

# A RESTORATIVE SCHOOL

## IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE



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## INTRODUCTION

This Guide is based on the collective experience and expertise of practitioners of RestorativeDC, a project of SchoolTalk Inc., and what they have learned from many, many others along the way. We begin by honoring the visionaries and roots of this work, including the many indigenous peoples who knew Restorative Justice simply as the way of life.

The purpose of this guide is to provide DC public and charter schools with an outline of the ideas and strategies needed for implementing a whole-school restorative approach. RestorativeDC offers this guide, the Implementation Timeline, and Planning Tool to partner schools as a part of an intensive onsite, multi-year technical assistance package, which you will find referenced herein. This guide may still be valuable to schools that are not currently receiving this support. It also complements the professional development opportunities RestorativeDC currently provides free of charge to any DC school or agencies and organizations that support them.

This is a living document that will continue to evolve based on the experiences of DC schools utilizing restorative approaches. We have incorporated lessons learned since the 2015-16 School Year when we started this work and will continue to update it. Your inputs and feedback are genuinely welcomed. Please email to [inaam.avant@schooltalkdc.org](mailto:inaam.avant@schooltalkdc.org) or [rdc@schooltalkdc.org](mailto:rdc@schooltalkdc.org).

We also invite you to explore the resources available from other jurisdictions across the country that have experience in whole-school implementation of Restorative Justice philosophy and practices. See the [APPENDIX D](#) for direct links to different organizations and resources.

For more information about RestorativeDC, see [APPENDIX A](#) or to sign up for our professional development announcements or newsletter, visit <http://www.restoratedc.org/>.

## Acknowledgments

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This Guide will continue to evolve as we continue our journey supporting DC schools with Restorative Justice philosophy and practices. Funding for RestorativeDC has been provided by the Office of the State Superintendent of Education, the aoe Foundation, and DC Public Schools.

# PART I: Restorative Justice: What's the Big Idea?

## Background

**Restorative Justice (RJ)** is picking up momentum across the U.S. and the world, but is not new. Indigenous peoples have been living by Restorative Justice principles and practices well before it was given that label and associated with the modern criminal justice system. In the last decade, restorative justice has seen great growth and evolution in its expansion into school systems. Refer to [APPENDIX C](#) for a glossary of relevant terms.

In schools, restorative justice philosophy and practices are an evidence-based, cost and time-effective approach to building positive, supportive climates in schools that minimize exclusionary disciplinary practices. It aims to:

- Keep youth in school and in their communities
- Promote a safe and inviting learning environment
- Repair harm and build stronger relationships
- Provide opportunities for youth and adults to be worthy, active, and accountable members of their school community



## An Effective and Impactful Approach

As reported by the American Psychological Association, zero-tolerance and accompanying suspensions *“appear to predict higher future rates of misbehavior and suspension among those students*

*who are suspended.*"<sup>1</sup> Moreover, the impact of such exclusionary methods has revealed startling disparities along lines of race, gender, and disability status. For example, black students are 3.8 times more likely to be suspended and expelled than white students<sup>2</sup>.

Endorsed by both the US Department of Education and the US Department of Justice,<sup>3</sup> restorative practices are a promising method for reversing these trends. In *Restorative Justice in U.S. Schools: A Research Review* (February 2016), Trevor Fronius and colleagues report on their literature review of 89 reports and studies on US school Restorative Justice programs. They found strong correlations between implementation and decreased exclusionary discipline, harmful behavior, absenteeism, and truancy despite the methodological difficulties, shortcoming, and inconsistencies in much of the research.<sup>4</sup> Note that a few more rigorous randomized control trial studies of school Restorative Justice programs are currently underway.

When schools promote a non-punitive mindset amongst adults and have an effective alternative to exclusion that addresses the root causes of harmful behavior and teaches social emotional skills, incidents of harm and suspension numbers both drop, and along with it the racial disparities in discipline data. Moreover, restorative practices build relationships and a sense of connectedness or belonging, which leads to improved performance, attendance, healthy lifestyle choices, resilience, self-esteem amongst youth and adults.

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<sup>1</sup> *Zero Tolerance Task Force Report; Are Zero Tolerance Policies Effective in the Schools: An Evidentiary Review and Recommendations; Aug, 2006*

<sup>2</sup> *U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights; 2013-2014 Civil Rights Data Collection: A First Look Jun. 2016*

<sup>3</sup> *US Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division and US Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights, "Dear Colleague Letter on the Nondiscriminatory Administration of School Discipline," January 8, 2014, 2, <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201401-title-vi.pdf>.*

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.wested.org/wp-content/files\\_mf/1456766824resourcerestorativejusticeresearchreview.pdf](https://www.wested.org/wp-content/files_mf/1456766824resourcerestorativejusticeresearchreview.pdf)

## PART II: Whole-School Approach and Implementation

### What is a Whole-School Restorative Model?

A whole-school restorative model touches all members of the school community and their relationships with each other. It embraces both the philosophy and practices of Restorative Justice. A restorative model is fundamentally about aligning the culture of a school along values of trust, compassion, inclusivity, accountability, safety, equity, collaboration, and growth.

### Key Ideas of a Whole-School Restorative Approach

#### Relationship-Centeredness

We place quality relationships at the center of everything. Through a relationship-focused lens, undesirable behaviors stem from a lack of strong human bonds and offer the opportunity build warm, caring, and respectful connection. In a restorative school, everyone in the school community is encouraged to reflect on how their actions have or will affect the quality of their relationships with students, educators, families, administrators, community members, and others.

#### The Whole Being: A Character Building & Values-Based Approach

We see humans as whole emotional, physical, intellectual, social, and spiritual beings and schools as a safe and inviting space for intellectual and physical development, as well as emotional, social, and spiritual growth. With a restorative approach, we hope our students graduate and walk out into the world with the values and character traits that will enrich their personal lives, family, and community, not just their career.

#### A Trauma-Informed and Sensitive Environment

Research studies are now showing how trauma is an inherent part of family systems, whether it is through lived events or through inter-generational trauma passed from one generation to another. We need to understand that everyone walks in the school with their own unique triggers, abilities or inabilities to regulate their emotions and express their feelings, communicate clearly their needs, and guess those of others. A restorative approach deeply complements trauma-informed practices, creating a sense of safety and opportunities for self-regulation, self-expression, and the ability to hear and understand another person.

#### The Importance of Competency and Mistakes as Learning Opportunities

Behavior is strongly tied to competency. Does the individual have the emotional and social skills to do what we expect, including listening, considering multiple perspectives, and expressing emotion? A restorative approach supports a “learning in progress” and growth mindset. Etymologically, the Latin root of the word “discipline” means knowledge, and that of “education” means to draw out from within. Restorative justice aligns with these meanings by seeing disciplinary matters as an opportunity for the student to learn and grow through personal experience, providing for strong social-emotional development to complement a school’s academic standards. We believe there is no better way to develop key competencies and self-confidence in solution-oriented, collaborative problem solving.

## Mindfulness and Empathy

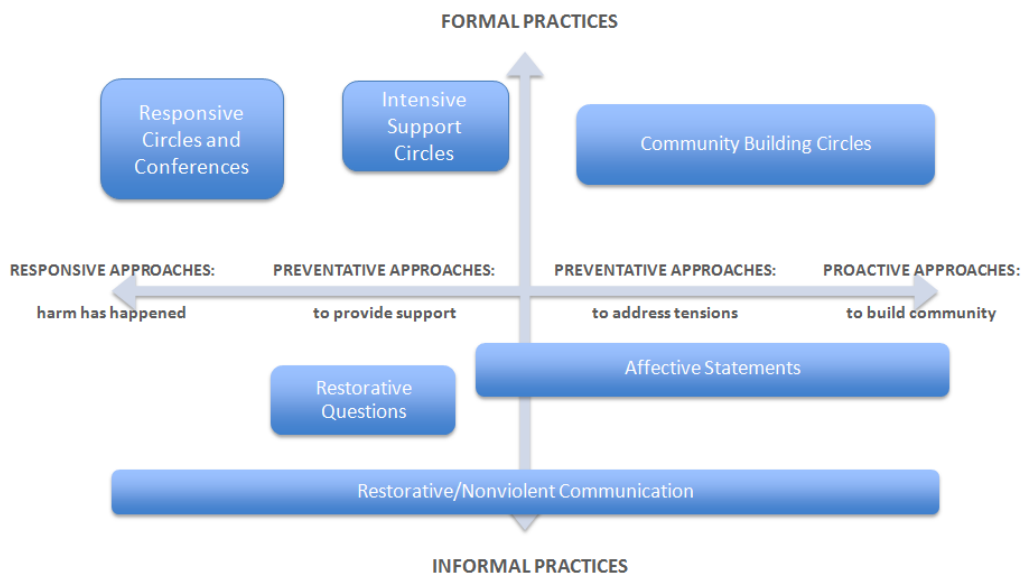
A restorative approach asks everyone to slow down and be present with themselves and others, listen with more attention, and increasingly regulate nervous reactivity with intentionality. By holding compassionate curiosity and intentions towards everyone and the self, adults and youth can learn to discern limiting beliefs, be more self-aware, and to appreciate the impact of one's actions. Related to this, an underlying assumption, increasingly supported by scientific research, is that humans have a strong empathic drive to be in caring and supportive relationship with each other, although this can be inhibited by trauma, socialization, and a sense of "other." The restorative approach draws out this intrinsic motivation to act with love and care.

## Tending to Root Causes

A restorative approach asks you to explore and address the underlying reasons for harmful or confusing behavior. This is closely tied to the key idea from Nonviolent Communication that all actions are simply the best strategies available to an individual to satisfy underlying human needs. A lack of social-emotional skills or supportive community, developmental and ability differences, socialization, trauma, poverty, or racism and other forms of oppression can all contribute to limiting the strategies available to individuals and resulting in acts of harm. Restorative Justice philosophy and practice ask us to understand and address both the human needs and limiting circumstances at the root of harmful behavior.

## A Landscape of Practices

A whole-school model uses practices that fall on the continuum of pro-active to responsive, as well as varying in their degree of formality. This is depicted in the two-dimensional map of restorative practices below.



Building a restorative school does not mean mandating school-wide implementation at once, rather it happens through organic growth, modeling, inspiration, voluntary participation, and collaborative engagement. It involves long-term institutional commitment towards transformation and sustainability, typically three to five years of hard work to grow in each of the following areas of focus.

# Whole-School Restorative Approach Focus Areas



## Leadership

To successfully implement a whole school model, it is essential to have individuals who are personally invested in the work, open to new ways of thinking and being, and intrinsically motivated to be a part of a **restorative school implementation team**.

The role of the restorative school implementation team is to help coordinate, delegate and support the shift to a restorative school. Leaders should be transparent in their approaches and do their best to model restorative behavior. This team will greatly benefit from the support or participation of key school administrators and senior support staff, as well as over the time the involvement of students, teachers, and parents.



A clearly articulated vision and mission builds a strong foundation for a successful school. If you do not already have one, your school should develop a motto/creed that summarizes the school's core beliefs. The vision and mission will serve as the focal point for school leadership as they begin to adopt a whole school restorative approach.

### Staff Engagement

Engaging school staff is a priority as they strongly influence school culture and determine what practices will take root. There are three key steps in supporting your staff:

- **Engagement and connection.** Relationship and community building is central. It is important to create a safe place where staff feel valued, engaged, and connected.
- **Capacity building.** A restorative approach comprises many different methods and skills. In developing your whole school implementation plan, prioritize what your staff needs to focus on and which staff to train first.
- **Self-care.** For your staff to adopt a restorative mindset practices, they must be restorative with themselves first. It is important that your school provides school staff with opportunities for self care. Some examples are holding regular staff circles where staff can share their grief and celebrations, and weekly yoga classes.

