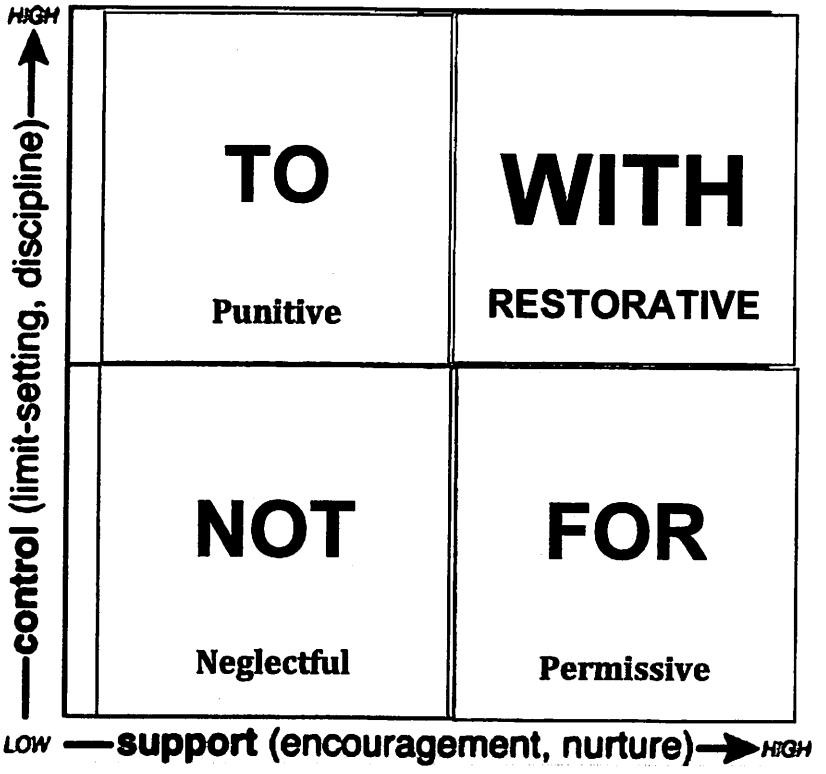
Traditional Retributive Approach	Restorative Approach
School and rules **violated**	***People and relationships*** **violated**
Justice focuses on *establishing guilt*	Justice identifies *needs and obligations*
Accountability = punishment	**Accountability = understanding impact, repairing harm**
Justice directed at person who caused harm, person who experienced harm ignored	Person who caused harm, person who experienced harm and school all have direct roles in justice process
Rules and intent outweigh whether outcome is positive/negative	**Person who caused harm is responsible for harmful behavior, repairing harm and working toward positive outcomes**
No opportunity for remorse or amends	**Opportunity given for amends and expression of remorse**

© K. Berkowitz (2017)
kerriberkowitz@gmail.com

The Social Discipline Window

The underlying premise of Restorative Practices rests with the belief that people will make positive changes when those in positions of authority do things *with* them rather than *to* them or *for* them.

According to the Social Discipline Window, a restorative approach requires a balance of high levels of control/limit setting with high levels of support, encouragement, and nurture.



High control and Low support = Punitive/Authoritarian
Low control and Low support = Neglectful
High support and Low control = Permissive
High support and High control = RESTORATIVE

