Restorative School Practices of Maine

A Program of the Restorative Justice Project, Belfast, ME

Helping to Create Safe, Fair & Restorative Maine Schools

“The restorative practices movement seeks to develop good relationships and restore a sense of community in an increasingly disconnected world.”

from The Restorative Practices Handbook
B. Costello, et al., 2009

“Students are more likely to succeed when they feel connected to school. School connection is the belief by students that adults in the school care about their learning as well as about them as individuals.”

• Wingspread Declaration on School Connections
• www.jhsp.h.edu/wingspread
The Restorative Approach

Is a philosophy or guiding principle (not a program or specific activity) that sees relationships as central to learning, growth and a healthy school climate for students and adults.

Restorative Practices

Enable us to integrate and normalize this approach within a school culture by focusing on building, maintaining and, when necessary, repairing relationships among all members of a school community.

These practices include:

Language that invites and encourages:
- Curiosity
- Empathy
- Respect
- Trust
- Accountability
- Repairing harm
- Collaboration.
And Tools

... for community building, such as

- Community Circles

... for addressing conflict and misbehavior, such as

- Restorative dialogue
- Restorative reminders
- Peer mediation
- Problem-solving circles
- Resolution circles
- Restorative conferences.

Why the Restorative Approach?

Strong relationships and student connectedness with adults and school contribute to:

- Improved school climate
- Stronger communication
- Fewer conflicts, less violence & misbehavior
- Better environment for learning.

When misbehavior happens:

- More effective form of discipline
- True accountability
- Important student learning
- Maintains and repairs relationships (instead of weakening them).

Climate & Connectedness

- Connectedness has a direct positive effect on academic achievement.

- As school climate improves, relational aggression (bullying, harassment, fighting) decreases.

- Highly connected students are less likely to be perpetrators or victims of aggression.

“With the push for academic achievement and accountability, there seem to be many new mandates imposed on classroom teachers and school administrators, leaving less time for building relationships and connections with students. Paradoxically, without those relationships students feel less connected to school and are less likely to excel.”

B. Costello, J. Wachtel, T. Wachtel,

A Restorative Approach Timeline

Criminal Justice Movement (1970s) Restorative Justice Approach in Schools (1990s)

Restorative Justice and the Restorative Approach in schools are relatively new, but they also have deep roots in indigenous communities in North America, New Zealand, Australia and elsewhere.
Relational Literacy

Skills, attitudes and practices that foster and strengthen human relationships.
Community Circles

• A key practice to promote Relational Literacy.
• A process of **Authentic Dialogue:**
  
  The practice of speaking one’s personal truth and listening well to others for deeper understanding.
• An opportunity to build trust and respect between all members of a school community.

A Structured Dialogue:

• One person speaks at a time (and you may choose to pass).
• We use a talking piece to focus everyone’s attention on the person who is speaking, to give everyone an equal chance to participate, and to encourage careful listening, patience, and thoughtful responses.
• A facilitator guides the conversation.
• We use Agreements (ground rules) to create a safe space for sharing.

A New-Old Approach to Peacemaking – Kay Pranis

“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.”

Pranis, Stuart, and Wedge, Peacemaking Circles: From Crime to Community, 2003
Break & Community Circles

Creating Routines

Think about routines or traditions you had in your family growing up.
What did you learn from them?
Why are routines/traditions important?

Doing circles should become routine and not be seen as a break from what we normally do. It is the way we do things here – not something else to do.

Uses for Circles

- Community Building
- Check-in: one thing you are looking forward to today/this week
- Check out: something you are going to do after school/tonight/this weekend
- Previewing: one thing you want to learn about (topic/unit)
- Quick survey: opinion/questions
- Addressing issues in class in a non-confrontational way
- Having fun together
- Democratic decision-making
- Problem-solving
Things to consider when crafting questions

- Questions are driven by the purpose of the dialogue.
- How much time is available?
- What outcomes are you looking for?
- What is the best sequence of questions?
- Understand the needs of participants, including safety concerns.
- Try to create questions that are inclusive, challenging and inviting, and open-ended (avoid questions with yes/no answers).

Secret to success of a circle:

- Have a clear topic and goal.
- Set a positive tone.
- Get some allies before the circle starts.
- Pre-alert students with processing issues to the questions prior to the circle.
- Maintain focus.