### School Culture and Climate

Restorative Justice complements a focus on positive school culture and climate. Restorative change is about aligning the culture of a school along values of trust, compassion, inclusivity, accountability, safety, equity, collaboration, and growth. Both pro-active and responsive restorative practices contribute to this change. We recommend a balance of **80%** of your efforts and resources focused on building community and **20%** of on disciplinary responses. Identify additional ways to intentionally shape the culture of the school from deliberate conversations about school identity to community events such as field trips, cookouts, school plays, shows, and assemblies.

### Restorative Discipline Policies and Practices

Most discipline policies in US schools are punitive. This means they punish in order to correct behavior or re-establish a moral equilibrium when someone has done wrong. Accountability is the external imposition of consequences. On the other hand, the intention of Restorative Justice is to respond to harm by restoring the people and relationships of those affected by the harm to wholeness. Accountability is the internal process of acknowledging the harm and taking steps to repair it. Revise your school's policies and practices to shift away from punishment towards restoration.

### Youth Engagement

Successful restorative schools empower youth to have voice on issues that affect them, influence culture change, lead restorative practices, co-create school norms and policies, and take initiative to shape their community. Meaningful youth leadership not only requires

providing the opportunities for youth leadership, but training adults in the school on how to let youth genuinely lead.

### **Community Engagement**

The entire community needs to have ownership to have a truly sustainable restorative school. Families may not only understand, support, and reinforce restorative philosophy and practices, they may actually push for its implementation or integrate it into their own home life. Similarly, consider how school neighbors and partner organizations can contribute to and become a part of the whole-school change.

### **Assessment**

More than just a condition of funders and other stakeholders, we refer to assessment as a mindset of learning what works and continually seeking to improve. Collect baseline and follow-up data on your school's performance and behavior trends to understand the effectiveness of whole-school implementation. Track quantitative data like attendance, student and staff retention rates, grades, suspensions, and referrals, as well as qualitative data such as interviews, focus groups, and surveys. Disaggregate data by race, disability, sexual orientation, etc. to assess impact on issues of equity.

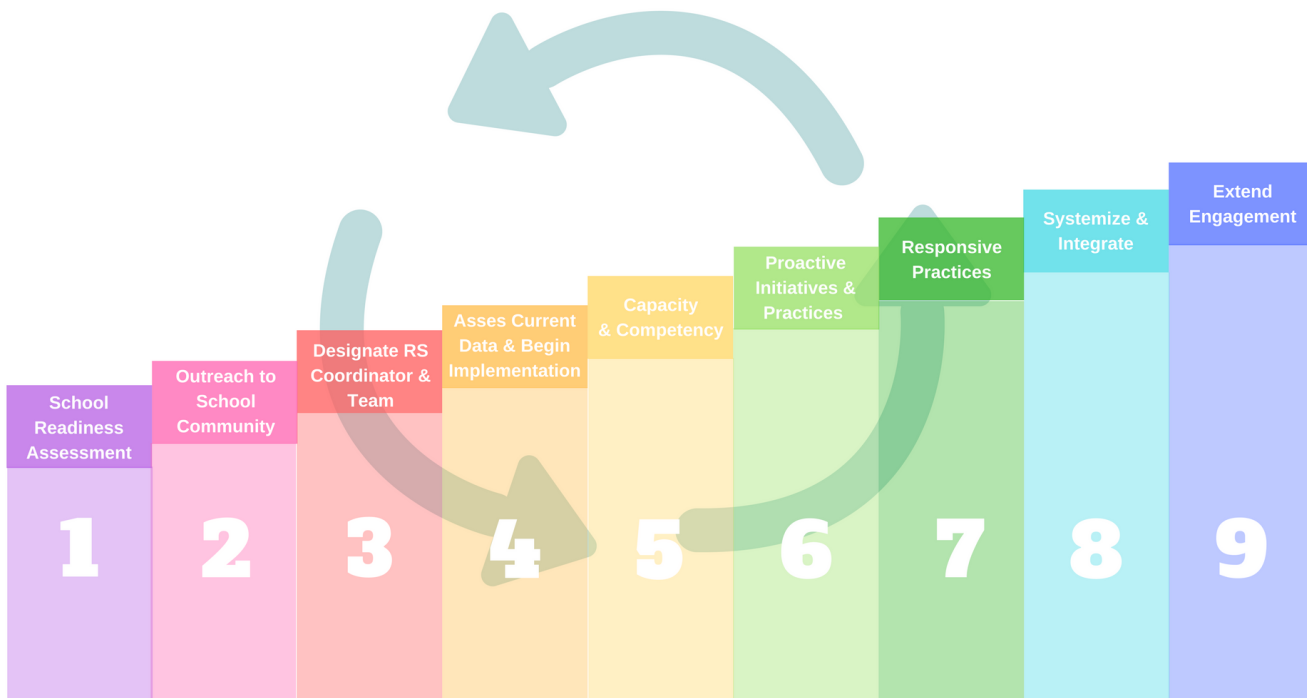
## **Steps to Implement a Whole-School Restorative Approach**

When supporting whole-school change in partner schools, RestorativeDC uses a structured, yet customizable, planning process to maximize the effectiveness of our technical assistance based on a three to five-year timeline, roughly broken down into:

- **Getting Started- Year 1**
- **Expanding School Efforts- Year 2 to 3**
- **Sustainability and Maintenance- Year 4 to 5**

The process starts with a school assessing itself as ready and committing to implement a whole-school approach. The first year is then characterized by the identification of a Restorative School Coordinator(s) and Implementation Team, outreach to and exposure of the school community about Restorative Justice philosophy and practice, development of a three-year Restorative School Implementation Plan, targeted professional development and implementation, and an end-of-year assessment. In subsequent years, the Implementation Plan is revised, professional development and implementation is deepened and expanded into more of the focus areas described above, and assessment continues. RestorativeDC's [Whole School Implementation Timeline](#) in **APPENDIX B** for your reference. You may also use the excerpt from our [Planning Tool](#) found in **APPENDIX B** for your own planning.

The key steps in this multi-year process are outlined in the following figure:



### Step 1: School Readiness Assessment

Start by knowing where you are starting. RestorativeDC does this by asking potential partner schools to complete a preliminary self-assessment of their school’s interest, needs, and capacity for receiving technical assistance in moving to a whole-school restorative model (See [APPENDIX B](#)). We consider such factors as current challenges and efforts, existing and desired school culture, leadership and teamwork style, school stability, administration buy in ("believe in"), and commitment of staff and resources towards planning and implementation (any school interested in receiving technical assistance must designate a minimum of one Restorative School Coordinator, supported by a Restorative School Implementation Team). Based on this assessment, we explore the possibility of partnership around whole-school implementation and the technical assistance options. We strongly recommend any interested school conduct a similar self-assessment. Additional resources for this can be found in the reference guides listed in [APPENDIX B](#).



### Step 2: Initial Outreach to the School Community

Members of the school community will have differing levels of openness to Restorative Justice philosophy and practices. The idea may resonate strongly with some who will adopt it quickly. Others may resist until they have deeper familiarity or there is a critical mass. See [APPENDIX C](#) for guidance on how to respond to resistance. RestorativeDC typically conducts or recommends initial outreach through exposure and invitation, that is offering a clear introductory understanding and experience of Restorative Justice followed by opportunities to get involved and receive deeper training. The exposure can come through participating in a restorative process, visiting a restorative school, listening to one of their staff, or attending a conference, not just a workshop.

At the same time, we urge school leadership to be transparent about their intentions and plans to adopt a whole school restorative approach and to model the restorative values of trust, compassion,

inclusivity, accountability, safety, equity, collaboration, and growth throughout this process, especially when meeting resistance from members of the community. Remember to stay focused on relationships. Sharing of personal experiences and the conclusions from the school assessment can serve to prompt genuine dialogue about what change is mutually desired.



### **Step 3: Establish a Restorative School Coordinator/Team**

A key step in whole-school implementation is to identify and engage a Restorative School Coordinator(s) and supporting RS Implementation Team with the commitment, training, support, resources, and authority to take meaningful action. Seek individuals with intrinsic motivation and aim to include representatives of different parts of the school community, including executive decision-makers. RS Coordinators and Implementation Teams who are part of the RestorativeDC project will receive intensive training in whole school Restorative Justice philosophy and practices, priority registration for future professional development opportunities, and onsite technical assistance.

#### Gather and Engage Key Stakeholders

Your Implementation Team might include:

- **Principal and Assistant Principals** (even if only as advisors)
- **Deans and Administrators**
- **Anyone in charge of student behavior, student affairs, discipline, or school culture and climate**, especially who have access to or track data
- **Special education staff**
- **Counselors and social workers**
- **Teachers** (various grades)
- **Youth** (various grades)
- **Guardians/parents**

#### A Diversity of Roles and Scopes

Some teams may have 15 people. Some 2-5 people. No matter where you are in terms of accessing outside support or building in-house support and capacity, get yourselves organized and look ahead at what you will need. Here are some examples of roles we have seen in schools (different titles may apply).

**RS Coordinator(s):** support the overall arching vision, mission and daily coordination of implementing restorative practices as well as actually coordinating facilitation of restorative processes.

**RS Facilitator(s):** anyone trained in restorative practices who feels comfortable and capable of holding either proactive practices and/or responsive approach to discipline and conflicts/issues.

**RS Enthusiast/Learner/Supporter(s):** anyone wanting to learn more, get trained and support implementation of restorative practices in a school. May support the RS coordinator or actively participate in circles to learn through practice.

**RestorativeDC Consultant(s):** an RDC consultant might support your overall vision, assess your school's resources, counsel next steps, facilitate trainings, and consult on your implementation plan.

**RS Trainer(s):** an experienced trainer who can deliver in-house or local trainings for your staff.

Your team may not look like this at all in the beginning and only have a few enthusiasts. That is not a worry as implementing restorative practices from the smallest circle to a whole-school approach takes three to five years, or more, depending on the support of the decision-makers. It usually starts with a small number of persons with vision and excitement.

#### RECRUITMENT TIPS:

- Voluntary participation and openness to anyone who feels called to do so will model the restorative values of trust, inclusivity, equity, collaboration, and growth.
- Check that all stakeholders are aware of and invited to this initiative and track that their voices and needs are represented.



### Step 4: Assess Current Data & Begin Implementation Plan

#### Collect Data and Track Patterns

It is important to have baseline data on performance and behavior to help you track trends and impacts of your school culture and discipline efforts. The data will communicate where the policies and practices currently in place need to be modified to align with your goals.

#### Culture and Climate Review

If you're not already doing it, use an annual climate and culture survey to poll your entire school population on their perceptions of the school community. Discuss this with RestorativeDC, contact your central office, or find national surveys that are available for you to use.

#### Discipline, Staffing, and Academic Data Review

Collect data spanning a couple of years and look for patterns in:

- Referrals
- Suspensions / Expulsions
- Attendance
- Graduation
- Staff turnover
- Grades and test scores

## Equity Check

Look at the above data disaggregated by grade level, gender, race, ethnicity, immigration status, and IEP status to understand the equity dimensions of school policies and practices. In terms of these same categories, analyze who has the power among staff and students to influence or change school policies and practices.

## Qualitative Data Review

In addition to quantitative data it is powerful to include qualitative data, such as testimonies from students, families, and staff. This could include feedback from teacher reviews, family/teacher conferences, and notable comments made by students about how they feel at school.