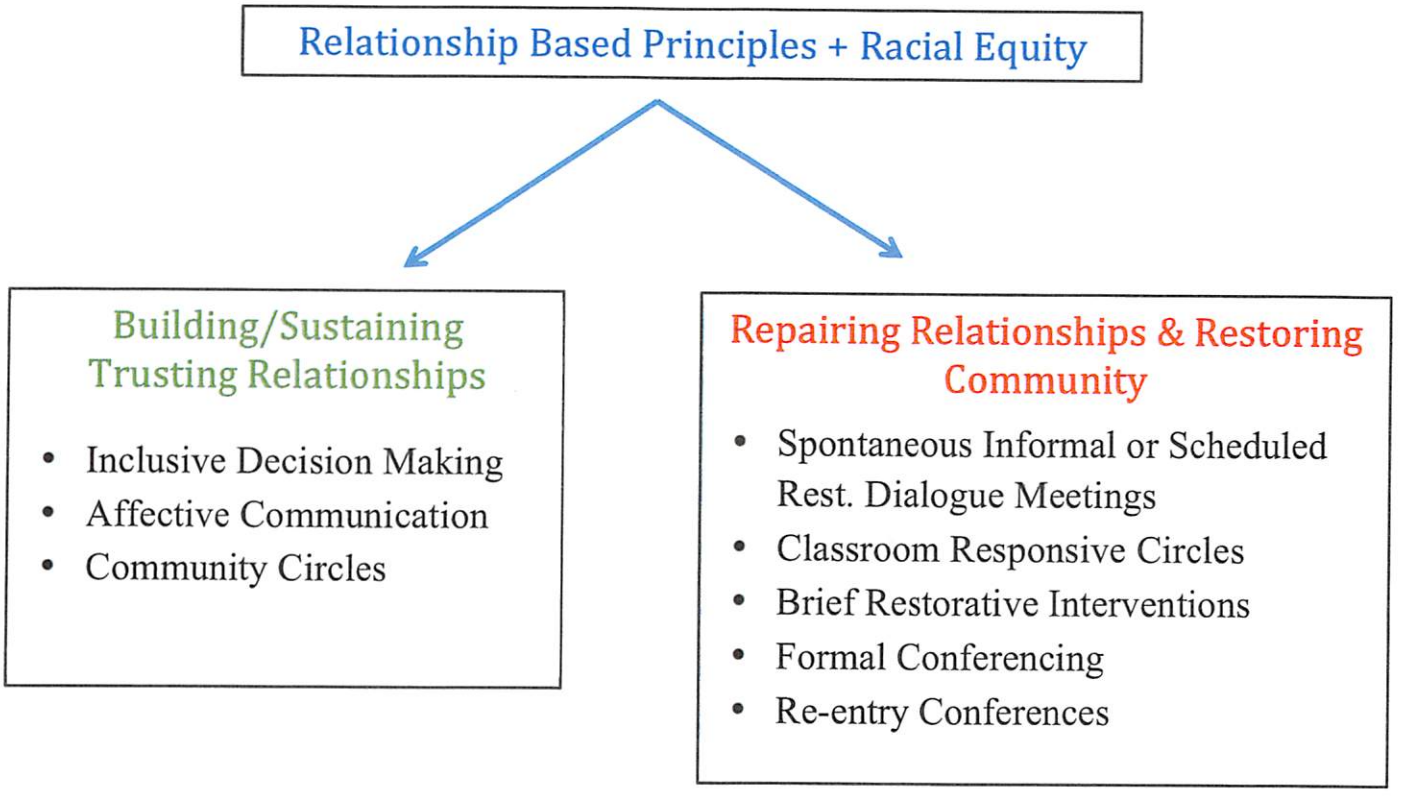
Wachtel & Costello (2009), The Restorative Practices Handbook, International Institute for Restorative Practices, pg 50

© K. Berkowitz (2017)

kerriberkowitz@gmail.com

Restorative Practices Definition and Practices

Restorative Practices are based on principles and processes that emphasize the importance of trusting relationships as central to building community and repairs/restores relationships when harm has occurred.



© K. Berkowitz (2017)
kerriberkowitz@gmail.com

Building/Sustaining Trusting Relationships:
Proactive Practices

Relationship Based Principles and Values (The RP LENS)

✚

Racial Equity Lens

Inclusive School-wide and Classroom Climate • Trusting Relationships • Narrative Story Telling • Reflective Practice • Implicit Bias and Stereotype Threat • Systems and Policy Review • Data Based Decision-Making

Inclusive Decision Making

Fair Process: Provides opportunities for those affected by decisions to be included in the decision making process. This contributes to an inclusive culture where all voices are valued and accounted for.

Affective Communication

Genuine expression of feelings and emotions in relation to specific behaviors and actions, affective language provides a structure for reinforcing desired behaviors and challenging/ redirecting unwanted behaviors.

Community Circles

Intentionally creating a space that lifts barriers between people, circles open the possibility for connection, collaboration, problem solving and mutual understanding.

<u>Proactive Circles can be used for various purposes:</u>

- Relationship building
- Establishing values and behavior expectations
- Check-in and check-out
- Celebrations, recognition, achievements
- Relevant content instruction
- Class progress (climate and academics)

© K. Berkowitz (2017)
kerriberkowitz@gmail.com

Repairing Relationships and Restoring Community:
Responsive Practices / Restorative Discipline

Relationship Based Principles / Values & Racial Equity Lens

Restorative Dialogue

A common, consistent language among all members of the school community that reinforces the core values of building and sustaining trusting relationships, reinforcing high expectations, taking responsibility and opportunities for accountability.

Restorative Questions:

1. What happened and what were you thinking at the time?
2. What have you thought about since?
3. Who has been affected and how?
4. What about this is/has been hardest for you?
5. What needs to happen to make things as right as possible moving forward?

Spontaneous Informal or Scheduled Meetings On the spot or scheduled meetings to respond to conflict, wrongdoing, or unwanted behavior.

Classroom Responsive Circles
Addresses incidents or patterns of disruptive behaviors that negatively impact the class learning environment and relationships.

Brief Restorative Interventions A referral-based problem solving process, which engages all parties involved in an incident. Used where the harm is significant enough not to be resolved informally, but not so great that it requires a formal conference.