Overview of Restorative Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For Community Building</th>
<th>For Low-Level Discipline</th>
<th>For Serious Discipline</th>
<th>Matters (addressed outside the classroom)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Restorative Conversations (“What’s up?”)</td>
<td>Restorative Reminder Cards</td>
<td>Resolution Circles</td>
<td>(group detention)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Circles: Classrooms, Teams, Club</td>
<td>Restorative Inquiry, one-on-one conversations during class or assigned, after-school “detention” within the classroom, using restorative questions</td>
<td>Restorative Conferences (includes student, family and other key people)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other small groups with faculty</td>
<td>Collaborative Problem-Solving (Boss Crones)</td>
<td>Restorative Inquiry used for in-school suspension</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With parents</td>
<td>Peer Mediation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Problem-Solving Circles</td>
<td></td>
<td>(for whole class issues)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Strategies for Developing Personal Connections with Students

- Smile
- Greet by name
- Birthday cards
- Post your pictures
- Ask an opinion
- Do the “2x10”
- 4 H’s
- Give notes
- Special cue signals
- Music
- Own your mistakes
- Be a chaperone
- Notice the unique
- Sponsor a club
- Eat with them
- Have fun together

Restorative Conversations

- What’s up?
- How are you doing today?
- How can I be of help?
- Tell me about what’s going on for you.

Restorative Conversations

Situations such as:

Personal check-in with a student in response to affective cues.

After an incident in a classroom.

When a teacher and a parent need to discuss a young person and share different perspectives.

When colleagues need to air a grievance between each other.
**Video & Lunch**

Why do most people do the right thing most of the time?

**Restorative School Discipline**

Discipline that restores is a process that encourages accountability, builds empathy, promotes understanding of the effects of one’s actions on others, and repairs relationships.

*“Moving from blame and punishment to harm and repair.”*
**Harmed-Harer Activity**

What do I need when I have been harmed?

What do I need when I have harmed someone else?

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**Key Goals of Restorative Discipline**

- To understand the harm done and develop empathy for both the harmed and the harmer.
- To listen and respond to the needs of the person harmed and the person who harmed.
- To encourage accountability and responsibility through personal reflection within a collaborative planning process.
- To reintegrate the harmer into the community.
- To create caring climates to support healthy communities.
- To change the system when it contributes to the harm.

*From The Little Book of Restorative Disciplining, by Lorraine Astuti and Judy Mullet*

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**Think about this...**

- What are you trying to achieve by disciplining a student?
- What does student accountability mean to you?
**Accountability**

Within the Restorative Approach, we define “accountability” in a very broad and comprehensive way:

- **Owning** our mistakes—accepting responsibility for the harm we have caused;
- **Understanding** the impact of our actions on others;
- **Repairing** the harm—e.g., “making it right.”

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**Punitive Discipline or Restorative Discipline**

**Punitive Discipline**
- Misbehavior is breaking the rules.
- Offender is accountable only to the school authorities.
- Accountability is equated with punishment, usually exclusion.
- Those harmed are peripheral to the process.
- Offenders are defined by their deficits (the misbehavior).

**Restorative Discipline**
- Misbehavior is a violation of people and relationships.
- Offender is accountable to those harmed and the community.
- Accountability is defined as taking responsibility and repairing the harm.
- Those harmed play a key role in response to wrongdoing.
- Offenders have capacity to take responsibility and change their behavior.

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The formation of human relationships is the primary developmental priority of all human beings and the bedrock of all healthy development.

Janis Whitlock, Research Scientist, Family Life Development Center, Cornell University

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<th>For Community Building</th>
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<th>For Serious Discipline</th>
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<tr>
<td>Making personal connections</td>
<td>Restorative Remind Cards</td>
<td>Resolution Circles</td>
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<tr>
<td>Restorative Conversations (“What’s up?”)</td>
<td></td>
<td>(group detention)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Circles: Classrooms</td>
<td>Restorative Inquiry</td>
<td>Restorative Conferences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teams</td>
<td>(one-on-one, addressed</td>
<td>(includes student,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chats</td>
<td>during class or assigned,</td>
<td>family and other key</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other small groups</td>
<td>after-school * detention*</td>
<td>people)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With faculty</td>
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<td>Restorative Inquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td>used for in-school</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>suspension</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Reminder Cards

- What are you doing?
- Who is being affected by this?
- How are they being affected?
- What will you do differently now?

Restorative Inquiry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggested Question</th>
<th>Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What happened?</td>
<td>Thinking (interpretation) and behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What were you thinking at the time?</td>
<td>Thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How were you feeling at the time?</td>
<td>Feelings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who has been affected by this?</td>
<td>Others’ feelings, thoughts, and behaviors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

And then….

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggested Question</th>
<th>Focus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What do you need to do to make things right?</td>
<td>Action toward repairing the harm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Problem Solving Circles

- Uses a restorative circle process when a group is facing a particular issue or problem.
- Based on the strength of community circles.
- Creates a safe place to process problems.

Building a Framework for Practice
Break and Problem Solving Circles

Resolution Circles

An alternative to Detention

It is the intent of the Resolution Circle process to have students become accountable to the greater school community for behaviors that distract from a harmonious learning environment.

Resolution Circle Process

- Circle format.
- Scripted process facilitated by trained individual.
- Persons Causing Harm - Involves 2-5 students with differing infractions.
- If possible the individual affected by the behavior or an advocate representative (may speak to all infractions).
- Other individuals impacted by the behavior(s) (i.e., administration).
- Outcome is an agreement written by the individual to be fulfilled within 48 hours.
Resolution Circle Questions

- Tell us what happened.
- What were you thinking at the time?
- Who have you thought about since?
- Who do you think has been impacted by what happened? In what ways?
- What do you need to do to make things right?