## Draft a 1-3-year Implementation Plan

- Assess "**Believe-In**" and resources invested towards Restorative Practices
  - *What support from the top-down do you have?*
  - *What access to resources do you foresee for this year? Next year?*
  - *What is engagement of key disciplinary staff like?*
- Identify feasible goals and objectives
  - *What are the short-term goals and long-term objectives that you can identify?*
  - *What are the doable steps and resources needed to achieve them?*
  - *Do you have a clear pathway towards your whole school vision?*
- Set up a monitoring system
  - To track progress towards objectives as well as the integrity of the restorative approach itself



## **Step 5: Build capacity and competency**

Consider yourself embarking on a journey of discovery and growth, the first and most important step of which is understanding and integrating the core restorative philosophy and principles. This will be followed by learning basic skills and practices, advanced skills and practices, and strategic thinking around organizational change. Remember it takes time to incorporate new knowledge, attitudes, and behavior. Be gentle with yourself, seek support and companionship, and consider a "F.A.I.L." as a "First Attempt in Learning." RestorativeDC will support your school in building staff capacity and competency in implementing the restorative approach.

## Get and Provide Professional Development

We encourage that all RS Implementation Team members and the staff who address disciplinary issues receive professional development training in:

- Restorative Schools overview of basic principles and practices

- Circle keeping skills for community-building
- Circle keeping skills for responsive interventions
- Restorative conversations
- Trauma awareness and resilience

Refer to RestorativeDC's calendar of trainings or [sign up](#) to receive PD announcements and our monthly Restorative Times newsletter featuring news, events, conferences, and other opportunities related to Restorative Justice in the District.

### Teach/Learn through Modeling

As you most likely know, in the science of how people learn, watching and mirroring others is many times more impactful than simply verbal instruction. Let your actions, approach and care speak louder than your words. The critical piece to understand here is that we urge you to “be restorative” in your daily interactions as much as possible, rather than simply applying restorative interventions in specific situations. People, including youth, are always watching and listening. Strive to create a safe environment for you and others to be vulnerable and authentic; give and receive feedback; and express frustration, confusion, and uncertainty.

Learning and integrating a myriad of self-connecting practices can support “being restorative” such as mindfulness, meditation, self-empathy, Nonviolent Communication, conflict resolution and mediation practices, coaching, consensus decision-making, and practices for making and breaking agreements with care.

### Engage in a Peer Support Group

Find or create a group of other educators and practitioners who are implementing Restorative Justice philosophy and practices. Meet together in circle on a regular basis to reflect on your work, collectively celebrate and mourn, build a web of supportive relationships, and share experiences, inspiration, best practices, and lessons learned.

RestorativeDC holds monthly Community of Practice meetings that are open to and attended by representatives from schools, agencies, and organizations across the District. It provides an important learning and support experience, as well as an opportunity to find others with whom you have specific common interests that could be channeled into specialized support groups. Contact us at RestorativeDC if you would like to join.

You are not meant to go at this alone, but in community.

*“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together” - African proverb*

### Engage Outside Support and Technical Assistance

While you are still gaining in-house expertise, personalized outside support beyond trainings and reference materials can be invaluable for more efficient and effective implementation. RestorativeDC's whole-school efforts emerged as a response to the lack of such support in the District. It pairs partner schools with one or more experienced restorative practitioners for regular onsite technical

assistance that may include coaching, observation and feedback, demonstrations, co-facilitation, emergency troubleshooting, policy advice, material development, planning, monitoring and evaluation, and customized training.



## Step 6: Proactive Initiatives and Practices

Pro-active efforts serve to build relationships and a sense of community; create a space for expression and dialogue around a particular topic; and make inclusive, collaborative agreements. Proactive practices are the foundation for a safer, inviting environment where respect and care flow. They also re-strengthen the community so as to preempt patterns of disconnect that may escalate into harmful conflict.

### Circle Processes

As with many Restorative Justice programs around the world, circle processes are a core proactive practice at RestorativeDC. Circle processes in the Native American-inspired peacemaking circle tradition are structured, facilitated dialogues that incorporate the use of a talking piece and centerpiece, rounds, values, opening and closing ceremonies, and personal storytelling. Below are some of the kinds of circles you can use proactively, keeping in mind that they will take time, instruction, practice, and self-forgiveness to master. Refer to the [Overview of Circle Process](#) in [APPENDIX C](#).

#### Staff Circles

As a part of whole-school implementation, we strongly encourage weekly or monthly circles for the adults in the building. Circles slow down and open up your team to the personal and authentic connections that are often missing in the workplace. They foster understanding and trust. They motivate and inspire teamwork and mutual care, while reducing stress and conflict. Staff or team meetings can be completely held in circle or part of the meeting may be designated solely for circle time.

#### Classroom Circles

We recommend classroom circles on a weekly basis to build relationships, establish and modify group agreements, check in with each other personally, share and learn from each other's life experiences, and collectively make decisions and solve problems. The circle offers young people an opportunity to take leadership, express themselves, listen deeply to their peers, talk about what matters to them, and relate to adults as equals. In this way, it builds community, a sense of belonging and worth, and social emotional skills. They work best when there is consistency, predictability, and deepening over time.

#### Small Group Circles



Circles can build community within smaller groups, affirming their shared human experiences through storytelling, and allowing them to reflect on how to relate with the larger community. In this way, everyone's voice is more likely to count in the whole-school community. Think of your newcomers, English language learners, parents, new mothers/fathers, extra-curricular groups, special focus groups, etc.

**Example:** *A social worker started using circle to run her weekly student group on self-confidence and healthy relationships. The circle helped everyone in the group develop their voice and effective strategies for formulating goals and relating to others.*

### (Hot) Topic Circles

Being part of a community means dedicating time to talk about differences of perspective and experience, and finding common ground. A number of templates for discussing both recent events and larger issues, such as social justice, healthy relationships and finding one's purpose, can be found in *Circle Forward*.

**Example:** *At Camp Horizons for a weekend leadership retreat, a group of 50 middle and high school students with 10 staff members from Columbia Heights Education Campus gathered on the bank of a lake to pay homage to those killed, hurt or affected by 9/11. Every person shared what was coming up for them and spoke their wishes for peace in the world. The circle was planned for a ceremony before the closing of the weekend, but such depth was reached in sharing that it became the closing ceremony for the retreat. The group ranged in age from 11 - 50 and everyone had something to share about its effect even though some of the kids weren't even born yet. Ironically, some of the staff members were in middle or high school when 9/11 happened. Some lived in NYC. Others had relatives working at the Pentagon. Some lost relatives or lost freedoms. It was a very heart-opening and tear-filled experience that helped some young people name their fears and impact on their families. Perhaps, most importantly, each person related to the topic and that connected them all together.*

### Restorative Communication

In our words, as in our actions, we seek to move from judgment, blame, and coercion to compassion, accountability, and collaboration. This means we seek to connect with curiosity and care, acknowledging everyone's humanity and holding a shared understanding of everyone experiences instead of alienating each other behind words of right and wrong, good and bad. This ensures healthy relationships and sustainable solutions that work for everyone.

Some examples of a restorative shift in language:

From	To
"You made me feel..."	"When you ____, I feel..."
"You should(n't)..."	"What is important to me is..."
"You are so disrespectful."	"When I see you [observation of action], I worry that..."
"This is inappropriate behavior."	"This behavior isn't working for me because...." "What is going on for you?" "Here is what I'd prefer instead..."
"What is wrong with you?"	"I really want to understand what's important for you. Let's take a deep breath and then tell me what you want me to know."

As with any practice, nonverbal communication such as body language and tone of voice, communicate much of the underlying intention and emotion of your words. If someone perceives hidden judgment or coercion, they will usually respond with resistance.

The following skills or frameworks contribute to a more restorative way of communicating. We encourage you to explore each through trainings or some of the reference materials found in [APPENDIX C](#).

- Active listening
- Affective statements ("I" statements)
- Appreciative inquiry
- Empathic reflection
- Empowering questions
- Nonviolent (or Collaborative) Communication

### Pro-Active Practices Implementation Ideas

For **Year 1** as you get started with whole-school implementation:

- Expose teachers and counselors to pro-active circles, train those who are interested in circle keeping, and begin regular pro-active classroom and group circles.
- Train an initial cohort of administration and staff in restorative communication
- Hold a couple staff meetings in circle.
- Test pro-active practices for parent engagement.

For **Years 2-3**, as you expand whole school efforts:

- Use pro-active practices to build school-wide community early in the year, including during incoming family orientation events.

- Expand circle-keeping capacity to more staff and students.
- Expand classroom and group circles to touch more of the student body.
- Expand capacity building in restorative communication to more administration, staff, and students.
- Hold regular staff meetings in circle.
- Use proactive processes to develop school norms, values, and vision.
- Use proactive processes to inclusively and collaboratively address a school policy issue.

For **Years 4-5**, as you sustain and maintain a restorative school:

- Use pro-active practices to build school-wide community early in the year, including security officers, social workers, community organizations, and other partners.
- Aim for regular pro-active circles to be held in all classrooms and be primarily led by students.
- Aim to train all administration and staff in restorative communication.
- Hold all staff meetings in circle.
- Use proactive processes to inclusively and collaboratively address all school policy issues.



## **Step 7: Responsive (and Preventative) Practices**

Conflict is a natural part of life. Whether within us or with regard to others, there will always be disagreement; different beliefs and preferences; biases, and harm – even if just unintentional. What profoundly matters is how we approach these aspects of life. Restorative Justice philosophy cultivates an appreciation for the role of conflict and harm as an expression of the underlying needs and relationships that are out of balance in a community, thereby opening up opportunities for growth. We seek to acknowledge and overcome the anger, fear, pain, and blame that may keep us from orienting ourselves towards growth.

## Responsive and Preventative Practices on a Continuum

As mentioned above, restorative practices fall on a continuum from proactive to preventative to responsive. The exact boundary between each of these three categories may be difficult to locate given similarities or overlap between the goals and methods of proactive and preventative practices, as well as preventative and responsive practices.

Preventative practices address a risk or emerging pattern of disconnection and may be used as soon as the risk or pattern becomes apparent or other existing strategies seem ineffective. For example, you may use staff circles when tension or morale becomes palpable on your team and support circles when a particular student seems to be at risk of dropping out or is returning from a long absence. These interventions may result in a collectively developed and agreed-upon action plan to address the tension or provide support.

Responsive practices address discrete harm that has occurred and seek to involve those directly involved, substantially affected, and their supporters. For example, you may use an on-the-spot restorative conversation or micro-circle when there is a minor verbal altercation in the hallway and a more formal restorative circle when two students get in a fight or one adult is alleged to have harassed another. Responsive practices may be combined with traditional disciplinary responses such as suspensions when time away is needed to calm nerves or ensure safety while a process is being planned. Peer juries or youth courts, accountability panels, restorative reflections, community service, and restitution letters or speeches are other common responses that may have some restorative qualities, but also punitive or unilateral elements.

For both preventative and responsive practices, the more serious, long-standing, or complex the harm or issues at hand, the more time and energy you will spend identifying and preparing participants for the process, building relationships throughout the process, and following up with them in a group or one-on-one. Both preventative and responsive interventions benefit from being imbedded in a system that provides for cases to be identified or referred, facilitated by a skilled practitioner, and tracked through to closure. Below are descriptions of some of the kinds of interventions you can use preventatively or responsively, keeping in mind that they will take time, instruction, practice, and self-forgiveness to master.

### Restorative Communication (pro-active/preventative/responsive)

Restorative Communication is focused on communicating thoughts, observations, feelings, and underlying needs in the spirit of curiosity, care for all, learning, and compassion. Pulling from Nonviolent Communication, restorative communication is guided by reflective listening, appreciative inquiry, affective statements, and blame-free language. It can happen in the moment, in one-on-one preparation sessions for a larger process; or during a formal group process.