Formal Conferencing
A structured formal process involving all members of the community affected by a particular incident. Those who cause harm are held accountable for their actions, those harmed are given a voice in the process and agreements are made to address needs, repair harms and prevent future wrongdoing.

Re-entry Conferences
A formal process that reintegrates students back into the school and classroom after a counseling office referral or an out of school suspension to re-establish connection with the community.

© K. Berkowitz (2017)

kerriberkowitz@gmail.com

Restorative Practices Language

Embracing Restorative Practices as a common, consistent language among the school staff community is a simple and effective approach to reinforce the core values of community, relationships, responsibility and accountability.

The words highlighted represent the key language of Restorative Practices.

We are a ***community.***

Recognizing that the strength and health of the community (among students, staff, and families) directly impacts school climate (sense of belonging and connectedness) and academic achievement. Every member of the community is important and contributes greatly. Each person's actions affect the health of the community in a positive or negative way.
Recommendation: *Consistently 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.
Recommendation: *Consistently 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, a particular student and his/her 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.
Recommendation: *Do not ask the "why" question. Instead, ask "what happened?" when inquiring about specific actions or behaviors.*

Who was ***impacted*** (harmed) by what happened?

For both positive and negative actions/behaviors, recognizing impact reinforces social responsibility and helps to teach that one's actions both positively and negatively affect the health of the greater community.
Recommendation: *Consider age appropriate language to use in response to students and staff actions/behaviors, reinforcing the importance of positive relationships and community.*

© K. Berkowitz (2017)
kerriberkowitz@gmail.com

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

When conflict or harm occurs, it is important to recognize that ALL parties involved have resulting needs. Often times the needs of those "harmed" and those who "harmed" are similar. 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 teacher/family member) to share/reflect on what needs they have/had (both during the time of the incident as well as after the incident).*

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 impacted the community) is a critical component 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 and reinforces responsibility and behavioral expectations and holds one accountable for their actions.

Recommendation: *Allow for the people involved in an incident to share what they may need in order to address the resulting impact and repair any potential harm/s caused by hurtful/negative behavior. Accountability stems from following-through with the identified plan after taking into consideration all that everyone needs to feel satisfied with the outcome allowing relationships to be repaired and community to be restored.*

© K. Berkowitz (2017)

kerriberkowitz@gmail.com

Restorative Questions (Secondary)

1. **What happened?**

2. **What were you thinking at the time?**

3. **What have you thought about since?**

4. **Who has been affected by what happened and how?**

5. **What about this has been hardest for you?**

6. **What needs to happen to make things as right as possible?**

© K. Berkowitz (2017)
kerriberkowitz@gmail.com

Restorative Questions (Elementary)

Name: _____
Date: _____

What happened? _____

_____

_____

_____

I feel _____

_____

_____

Who was hurt? _____

_____

_____

How? _____

_____

_____

What is the hardest part for you?_____

_____

_____

What needs to happen now to make things right? _____

_____

_____

© K. Berkowitz (2017)
kerriberkowitz@gmail.com

Determining the Need for Restorative Justice Practices

Evidence from practice suggests that by implementing Restorative Justice Practices across the school community, schools can expect the following outcomes.

Please review these outcomes and reflect on a scale of 1-10 the specific needs of your school community in each area. (1=very low need 10=extremely high need)

Improved relationships across the school community. *(1=very low need 10=extremely high need)*

Among students:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Among the adults in the school:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Between teachers/staff and families

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Comments:

Growth in relational and problem-solving skills, both for adults and students across the school community. *(1=very low need 10=extremely high need)*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Comments:

A calmer school environment, with less classroom disruption and more time for teaching. *(1=very low need 10=extremely high need)*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Comments:

An increase in the engagement and learning of students in the classroom.
(1=very low need 10=extremely high need)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Comments:

© K. Berkowitz (2017)

kerriberkowitz@gmail.com

Increase in school attendance. *(1=very low need 10=extremely high need)*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Comments:

Decrease in counseling office referrals. *(1=very low need 10=extremely high need)*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Comments:

Decrease in out-of-school suspension. *(1=very low need 10=extremely high need)*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Comments:

Decrease in school expulsions. *(1=very low need 10=extremely high need)*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Comments:

Reduction in racial disciplinary disproportionality. *(1=very low need 10=extremely high need)*

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Comments:

Dr. Armour, Marilyn, University of Texas at Austin, Ed White Middle School Restorative Discipline Evaluation, Year 2, 2014

Oakland Unified School District, http://www.ousd.k12.ca.us/restorativejustice

Positive Behavior For Learning, New Zealand Ministry of Education, Restorative Practice Kete Book 1, www.education.govt.nz

San Francisco Unified School District, Restorative Practices, www.healthiersf.org/restorativepractices/

© K. Berkowitz (2017)

kerriberkowitz@gmail.com