Closing the Circle

Discuss “How to Say I'm Sorry.”

Summarize the outcome.

Emphasize expectation for fulfilling.

Thank all for participating.

Time for Lunch
Restorative Conferences

This process brings together a core of individuals who have been affected by a behavior or conflict to participate in a structured dialogue, with the goal of creating understanding, accountability, and the repairing of harm with community support.

Restorative Conference

- Pre-conference preparation
- Circle format.
- Scripted process facilitated by trained individual(s).
- Person(s) Causing Harm - May involve more than one student with their parent(s)/guardian.
- Individual(s) impacted by the behavior or an advocate representative.
- Other individuals impacted by the behavior(s) (community-wide, i.e., administration, maintenance, etc.).
- Individuals who may support the agreement and the process.
- Outcome is an agreement for the individual to work toward changed behaviors and the acceptance of responsibility for said behaviors.
- Follow-up within specified time frame.

The Agreement & Follow-up

- The agreement reached by the participants should be specific, feasible, measurable and achievable. All individuals in attendance must reach consensus and sign the agreement. A time line is given for its accomplishment. A mentor may be assigned to assist the student to complete the agreement through developing a positive relationship with the student.

- If the harmer fulfills all the terms of the agreement in a timely fashion, there are no further actions. If he/she fails such fulfillment the agreement is referred back to the Administration or School Board for further actions.
Administrative Office Discipline

Use Restorative Inquiry for:

- Office disciplinary conversations;
- In-school suspension;
- Out-of-school suspension.

Schools Implementing RSP in Maine

Troy Howard Middle School & BCOPE Alternative HS, Belfast, ME
Messalonskee Middle School, Oakland, ME
Winslow Jr. High, Winslow, ME
Waterville Jr. High, Waterville, ME
Mt. Ararat Middle School, Topsham, ME
Leonard Middle School, Old Town, ME
Whittier Middle School, Poland, ME
Hall Elementary, Waterville, ME
Mt. View Middle School, Thorndike, ME
Morse Elementary, Brooks, ME
Monroe Elementary, Monroe, ME
Moscow Elementary/Quimby Middle/Valley High School, Bingham, ME
RSP Implementation Model
A. Introduce the restorative approach.
A. Train all staff in restorative practices.
A. Develop a team trained in Resolution Circles and Conferencing to respond to more serious incidents.
A. Introduce restorative practices in all settings.
A. Develop school-wide policy and procedures.
A. Evaluate the initiative.

A. Introduce the Approach
• Provide an awareness presentation for the school community.
• Select and train a Leadership Team.
• Administer staff and student surveys that establish baseline data.
• Set goals for school climate improvements.
• Begin implementing community-building circles in the school wherever possible.

B. Train Staff
• Provide ongoing staff development in restorative practices.
• Provide time for ongoing staff discussion of the initiative.
• Encourage staff to attend professional development workshops in restorative practices and related areas (mediation, conflict resolution, non-violent communication, collaborative problem-solving).
C. Develop a Response Team

- Identify members of the staff and members of the community who could respond restoratively to serious incidents.
- Provide specific training in resolution circles and conferencing to those individuals.
- Provide time and space for the conferences, and follow-up the agreements reached.

D. Introduce Restorative Practices Into All Settings

- Integrate restorative practices into daily school life and throughout the curricula.
- Leadership Team plans and implements on-going activities to support the initiative.
- Provide parent/community awareness session(s).
- Use restorative approaches within the staff and at staff meetings.
- Celebrate activities and efforts community-wide.

E. Develop School-Wide Policy and Procedures

- Adopt a school discipline rubric that includes restorative responses to misbehavior.
- Maintain a record-keeping system to record important disciplinary data including office referrals, detentions, suspensions and expulsions.
- Create or revise school mission/vision statement to reflect the restorative approach.
F. Evaluate the Initiative

- Re-administer the student climate survey after 2 years, and analyze the results to measure changes.
- Compare discipline data pre- and post-implementation.
- Revise/update the initiative to meet changing needs.

### Mt. Ararat MS Behavior Referral – Resolution Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
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<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Office Referrals</td>
<td>381</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detentions</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suspensions</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Waterville JHS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Behavior Infractions</th>
<th>07-08</th>
<th>08-09</th>
<th>09-10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>RESTORATIVE JUSTICE</strong></td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>81 students</td>
<td>80 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DETENSIONS</strong></td>
<td>339</td>
<td>218</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>102 students</td>
<td>75 students</td>
<td>80 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SATURDAY DETentions</strong></td>
<td>n/a</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3 students</td>
<td>21 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>SUSPENSIONS</strong></td>
<td>302</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>74 students</td>
<td>59 students</td>
<td>36 students</td>
</tr>
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Contact Information

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