### Intensive Support Circles (preventative)

Intensive Support Circles are a kind of circle process that weaves struggling individuals or families together with community members, youth workers, and others into a web of support characterized by strong relationships, joint decision making, and shared responsibility. They may occur as a series of circles for relationship building, resource mapping, action planning, check-ins, and celebration.



**Example:** *We used this type of circle to support a youth who had seen declining grades, school engagement, and relationship with his mother the semester following a summer incident in which he was arrested. The circle brought together his mother, coach, mentor, therapist, and dean to affirm his potential and strengths and to come up with a joint plan of action to address his challenges.*

### Reintegration Circles (preventative)

Reintegration Circles are a form of support circle for those who have been excluded from the school or neighborhood community on account of suspension, arrest, incarceration, illness, etc. Reintegration Circle provides an opportunity to welcome the individual back, reaffirm their importance in the community, and provide support their successful reintegration.

### Dialogue Circles (preventative/responsive)

Staff, classroom, or group circles used to address an identified source of tension or conflict.

**Example:** *An AP English teacher had some issues with a specific class where she heard a lot of complaints and could see and feel the resistance and disengagement of students. She had a great diversity of students with a wide range of background in English, a variety of home situations (e.g. caring for a baby, working full-time) and differing levels of family support. She held classroom circles where all students were invited to name what was hard and what needed to happen to make things better. The students felt safe enough to share their complaints without blaming the teacher herself. Some even were able to express gratitude for her pushing them to go higher. And all students contributed ideas to make things better, resulting in strong new agreements in class, from small to big, such as the teacher giving a visual of deadlines and missing homework so students could know where they were standing, some bilingual kids volunteering to be supportive at key tables to help those who needed more English support, and so many others. Class atmosphere was restored and the teacher reported that she felt much better having heard a bit more about her students' needs and being now able to implement new strategies that became clear. Win-win!*

**Example:** *We used this type of circle with a group of 6th grade “high flyers” to build relationships and offer a place to be heard. We talk about what makes us happy in life, what’s hard in school, what makes us uncomfortable, etc. Within 2-3 weeks we had reports from administrators that these students were more integrated into their classroom and no longer as “disruptive” as before.*

### Responsive Circles

A dialogue process that uses the same circle process structure described for pro-active circles to resolve incidents of harm. Restorative circles provide a safe and structured space for participants to understand what happened, express how they have been affected, and create a written agreement to repair the harm and prevent the incident from happening again. Follow-up ensures the agreement is working or modified as needed.

### De-Escalation and Restorative Questions (responsive)

This on-the-spot approach involves taking the heated individual(s) aside, showing care, validating their humanity (not behaviors), or providing a sensory outlet until they return to a sense of calm and the capacity to self-regulate. You can then ask the restorative questions to elicit a deeper understanding of the harm, the actions that led to it, and the steps needed to repair it.

### Micro-Circles (responsive)

Another on-the-spot technique that engages two or more individuals in a conversation around the restorative questions, or more simply "what would you like the other to know about what happened and how to make it better?" then asking the other person to paraphrase what they heard. Having the participants hear and reflect each other for a few rounds ensures that all is spoken and acknowledged, and can move participants back into calmness, empathy, and a problem-solving mode.

### Restorative Conferences (responsive)

Restorative Conferencing is inspired by Aboriginal practices from Australia. It is a formal process used as an alternative to exclusionary forms of discipline or justice. A facilitator individually prepares those involved and affected by an incident of harm (as well as anyone invited to provide support and resources) and then convenes a conference for them to share what happened, how they have been affected, and what they need to repair the harm and prevent it from happening again. Like Responsive Circles, agreements may be written and signed and follow-up ensures agreements are honored and supported. They are similar in format to Community Conferencing and Family Group Conferencing, the latter of which can also be used preventatively.

#### **Considerations for a Restorative Disciplinary Response**

##### **1. When the harm first occurs or is discovered:**

- Who decides how the school will respond to the harm and whom do they consult?
- Is everyone in the school community safe from further harm occurring? And what needs to be put into place to ensure this safety while any planning takes place?
- What kinds of responses are contemplated by your current disciplinary policy and practices? What do the potential participants expect?
- How willing and able are the necessary staff to take a restorative approach?
- What responsive practice will be the most supportive process for this particular situation? Is an on-the-spot informal intervention enough or do you need more time, structure, participants, and preparation to bring about real restoration?
- Are there the resources and availability to handle the matter restoratively?

##### **2. If it is decided to handle a given case restoratively:**

- What is the process for referring cases and communicating this to administrators, teachers, and families?
- Who will facilitate and follow-up on the process, considering both in-house and outside practitioners?
- Who will identify, invite, prepare, schedule, and correspond with participants, including families; how will they do this; and along what timeline?
- Who will coordinate logistics such as finding a venue, organizing transportation, and obtaining materials?
- What other resources or expertise is needed?

##### **3. In preparation for the process:**

- Are all potential participants informed of the process and willing to participate fully with a genuine intention to make things better? What pressures or concerns can be addressed to make participation more voluntary and open?
- What individuals who are directly involved and affected by the harm, as well as their supporters and resource people, need to be there to ensure the process is effective and inclusive? Consider, for example, families, counselors, social workers, coaches, peers.
- Who from the school community, including classmates and administration, can be present to speak to the needs of the community?

#### 4. Following the process:

- Who will be following up with the participants and on any agreements reached, and how?
- How will the outcome of the process and any agreements be documented and communicated to relevant staff and the wider community?
- How will facilitators, participants, and administration give and receive feedback to ensure learning and growth?

#### Responsive Practices Implementation Ideas

For **Year 1**, as you get started with whole-school implementation:

- Get targeted staff trained and coached to facilitate restorative processes. You can build on prior training and experience in pro-active circles to learn responsive circles.
- Train an initial cohort of administration and staff in restorative communication.
- Go the restorative route with low level harms (Tier 1 and some Tier 2) and expand to higher levels as capacity, competency, and in-house resources increase.
- Add Circles to the In-School Suspension (ISS) program (both proactive and responsive).
- Identify individuals or classes with emerging patterns of challenging behavior, use preventative interventions, and track how it affects the behavior.
- Involve school leadership in restorative interventions to experience it in action.

For **Years 2-3**, as you expand whole school efforts:

- Expand capacity building in restorative processes to the whole disciplinary team.
- Expand capacity building in restorative communication to more administration, staff, and students.
- Expand restorative responses to higher-level harm and more of your suspension cases (in-house or out).
- Engage “troubling” or “high flyer” students with preventative interventions and have administrators participate with an intention to strengthen their relationship to the student.
- Use responsive interventions to address conflicts or harm among and between students, staff, and families.

For **Years 4-5**, as you sustain and maintain a restorative school:

- Aim for a restorative intervention for all of your suspension cases in-house.
- Attempt a restorative intervention as an alternative to expulsion.
- Aim to train all administration and staff in restorative communication.
- Assess what is needed to deal with all tiers of behaviors, conflicts, and harm, including collaboration with police, social workers, court system, community organizations, and other potential partners.



- Equip and empower youth to lead restorative responses for cases of lower-level harm and conflict.



## NOTES ON RESPONSIVE PRACTICES:

- Responding restoratively takes time, most likely way more time than dealing out commands, threats, enticements, punishments, and rewards.
- Responding restoratively involves inner work by the facilitator to approach the situation with a non-judgmental curiosity, seeing it as a natural part of life and an opportunity to grow as an individual and community. This comes with a lot of practice and self-connection, self-management, self-empathy. See section IV for ideas or read more about supportive philosophies such as Ubuntu<sup>5</sup> or Ahimsa<sup>6</sup>
- Restorative practices are difficult to implement when tensions are high, time is short, and capacity is low.
- Remember the F.A.I.L. approach and seek support as you proceed.

## Step 8: Systemize and Integrate

### Revisit and Revise Disciplinary Policies and Practices

Policies are linked to, but not the same as, practices. Ultimately, it's the practice that makes the most tangible impact in the life of the community. At the same time, policies can inspire and guide practices, as well as build a sense of predictability, continuity, and fairness, provided they are communicated to and accepted by the school community. Because disciplinary policies govern when there has been conflict and harm, they can reflect the school's deepest values. A restorative disciplinary policy thus communicates both practical restorative options and core values of trust, compassion, inclusivity, accountability, safety, equity, collaboration, and growth. A restorative policy may also involve pro-active practices that are atypical for a traditional disciplinary policy. The process of (re)developing a disciplinary policy can itself be more restorative and effective by inviting some form of whole-school collaboration, using restorative practices to reflect on the policy, get input and feedback, and make decisions.

As you visit and revise your disciplinary policies and practices, here are some questions to consider:

- Prior to reading the existing disciplinary, how well, if at all, did you know what it entailed?
- How did you and your colleagues first learn about this discipline policy?
- Where can you, students, parents, or other members of the school community find the actual policy if needed?
- How can the policy be better communicated?
- How was the policy created and what avenues are there for input and change?
- How well does the written disciplinary policy line up with actual disciplinary practices? Where do they diverge?
- What are three words that the disciplinary policy communicates as the school's core values?
- How would you draw out a flowchart of your discipline policy, beginning with an incident of harm and where it could go from there, depending on the kind of offense?
- What are some restorative elements in your existing disciplinary policies or practices?
- Where are opportunities for the policy or practices to be more restorative?
- What are legal, regulatory, or other restrictions on the policy becoming more restorative?



## Set Up a Restorative Request and Referral System

In a restorative disciplinary process, the wisdom needed to come to resolution is collectively held by all participants. Similarly, in a restorative disciplinary system, the community plays a larger role in identifying and contributing their voice to what is needed to ensure safety, care, respect, and accountability among adults and young people alike. Envision a system where a harmed member of the school community requests a restorative response. As internal capacity widens and deepens, they may initiate a formal administrative referral or informally approach support staff or peer groups, including students and families.

To get there, consider the following implementation ideas:

- Once you have a Restorative School Coordinator and access to facilitator(s), set up a referral system that can receive requests from anyone for restorative interventions.
- While most referrals will come from administrators in the first year or two, raise awareness amongst students, teachers, counselors, and social workers about their restorative options.
- As students and staff get exposed to proactive practices, explain how they link to preventative and responsive interventions and how to make a request/referral.
- With expanded capacity and competency, allow and/or encourage members of the community to "call a circle" for themselves without involving administration.
- Involve students, families, and staff in the creation and revision of the referral system.

## Monitor and Evaluate your Efforts

Set up a tracking system to:

- Manage and document responsive interventions and their follow up
- Measure changes in disciplinary and attendance data, academics, behavior, and school culture
- Assess implementation outcomes against set plans and goals
- Identify gaps in your analysis of the problem and implementation plan

## Integrate with Existing Frameworks

Your school most likely already has frameworks that complement and strengthen a whole-school restorative approach. Collaborate with those teams who are responsible for their implementation and invite them to be a part of your Restorative School implementation team. Identify if any aspects of their framework are not supportive of a restorative approach and work together to address these areas of tension.

### **Examples of Supportive Frameworks**

- Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
- Response to Intervention (RTI)
- Responsive Classrooms
- Social Emotional Learning (SEL)
- Positive Climate and Culture
- Trauma-Informed Schools
- Positive Discipline (Jane Nelsen)
- Mindfulness in schools



## Step 9: Extend Engagement

### Increase Exposure and Practice

Participating in a restorative process can provide a powerful experiential demonstration of the spirit and potential of these processes. Participating, and facilitating or co-facilitating once ready, is indispensable to building skills and deepening understanding of Restorative Justice. There are many opportunities for you and other members of your school community to both participate and facilitate. The outlines listed in the table of contents of *Circle Forward* will give you countless ideas.

Here are a few to start off with:

- Run your next staff or department meeting in circle.
- Run an advisory period in circle.
- Integrate restorative processes into school assembly.
- Offer a self-care circle for teachers in the staff lounge.
- Hold your next parent engagement event with an "Introduction to Circles" circle.
- Find programs, groups, or meetings that can be modified slightly by adding opening or closing rounds, talking piece, and storytelling rounds. These tiny additions can have a big impact on the sense of human connection and motivation.
- Consider how to hold student government, town hall, or other decision-making meetings with students using circle.

### Embrace the Learning Process

Just as your first circle may not come easy, the first year may be a real test of will. Remember you are changing the fundamental way people have been taught to think and act. Skepticism and resistance is a healthy response and an opportunity to share and understand core values, vulnerabilities, and life stories. Building the skills is also an opportunity to engage yourself with kindness and forgiveness.

Along the way, don't forget to be creative and have fun! Add ice-breakers, games, movement, music, art, drama, and humor. Encourage personal quotes, readings, and stories. Build a talking piece together. Elicit topics and questions from the group. Customize your own culturally-relevant terms for what you are doing. As you master the skills and the principles that guide them, innovate with the process to better serve your community.

### Raise Awareness and Advocate

Based on your experiences and passions, raise awareness around and advocate for Restorative Justice amongst key stakeholders, in and outside the school community, including families, partner organizations, social workers, after school programs, sports teams, city council, etc.

With permission, collect testimonials of voices who have gone through a restorative process, whether proactive or responsive, and share them in your school bulletin, on a corridor screen, or your school's social media platforms.

### Establish A Restorative School Vision and Values

**Vision:** As more and more members of the school community come to understand and experience the philosophy and practice of a Restorative School, bring them together to envision what a restorative school would look like, sound like, feel like. Through a collaborative and inclusive process, your vision could be a list of statements beginning with "We envision a school where... "

**Values:** Similarly, invite voices from throughout the community to co-create a set of values that guide your vision and are important to the wellbeing of all. Note for participating DCPS schools, this can also be part of the School Climate Initiative.

Once you have a [restorative school vision and values](#), consider one of the following follow-up ideas:

- Add the values and vision to a variety of customized school schedules, binders, shirts, and informational materials
- Post the vision and values as banners, posters, or murals throughout in the school
- Create school culture cards with the values and vision on one side and restorative questions on the other, which can be carried in your badge or card holder
- Organize a restorative pledge where school community members commit to the vision and values
- On a school wall panel or newsletter, recognize individuals or actions that reflect the values.

### Elevate an Awareness of Power and Trauma

Restorative Justice recognizes that community is imbedded in an invisible social-historical context, as much as each individual carries an underlying nervous system, both of which strongly, yet subconsciously, affect how people act and relate to each other. In turn, our actions and relationships shape our social-historical context and nervous system. As a result of these dynamics, well-intentioned attempts to develop relationships are often compromised by implicit bias. Individual incidents of harm may have hidden dimensions of trauma and marginalization. Traditional disciplinary responses are a shunt valve in the "school-to-prison pipeline."

To truly build strong relationships; understand, prevent, and repair harm, and ensure all of its members matter, communities must have a basic understanding of systems of power and neurobiology. This can be achieved through dialogue circles, training, presentations, videos, and simple conversations and is most likely to make a difference when grounded in empathy, not shame, blame, or demands.

### Create Space for Student, Family, and Staff Leadership

A Restorative School is meant to be held by the entire community, not just adults and educators or school administrators. As soon as you can, and within your capacity:

- Reach out and expose a variety of stakeholders to circles. Run youth circles, increasingly inviting their contributions until they are designed and kept by students. Do the same with family circles.
- Pro-actively invite youth and parents or guardians to be part of the Restorative School team.
- Coordinate spaces and positions from which students, families, staff, and their representatives can meaningfully discuss and share their perspectives to decision makers on issues they care about. As they become familiar with restorative practices, these may be effective in circle.

### Integrate Restorative Justice and Special Education

Developmental delays, disability, or trauma can affect participants' capacities to effectively listen, express themselves, take turns, maintain focus, remember and process information, read emotions, regulate their own, and physically access a restorative process. Modifications to the standard restorative process are thus needed to account for these differences. RestorativeDC has developed a [Capacity Assessment and Accommodations Guide](#), included in [APPENDIX C](#), to make restorative practices more inclusive.

Restorative practices can also be used to improve special education processes and services, promoting more relationship-based and student-led collaboration. Consider, for example, running circles for:

- Manifestation Determination or meetings with inclusion of the student and family if possible
- Individualized Education Plan meetings, noting the IEP Outline in *Circle Forward*
- Special education groups for peer support and advocacy
- Staff and students on the topic of special education to raise awareness (possibly led by staff or students with disabilities)

Part of education is allowing students to speak and act for themselves, and to learn from each other. We thus recommend creating space for students with disabilities to inform the school community about their experiences, to voice what matters to them, and to take the lead in the decisions that impact them.

### Advanced Implementation Ideas

As you grow in capacity and competency, consider what additional steps can strengthen community, transform culture, and address critical issues through a restorative approach. For example:

- Co-creating or revising your school mission statement, norms, guidelines, and other institutional policies using restorative processes and the involvement of all affected members of the school community. You may begin in the first year by generating classroom norms and over time take on broader policies with the inclusion of families and students, including lower grades. See [APPENDIX B](#) for more on this topic.
- Identifying and addressing critical issues relevant to the school community and larger society in which it finds itself. For example, you may call circles around such topics as bullying, racism, privilege, gender, sexual harm, anger management, self-esteem, healthy relationships, body image, pregnancy, substance abuse, and class for young people and adults.
- Collectively processing major events in the life of the school community. Successes and losses are an opportunity to celebrate and mourn together from winning a district championship to losing a beloved member of the community.
- Create a task force of "Peacekeepers" (or whatever name you choose) that equips youth, teachers, staff, and families to become restorative practitioners and facilitate processes to address any harm and conflict that may emerge.





## **PART III: (Self) Practices that Restore Belonging, Care, & Responsibility**

### **Be Restorative with Yourself First!**

Your relationship with yourself is the most important one. How punitive or collaborative are you with your own mistakes or mishaps? How supportive or discouraging are you with your own heart? Also remember that we teach by modeling.

### **Invitation and Collaboration, Not Coercion or Threat**

The Restorative Justice philosophy values choice and genuine curiosity. Invite others into dialogue and collaboration, vulnerability and growth. Contrary to dealing in the currency of punishments or rewards, which are external motivations, this work is about the finding intrinsic motivation that arises from empathy, relationships, and community.

### **(Re) Empower and Encourage**

A restorative approach asks “how can I better understand and support?” rather than “what’s wrong with you?” It is a community-based approach where we get to affirm a human being and strengthen their capacity to care for themselves and others. A misbehaving person is often a discouraged person who has lost hope for themselves to be a contributing member of their community. Often negative labels just reinforce the belief that there is nothing much they can do to change. The restorative approach aims to inspire hope, build supportive relationships, and develop new strengths and habits to animate change possible.

### **Everyone Matters**

Restorative Justice honors each person’s dignity and worth equal to anyone else. It is a difficult when current systems and cultures do not seem to value young people and other marginalized groups as much as others. A restorative approach aims to affirm that everyone matters, equally acknowledge everyone's dignity and the importance of their underlying needs.

### **Persist in Finding Solutions that Work for Everyone**

Our minds often jump to binary thinking - "it's your fault OR mine!" Adopting a restorative mindset means shifting from "Either/Or/But" to "And." When we start holding our own and someone else's perspective and needs as worthy of attention, we have taken a big step towards trust, collaboration, and creative problem solving. It will take practice, humility, forgiveness, and a whole lot of F.A.I.L.s. We hope this guide will inspire you to walk forward on your own never-ending journey of transformation.

## CONCLUSION

### **Several core elements contribute to successful whole-school restorative change:**

- An empowered group of “champions” that includes individuals from school administration who understand the core restorative principles and is committed to adopting them in their school
- A collaborative, well-paced, and strengths-based planning process that reviews a school's existing practices and policies; invites the contributions of all relevant support staff, teachers, and outside resources; and tailors a model to the particularities of the school
- A gradual internally-led sensitization process for the entire school community that encourages believe-in and commitment to restorative principles and processes
- The adaptive and creative integration and modeling of restorative principles in all aspects of the school community
- Substantial and ongoing technical support by an experienced practitioner
- The delivery of high-impact trainings using experiential techniques on an as-needed basis
- At least three years of adequate technical and financial support, followed by the internal resources and infrastructure, to ensure efficacy and sustainability
- Strong relationships between the school and other key external stakeholders such as school security officers, parent/teacher associations, and relevant community-based organizations

# RESOURCES & APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A: About RestorativeDC

RestorativeDC, a project of SchoolTalk Inc., supports the integration of Restorative Justice philosophy and practices in DC schools, agencies, and communities. Our diverse team of local restorative practitioners has a knowledge base that spans multiple Restorative Justice models and practices, as well as complementary expertise in social work, drama therapy, Nonviolent Communication, Positive Discipline, coaching, trauma-informed practices, special education, and more.

### Restorative Justice Program Areas

#### On-Site Technical Assistance

RestorativeDC provides intensive, on-site technical assistance to DC schools. RestorativeDC takes a whole-school approach designed to create organizational culture change that positively impacts all members of a school's community. Our technical assistance model is highly individualized in order to address the unique contexts, priorities, and needs of each of our school partners. RestorativeDC scaffolds supports to help each school gradually take ownership of their restorative journey with the ultimate goal of complete self-sustainability. Technical assistance includes:

- Customized on-site professional development;
- Co-facilitation and apprenticeship of mediations, staff circles, parent circles, classrooms circles, responsive circles, or other restorative processes;
- Intensive coaching (demonstrations, observations, feedback, and emergency troubleshooting); and
- Support in aligning school policies and procedures to restorative justice practices and philosophies.

#### Professional Development

Each school year, the RestorativeDC team provides hundreds of hours of Restorative Justice capacity-building opportunities to all schools, agencies, and organizations that work with DC youth. These workshops are highly participatory and experiential, largely using circle processes in combination with exercises, role-plays, presentations, videos, work groups, handouts, and planning discussions.

Workshop topics include:

- Restorative Schools Overview
- Proactive and Responsive Circle Keeping Skills
- Restorative Communication
- Trauma Awareness and Resilience
- Restorative Justice for Younger Learners
- Restorative Justice and Special Education

RestorativeDC also facilitates a monthly *Community of Practice*, a peer-sharing space to discuss best practices and challenges related to Restorative Justice implementation.



## **At the Intersection of Restorative Justice and Special Education**

Beginning in 2016, SchoolTalk took a local and national lead in the exploration of the intersection of Restorative Justice and special education. Restorative Justice calls for the inclusion of all members of a community. For school-based programs this means creating opportunities for students receiving special education services to have meaningful involvement Restorative Justice practices and a voice in their education and community. Activities in this area include:

- District wide trainings on how to make restorative practices more inclusive of students with disabilities;
- Development of resources and tools that support the inclusive implementation of restorative practices for all students;
- Co-facilitation of *Expanding the Circle: Restorative Practices in Special Education* with CADRE, the national technical assistance center for special education conflict resolution; and
- A pilot of IEP support circles at a public charter school.

## **Juvenile Justice Diversion and Support**

RestorativeDC receives referrals from the DC Department of Human Services (DHS) to facilitate restorative conferences and support circles for youth who are part of the Alternative to Court Experience (ACE) diversion program and Parent and Adolescent Support Services (PASS) program instead of being prosecuted for status offenses (e.g. truancy, curfew violations, extreme disobedience and running away) and/or delinquency offenses. This program is a collaboration between DHS, Court Social Services (CSS), the Metropolitan Police Department (MPD), the Office of the Attorney General (OAG), the Department of Behavioral Health (DBH), and other community-based service providers.

## APPENDIX B: RestorativeDC Tools

### RestorativeDC School Readiness Assessment Tool

This is a word document with the questions that we include in our online readiness assessment form. If you are interested in applying for technical assistance from RestorativeDC please contact us at [rdc@schooltalkdc.org](mailto:rdc@schooltalkdc.org).

#### Current needs

What of the following school climate issues takes up most of the school staff's time and energy?

- Physical/emotional safety of students
- Physical/emotional safety of staff
- Bullying
- Tardiness
- Drop-out rates
- Staff morale
- Student-student relationships
- Student-teacher relationships
- Teacher-administration relationships
- Parental engagement
- Suspensions/expulsions
- On-site arrests
- In-class misconduct/disruption
- Out-of-class misconduct/disruption
- Racial/ethnic tensions
- Mistreatment/discrimination on the basis of disability or sexuality
- Poor social-emotional development
- Manifestations of trauma
- Lack of youth leadership/voice
- Gang/crew fighting
- Physical violence
- Verbal altercations
- Property damage/theft
- Other:

Please elaborate on each of the issues you indicated above.

**Background:** Briefly describe how you came to be interested in Restorative Justice/Practices at your school. How were you first introduced?

**Prior Exposure:** Has your school's staff already received professional development in Restorative Practices?

Yes

No

If yes:

1. When were these provided, and by whom?
2. How many hours was each?
3. How many and which staff attended each?
4. Was follow up support provided? What did that look like?
5. Describe any evidence of implementation based on this professional development.

**Professional Development Needs:** In addition to the above professional development, which of the following training or practices are you familiar with AND interested in? Pick your top three.

- Classroom circles
- Staff circles
- Family-student-staff circles
- Adult mediation
- Peer mediation
- Peer juries/panels
- Responsive circles/conferences (in lieu of suspension/expulsion)
- Restorative conversations/Collaborative Communication
- Trauma awareness and resilience
- Mindfulness
- Need more information to make a choice
- Other:

**Other Frameworks:** Which of the following models has your school been trained in AND significantly implemented at your school?

- Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS)
- Response to Intervention (RTI)
- Responsive Classrooms
- Positive Discipline
- Classroom Management
- De-escalation Techniques
- Other:

**Current Partnerships:** What partnerships does your school currently have that relate to discipline, behavior management, youth development, social emotional learning, or school culture?

**Current Efforts:** What does your school currently do to improve relationships amongst students and staff, to build positive school culture and social emotional skills, and/or to respond constructively to harm or misbehavior?

**Inclusivity:** What opportunities are there for staff, students, and parents to have input and take leadership in these efforts?

**Leadership and Teamwork Style:** How would you describe your school's approach to making decisions that affect others, addressing conflict, and solving problems? Is it collaborative? Top-down? Bureaucratic? Innovative?

**School Stability:** Describe any major changes in leadership, policy, operations, or infrastructure that have recently taken place or are anticipated to occur in the next three years?

**Current Climate and Culture:** What five words would you use to describe your school's current climate and culture?

**Desired Climate and Culture:** How would you describe the climate and culture you most ideally envision for your school?

**Restorative Justice Coordinator(s)**

Does the school have the willingness and capacity to designate one or more RJ Coordinators as described in the Qualifications, Responsibilities, and Authorities document?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

**Restorative School Implementation Team**

Does the school have the willingness and capacity to assemble an RS Team as described in the Roles and Responsibilities document?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

# RestorativeDC School Planning Tool

## How to Use this Tool

RestorativeDC (RDC) developed this planning tool to help schools move toward whole school Restorative Justice philosophy and practices and to maximize the effectiveness of RestorativeDC technical assistance and support. It is important to note that the transformation to a whole school restorative approach is a **three to five year process** when backed by solid commitment and planning.

- **Getting Started- Year 1**
- **Expanding School Efforts- Year 2 to 3**
- **Sustainability and Maintenance- Year 4 to 5**

This planning tool is to help you prioritize your tasks for this school year. Please consider the following guidance when completing it:

- **First Things First** is a checklist of items that **must** be completed before taking on any other implementation goals. These items help you set a strong foundation before continuing your 3 to 5 year journey;
- The following pages contain the planning tool template, which asks you to:
  - Identify three goals your restorative school team aims to achieve by the end of the next three school years;
  - Break down action items and benchmarks to reach before June around each goal you identified;
  - Identify staff points of contact to coordinate the activities needed to achieve the goal by June; and
  - List the resources you need from RestorativeDC to achieve each goal;
- Click [here](#) for the Google sheet version of this tool for easy collaboration with your team.

## First Things First

The following is a checklist of items that need to be completed before proceeding with plans.

### Summer

- Identify a Restorative School Coordinator(s) and Restorative School Implementation Team (see guidance on RS Coordinators and Implementation Teams)
- Have RS Coordinator(s) and RS Implementation Team members attend at least 30 hours of Restorative Justice and Restorative Justice in Schools Training
- Set professional development dates for the year
- Establish a regular RS team meeting schedule (at least twice a month to discuss progress of key outputs for that year, coordinate restorative school responsibilities, and identify ways to strengthen restorative philosophy in your school's vision/mission/norms)

### Fall

- Reach out to all your school staff, students, and families to provide an exposure to Whole-School Restorative Justice Philosophy and Practice, along with an overview of your Restorative School Plan
- Offer professional development on proactive practices followed by implementation as per your goals
- Offer professional development on responsive disciplinary practices followed by apprenticeship and implementation as per your goals.
- Complete your RS plan by November

RS Coordinator(s) Name	Position
RS Team Member Names	Position

<b>End-of-Year Goal 1:</b>	
----------------------------	--

<b>Focus Areas Your Goal Satisfies</b> <i>(Check all that apply)</i>
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Leadership	Staff Engagement	Positive School Culture and Climate	Restorative Discipline, Policy, and Practice	Youth Engagement	Family and Community Engagement	Assessment

<i>What data (quantitative or qualitative) will be used to measure progress on this goal?</i>	
---	--

<i>What relevant baseline data do you have? How can you get it?</i>	
---	--

Checkpoint	November	January	March	June
<b>Benchmark</b> <i>(Where do you hope to be at this checkpoint?)</i>				
<b>1-3 Action Steps</b> <i>(What do you need to do to get there?)</i>				
<b>Progress</b> <i>(What progress does the data you've collected indicate?)</i>				
<b>Resources and Support Needed</b>				
<b>Point(s) of Contact</b>	Name and position of point(s) of contact responsible for the above action steps:			



<b>End-of-Year Goal 2:</b>						
<b>Focus Areas Your Goal Satisfies</b> <i>(Check all that apply)</i>						
<b>Leadership</b>	<b>Staff Engagement</b>	<b>Positive School Culture and Climate</b>	<b>Restorative Discipline, Policy, and Practice</b>	<b>Youth Engagement</b>	<b>Family and Community Engagement</b>	<b>Assessment</b>
<i>What data (quantitative or qualitative) will be used to measure progress on this goal?</i>						
<i>What relevant baseline data do you have? How can you get it?</i>						
<b>Checkpoint</b>	<b>November</b>	<b>January</b>	<b>March</b>	<b>June</b>		
<b>Benchmark</b>  (Where do you hope to be at this checkpoint?)						
<b>1-3 Action Steps</b>  (What do you need to do to get there?)						
<b>Progress</b>  (What progress does the data you've collected indicate?)						
Resources and Support Needed						
<b>Point(s) of Contact</b>	Name and position of point(s) of contact responsible for the above action steps:					

**End-of-Year Goal 3:**

**Focus Areas Your Goal Satisfies**  
(Check all that apply)

Leadership	Staff Engagement	Positive School Culture and Climate	Restorative Discipline, Policy, and Practice	Youth Engagement	Family and Community Engagement	Assessment

*What data (quantitative or qualitative) will be used to measure progress on this goal?*

*What relevant baseline data do you have? How can you get it?*

Checkpoint	November	January	March	June
<b>Benchmark</b> (Where do you hope to be at this checkpoint?)				
<b>1-3 Action Steps</b> (What do you need to do to get there?)				
<b>Progress</b> (What progress does the data you've collected indicate?)				
Resources and Support Needed				

**Point(s) of Contact** Name and position of point(s) of contact responsible for the above action steps:

## Whole School Restorative Implementation Timeline (3-5 years) Getting Started – Year One

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Summer</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Sign MOU</li> <li>✓ Identify RS coordinator and team</li> <li>✓ Attend Summer Intensive</li> <li>✓ Set PD dates for the year</li> <li>✓ Begin regular Implementation Team meetings and identify initial priorities and action items</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Fall</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Outreach to and exposure of school community about restorative approach</li> <li>✓ Proactive - targeted PD followed by limited implementation per priorities</li> <li>✓ Responsive – targeted PD, begin apprenticeship, limited implementation per priorities</li> <li>✓ Complete Implementation Plan by November</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Winter</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Proceed with TA activities per RS plan               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Proactive</li> <li>○ Responsive</li> <li>○ Staff, family, and student engagement</li> <li>○ Build purposeful youth voice</li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ Continue regular Implementation Team meetings</li> <li>✓ Voluntary mid-year survey for all staff</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Spring</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Continue TA activities per Implementation Plan</li> <li>✓ Assess school progress based on Plan</li> <li>✓ Focus groups for staff and students</li> <li>✓ End of year principal interview</li> <li>✓ Plan for next school year</li> </ul>

### Key Outputs (Criteria to advance)

- ✓ Restorative school team has committed and credible representation of most of the whole school community and basic restorative justice understanding
- ✓ All staff is familiar with restorative justice principles, processes and participated in circles
- ✓ At least 15-49% of staff use restorative conversations and questions
- ✓ At least 15-49% classrooms have a regular circle practice
- ✓ At least 15-49% of discipline cases are afforded a restorative alternative
- ✓ At least 15-49% of families are familiar with restorative justice or have experienced circles
- ✓ Implementation efforts evaluated and plan revised



## Expanding Whole School Efforts- Year 2 to 3

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Summer</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Renew MOU</li> <li>✓ Coordinator Refresher PD</li> <li>✓ Staff PD on proactive circles and restorative communications</li> <li>✓ Set PD dates for the year</li> <li>✓ Continue regular Implementation Team meetings</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Fall</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Update Implementation Plan by November</li> <li>✓ Advanced PD for targeted staff</li> <li>✓ School discipline staff trained and facilitate restorative processes, with appropriate TA support</li> <li>✓ Weekly check-in and check-out circles for school</li> <li>✓ Begin regular staff circles</li> <li>✓ Staff, student, and family engagement efforts</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Winter</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Expand and deepen TA activities per RS plan               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Proactive</li> <li>○ Responsive</li> <li>○ Staff and family engagement</li> <li>○ Begin systems &amp; policy review</li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ Continue regular Implementation Team meetings</li> <li>✓ Voluntary mid-year survey for all staff</li> <li>✓ Build purposeful youth voice</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Spring</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Provide family resources to use restorative practices at home</li> <li>✓ Assess school progress based on Implementation Plan</li> <li>✓ Focus groups for staff and students</li> <li>✓ End-of-year principal interview</li> <li>✓ Plan for next school year</li> </ul>

### Key Outputs (Criteria to advance)

- ✓ RS Team has committed and credible representation of the whole school community and advanced RJ understanding
- ✓ At least 50% of staff trained in circle facilitation and restorative conversations
- ✓ At least 50% of staff use restorative conversations and questions
- ✓ At least 50% of classrooms have a regular circle practice, co-led by students
- ✓ At least 50% of disciplinary cases are afforded a restorative alternative
- ✓ At least 50% of families are familiar with or have experienced circles
- ✓ RJ-inspired norms, values, and vision collaboratively created
- ✓ Policies and budget related to discipline and staffing revised to incorporate restorative justice and disseminated to school community, as relevant
- ✓ Implementation efforts evaluated and plan revised



## Sustainability and Maintenance- Year 4 to 5

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Summer</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Renew MOU</li> <li>✓ Coordinator Refresher PD</li> <li>✓ Staff PD on proactive circles and restorative communications, as needed</li> <li>✓ Set PD dates for the year</li> <li>✓ Continue regular Implementation Team meetings</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Fall</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Update Implementation Plan by November <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Focus on systems and policies</li> <li>○ Ensure sustainability - budget and staffing</li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ Provide intro &amp; advanced PD for students and staff, as needed</li> <li>✓ Approach all discipline issues restoratively approach</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Winter</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Proceed with TA activities per Implementation Plan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Proactive</li> <li>○ Responsive</li> <li>○ Staff, family, and student engagement</li> <li>○ Systems &amp; policy review, cont.</li> </ul> </li> <li>✓ Continue regular Implementation Team meetings</li> <li>✓ Voluntary mid-year survey for all staff</li> <li>✓ Build purposeful youth voice</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Spring</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Assess school progress based on RS plan</li> <li>✓ Focus groups for staff and students</li> <li>✓ End-of-year principal interview</li> <li>✓ Plan for next school year</li> </ul>

### Key Outputs (Criteria to advance)

- ✓ School policies/budget related to discipline and staffing reflect whole school restorative model
- ✓ All staff receive regular RJ training, which is primarily provided in-house
- ✓ At least 75% of staff use restorative conversations and questions
- ✓ At least 75% of classrooms have a regular circle practice, co-led by students
- ✓ At least 75% of disciplinary cases are afforded a restorative alternative
- ✓ 50% of families are familiar with RP and have experienced circle
- ✓ R-Inspired norms, values, and vision established and widely known by school community

## APPENDIX C: RestorativeDC Handouts

### Glossary of Terms

#### Restorative Justice Practices

There are several families of restorative justice practices. They can be on a spectrum from-

- “pro-active” for building community; to
- “preventative” for addressing tensions or conflicts; to
- “responsive” for repairing harm.

**Circle Processes** (also known as Council): This family of restorative dialogue practices is inspired by the traditional ways of Native American, First Nations, and other indigenous peoples. It is characterized by rounds in which every participant in the circle speaks in turn. The widely-used framework for circle processes articulated by Kay Pranis and Carolyn Boyes-Watson in the book *Circle Forward* also incorporates the use of opening and closing ceremonies, a centerpiece, talking pieces, specific storytelling and values rounds, and a circle keeper (the equivalent of facilitators). Other models use all or some of these elements. As a process, different circles can be used for different purposes See below for more details on the circle process.

1. **Classroom or Staff Circles** can be used *proactively* to build community, establish norms, check in, and collectively solve problems and make decisions. In the classroom, they are also a vehicle for social emotional learning and content instruction, offering youth an opportunity to take an active role in creating a safer and supportive space in their own classroom. In any context, the circle gives equal opportunity for all to listen, contribute, and practice key life skills.
2. **Intensive Support Circles** are a *preventative* circle process to weave struggling individuals or families together with community members, youth workers, and others into a web of support characterized by strong relationships and shared responsibility. They may occur as a series of circles for relationship-building, resource mapping, action planning, check-ins, and celebration.
3. **Reintegration Circles** are a form of support circle for those who have been excluded from the school or neighborhood community on account of suspension, arrest, incarceration, illness, etc. Reintegration Circle provides an opportunity to welcome the individual back, reaffirm their importance in the community, and provide support their successful reintegration.
4. **Responsive Circles** bring together those who were involved in and affected by a significant incident of harm (as well as anyone invited to provide support and resources) to rebuild trust, understand what happened, express how they have been affected, and agree on how to repair the harm and prevent it from happening again. Pre-circle meetings are typically used to individually prepare participants in advance. Agreements may be written and signed. Follow-up ensures reflection, support, adjustment, and affirmation in carrying out the agreement. This process can be used as an alternative to exclusionary interventions such as suspensions.



**Conferencing:** This family of restorative dialogue practices is similar to structured, guided circle processes, but does not typically use opening and closing ceremonies, a talking piece, a centerpiece, or the round format. Two common types of conferencing are:

**Family Group Conferencing** is inspired by Maori practices from New Zealand where it was formally legislated in 1989 as a central part of the state's practices and services whenever serious decisions about children had to be made, including child abuse and neglect, juvenile offending, adoption, and domestic violence. According to the New Zealand model, after a referral is made, the coordinator makes contact with both the professionals/agency and the family to initiate the process and determine participants. At the conference, all the participants (child, family, and professionals) are first introduced to each other and the process. In the second stage of the conference, there is "private family time" for just the child and family to come up with a plan that meets the needs of the child, and how to monitor it. In the third stage, the professionals return and are presented with this plan for consensus, which includes use of agency resources and mechanisms for monitoring.

**Restorative Conferencing** (or Community Conferencing) is inspired by Aboriginal practices from Australia. It is used as a responsive alternative to exclusionary forms of discipline or justice. A facilitator individually prepares those involved and affected by an incident of harm (as well as anyone invited to provide support and resources) and then convenes a conference for them to share what happened, how they have been affected, and what they need to repair the harm and prevent it from happening again. Like responsive circles, agreements may be written and signed and follow-up ensures agreements are honored and support

**Victim Offender Dialogue (or Mediation):** This family of processes is similar to other **responsive** processes, but does not take place in circle with the involvement of a larger community of participants. The mediator prepares and then brings together those harmed and those responsible for the harm for a face-to-face conversation about what happened, how they were affected, and what can be done to repair the harm. This process includes peer mediation, a common alternative to punitive school discipline.

**Restorative Conversations:** Informal, non-punitive conversations that are centered around the restorative questions to address minor to moderate incidents of harm. There is some variation in the exact questions across different models and programs, but most of them include or build on the three core questions: **1)** What happened?; **2)** Who was affected and how?; and **3)** How do repair the harm and prevent it from happening again?

**Restorative Communication:** A way of engaging in any difficult conversations with empathy, a genuine curiosity for understanding, and the commitment to share power, rather than blame and judgment. Restorative Communication often draws on Nonviolent Communication (described below) and active listening techniques, which encourage reflective listening, self-awareness, and honoring multiple perspectives.

**Quasi-Restorative Processes:** This varied family of responsive practices includes youth courts, peer juries, restitution panels, reparative boards, victim impact statements, proxy circles, apology letters, community service, and reparations payments. They provide alternatives to conventional discipline and criminal interventions that are more attuned to the needs of those harmed and those responsible for

the harm. They are not considered pure Restorative Practices because they do not satisfy one or more of the following key characteristics of Restorative Justice: 1) an encounter of the individuals involved in the harm; 2) personal sharing of what happened and how they were affected; and 3) joint decision-making around how to repair the harm.

### Complementary Models

**Balanced and Restorative Justice (BARJ):** a framework developed in part by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Delinquency Prevention to apply Restorative Justice to the contemporary U.S. juvenile justice system. It incorporates Restorative Justice principles and the above practices to promote accountability, competency development, and community safety.

**Mindfulness Practices:** the techniques and programs that promote mindfulness, a state of calm presence in the current moment.

**Nonviolent Communication (NVC):** a framework for empathic connection with oneself and others synthesized by Marshall Rosenberg beginning in the 1960s and built upon the consciousness of human needs as a fundamental driver of human action.

**Positive Discipline:** a non-punitive model and set of techniques used in schools and parenting that emphasize connection, mutual respect, social skill building, and autonomy in approaching discipline.

**Trauma-Informed Approaches:** an umbrella term for the science-based models that raise awareness around the underlying biology of trauma, its impact on human functioning, as well as ways to be trauma-sensitive and build resilience.

## Responding to Objections of Restorative Practices

### THEME 1: TAKES AWAY FROM CONTENT LEARNING, WILL RESULT IN LOWER SCORES

1. Takes too much time away from content.
2. Will result in less time for learning important things that students will be evaluated on.
3. It means lowering our expectations, degrading our standards.

#### **POSSIBLE RESPONSES:**

- a. How much time is lost to the effects of student non-engagement, not having support with challenges in their life, feeling like they matter, that others are going through similar experiences, that they belong?
- b. How much time and learning is lost to distracting behaviors, discipline issues, not effectively dealing with stressful events in the classroom?

- c. How much learning is lost because of skipping classes, truancy, and dropouts?
- d. Students come to class with their distress whether it is supported or not. Students can't learn when they are upset and don't know what to do with their upset.
- e. Circles multiply the support they get from others. One teacher cannot do it all; peer support and connection is vital to remaining in school.
- f. This stuff really works!!! [provide data from a local school or recognized authority]

### **THEME 2: THIS STUFF IS UNCOMFORTABLE FOR ME, OUTSIDE OF MY SKILL SET**

- 4. Will I have to learn new skills for this?
- 5. I don't have the training for this – I'm not a social worker, I'm a scientist, artist, math person, etc.
- 6. I don't like touchy-feely stuff; it makes me uncomfortable, I want to just teach my subject matter.
- 7. It means getting too personal, asking private questions, that's not our job or business.

#### **POSSIBLE RESPONSES:**

- a. Doing Circles is not Rocket Science. It is teachable and learnable. Many teachers are effectively starting this after as little as a half-day of training. Students learn how to be Circle Keepers, too.
- b. It is not about being a social worker; it is just about listening and sharing. We all have interpersonal skills or we could never be teachers or working with children or parents.
- c. Learning new stuff is often uncomfortable; it's what our students have to do every day.
- d. Building an effective learning community in the classroom is absolutely part of our job.

### **THEME 3: THIS IS AN IRRELEVANCY**

- 8. It's a distraction; It's not preparing them for the real world, how things are out there.
- 9. It's not part of our mission.

#### **POSSIBLE RESPONSES:**

- a. People virtually never get fired because they don't have the technical skills or information for doing the job they were hired for. They get fired because they could not get along with their co-workers, their boss, their customers, and/or their direct reports. Circles teach these skills.
- b. Nationwide businesses are overwhelmingly saying they are looking for workers to have "good people skills", be team players, solve problems, and listen and communicate effectively. Colleges and universities, too. Our students absolutely need these skills.
- c. Our mission is to creating successful students in all aspects of their lives

### **THEME 4: WHAT WE ARE DOING NOW IS WHAT WE SHOULD CONTINUE**

- 10. What we are doing now is fine enough.
- 11. We can't be all things to all people.
- 12. It's not what education is supposed to be about. It's not what I had when I was in school.
- 13. It's just another passing fad.
- 14. I am already doing this stuff.

#### POSSIBLE RESPONSES:

- a. Our graduation rate and truancy/absenteeism rates are *not* what they need to be and research indicates many social, emotional and cultural reasons contribute to this. The time used in the classroom to build community, support, belonging etc. is **already documented in research** as making a huge difference. Youth need to know that they matter, that they have something to contribute, that people “have their back.”
- b. Our mission is to the whole student; attending to the whole student will make all the parts go more easily.
- c. This is more than a set of techniques; it is a new mindset that will be at the core of all we do, a way of being as individuals and a community.
- d. We are working to integrate restorative practices throughout the school in a way that is meaningful and sustainable, and complements other models/tools we have adopted in the past.
- e. Like other social skills, Restorative Practices incorporates many things you already know and do, but that we can always strengthened and reinforced; and there will likely be completely new things to learn as well.

#### THEME 5: THIS APPROACH WON'T WORK WITH OUR STUDENTS

15. This is too soft. Students just get off easy. It won't work with our students.
16. This is too culturally foreign. It's not appropriate for our students.

#### POSSIBLE RESPONSES:

- a. This offers an alternative form of accountability to punishment. It is not easy to acknowledge and repair human harm directly with those you have impacted.
- b. Restorative justice is rooted indigenous traditions from around the world. We have since seen this developed out of and adapted to a variety of contexts. Some of the most successful cases are inner city schools with students of color similar to DC such as in Oakland Unified and Baltimore.

#### GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR DEALING WITH RESISTANCE

- Change is an *emotional* process. Under particular circumstances, change can threaten one's sense of order, certainty, ease, or competence, thereby triggering strong emotional reactions. This is inherent to change. Respond with patience and compassion (i.e. restoratively) modeling how you would respond to anyone with challenging emotions. Remember resistance is an opportunity to build relationships!
- A leading cause of resistance is lack of clarity. Be pro-active in clearly addressing the following questions:
  - What is the change?
  - How do we know this works?
  - What will be asked of me?
  - Why is it needed?
  - What's in it for me?
  - What is the vision?
  - What is wrong with the way things are now?

- What is the scope and pace of change?
- How will I find the time to implement it?
- There may be other concerns. Make the time and space for them to be surfaced and addressed.
- Another cause of resistance is lack of control. As you anticipate the change, offer anyone affected by it the opportunity to be involved in planning.
- Resistance over the long-term can arise from leaders underestimating the time and effort required of everyone for real change, or declaring victory too soon. Whole-school restorative culture change often takes 3 or more years. Be realistic and transparent about what is ahead, and plan for and celebrate short-term wins along the way.

## Overview of Circle Processes in the Peacemaking Circle Tradition

**Purpose:** Found in the traditions of many indigenous cultures and applied to modern-day contexts, circle processes promote openness and shared voice amongst individuals of a group in order to celebrate, build community, make decisions, or address harm/conflict.

### Key Features:

**Circular Seating** (without any high tables) emphasizes equality and connectedness. It improves focus and visibility amongst the group.

**The Keeper** facilitates the circle, holding a collective space and process that encourages participant to be present, open, vulnerable, reflective, and compassionate. The keeper may contribute their own voice to the circle, but does not control the issues raised by the group or try to move the group toward a particular outcome.

**Opening and Closing Ceremonies** mark the Circle as a special, even sacred, space in which participants are present with themselves and one another in an interconnected way that is different from other settings. They may include mindfulness moments, readings, quotations, movement, music, lighting candles, and/or ringing bells. Openings set the tone of the Circle and closings transition participants back to their ordinary lives.

**The Centerpiece** sits on the floor in the center of the open space inside the circle of chairs. Typically, a cloth or mat, the centerpiece holds talking pieces and other items of personal and collective significance such as the group's written values and vision of the group, as well as candles, bells, pens, or other objects used during the Circle. The group can be involved in collectively building the composition of the centerpiece over time.

**The Talking Piece** is an object of personal or shared significance used to support the sanctity of the space, full expression of emotions, thoughtful reflection and listening, an unhurried pace, and equal voice. During rounds, it is passed from person to person around the rim of the Circle. The person with the talking piece is invited to speak authentically and all others to listen.

**Values** to hold the space are elicited from the group early on and often memorialized in written form on the centerpiece. They can be the basis upon which participants adopt **Guidelines** of what will make the space safe and encourage openness. Three important guidelines that the

keeper may propose are voluntariness (anyone can pass the talking piece without talking or leave the Circle at any time); respecting the talking piece; and confidentiality (what is shared in the circle will not be discussed outside of the Circle without permission).

**Guiding Questions** are open-ended prompts that stimulate deep sharing during rounds.

## MODEL CIRCLE FLOW

### Welcome

**Opening Ceremony** – Mindfulness moment, poem, reading, quotation, song, activity, visualization, meditation, yoga.

**Explain and Introduce Centerpiece/Talking Piece** (as needed)

**State the Purpose** – Remind participants of the purpose of the Circle.

**Opening Round** – For participants to get acquainted (for groups with individuals that are new to each other) or check in on how everyone is doing.

**Generate Values/Guidelines** – During the first session, the group shares grounding values and agrees to guidelines that will help bring these values to life. Ask “what proposed guidelines to you have for yourself and others to help bring out these values?” then seek consensus on each request. Write down the values and guidelines, making them a visible reminder at subsequent sessions.

**Storytelling Rounds** – To prompt the sharing of personal stories for greater understanding and connection in the Circle.

**Exploring the Topic of the Circle** – This is where the primary topic or purpose of the Circle is addressed through rounds and/or activities.

**Closing Round** – To provide closure by asking participants to reflect upon their experiences in the Circle

### Seven Key Assumptions Underlying Circle Processes:

- The core self in everyone is human, wise, and powerful.
- Everything we need to make a positive change is already here.
- The world is profoundly interconnected.
- All humans have gifts and everyone is needed for the gifts they bring.
- Behind our defenses, all human beings desire to be in good relationship with others.
- Human beings are holistic.
- We need practices to build habits of living from the core self.

### Sample Guiding Questions and Prompts (See also *Circle Forward*, Appendix 1, p. 323-327)

#### Opening round:

- What brings you here today?
- How are you doing today?
- Describe your mood as if it were the weather (sunny, cloudy, windy, etc)

- What would you like to get off your chest to be more present here?

**Exploring values:**

- What value do you think would help us have this conversation best?
- Imagine you are in conflict with a person who is important to you. What value would guide your conduct as you try to work it out.
- What principle do you keep returning to in your life?
- What quality do you have to offer this Circle?
- What value would you like manifest in Circle today?

**Establishing guidelines:**

- What agreements would you like to make for our Circle that fully live out our values?

**Getting acquainted:**

- What is something we wouldn't guess about you?
- What do you do to release stress?
- Share a funny story from your work/school.
- What do you appreciate about your work/school?
- How would your best friend describe you?
- What would you not want to change about your life?
- If you had an unexpected free day, what would you like to do?
- What is your cultural heritage and what role does it play in your life?

**Storytelling prompts from our lives to share who we are and what has shaped us** (to build understanding and empathy):

- A time when you had to let go of control.
- A time when you were outside your comfort zone.
- A life experience when you “made lemonade out of lemons.”
- An experience of transformation when, out of a crisis or difficulty, you discovered a gift in your life.
- A time when you had to hear something very difficult from someone, and afterward you were grateful that it happened.
- An experience of letting go of anger or resentment.
- An experience of causing harm to someone and then dealing with it in a way you felt good about.
- A time when you acted on your core values even though others did not.
- A time you discovered that someone was very different from the assumptions you first made about them.
- An embarrassing moment that you can laugh at now.
- An experience of feeling that you did not fit in.

**Making decisions:**

- What values or other criteria should guide our decision?
- What objections or concerns do you have about any given idea?
- How will you know if things are better or have worked?
- What are possible solutions or strategies?

- What needs to happen, by whom and when to implement this decision?

**Exploring issues, concerns, conflicts:**

- How have you been affected by this situation?
- How do you feel about this situation?
- What's been the hardest part of this situation for you?
- What can be done to make things better?
- Does anyone have anything to clear up with someone else in the Circle?
- How have we each contributed to this situation, and how can each of us, by taking responsibility, act differently now?

**Addressing an incident of harm:**

- What happened? How did you experience the incident?
- Who has been affected by the incident and how?
- In your experience what supports healing?
- What were you thinking and feeling at the time?
- What do we need to do now to repair the harm that happened and to make sure it doesn't happen again?

**Closing round:**

- Is there anything you came with that you would like to leave behind?
- What are you taking from this circle that supports your healing?
- Where do you see yourself moving forward?
- What have you learned?
- What can you take away that is useful to you?
- How will these insights help you in the next two weeks?

**Links to Sample Resources for Opening and Closing Ceremonies** (See also *Circle Forward*, Appendix 2, p. 329-394)

Readings: <http://www.keepinspiring.me/positive-inspirational-life-quotes/>

<http://www.doc.state.mn.us/rj/Inspirational.htm>

Sample activities: Help Increase the Peace Program manual (<http://afsc.org/resource/hipp-manual>).



## Capacity Assessment and Accommodations Guide

Use this form to identify and make accommodations for differences in the "key capacities" of participants that may arise from disability, developmental delays, or trauma and thus impact the effectiveness of a standard restorative process.

**STRATEGY ONE:** Identify from records any known diagnoses, history of trauma, or IEP/504 plan that predictably affect the "key capacities" of participant(s), and indicate those on the chart, along with any accommodations they may recommend.

**STRATEGY TWO:** Provide participant(s) an opportunity to self-identify differences and accommodations around "key capacities."

**STRATEGY THREE:** Note significant differences in "key capacities" through observation of the participant(s) during outreach or prep, and indicate those on the chart.

**STRATEGY FOUR:** Inquire with the referral source, parents/guardians, and/or other individuals with a close knowledge of the participant(s) about the participants' "key capacities" and indicate those on the chart, along with any accommodations they may recommend.

### NOTES:

- If you have the target participant(s) or their guardians' consent consider having them, the facilitator, or a specialist support person educate the other participants about any of the above differences in capacity, so that the target participant is not perceived as lacking honesty, sincerity or empathy.
- If this is confusing to other participants, make sure to explain the purpose of any accommodations to participants, revealing only as much about the target participant's condition as you have consent to
- Standard elements of many restorative practices such as prep meetings, voluntary participation, rounds, support persons, talking/centerpieces, co-created values and norms are already valuable for maximizing the inclusion of all

Key Capacities	Indicate what concerns have been raised and by whom	If concerns are significant and credible, circle and/or write in the most relevant accommodations to be applied from prep to meeting
<p><b>Receptive language:</b> Functionally understanding verb and non-verbal language; responding clearly to questions, introductions, and body cues</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coach and remind target participants to signal when not understanding</li> <li>• Coach and remind facilitator and other participants to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Simplify their language</li> <li>○ Verbalize non-verbals</li> <li>○ Speak slower</li> <li>○ Articulate clearer</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Use hearing aids</li> <li>○ Use written communication and alternative forms of expression such as visual aids, pictures/drawing, music, or skits</li> <li>○ Use an interpreter</li> <li>○ Coordinate with family/guardian to restate/summarize</li> <li>○ Other: _____</li> </ul>
<p><b>Expressive language:</b> Expressing functionally using verbal and nonverbal language; expressing clear thoughts and uses consistent body language</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coach and remind target participants to signal when not understanding</li> <li>• Coach and remind facilitator and other participants to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Simplify their language</li> <li>○ Verbalize non-verbals</li> <li>○ Speak slower</li> <li>○ Articulate clearer</li> </ul> </li> <li>○ Use hearing aids</li> <li>○ Use written communication and alternative forms of expression such as visual aids, pictures/drawing, music, or skits</li> <li>○ Use an interpreter</li> <li>○ Coordinate with family/guardian to restate/summarize</li> <li>Other: _____</li> </ul>
<p><b>Pragmatic language:</b> Understanding the balance of speaking and listening; taking turns when speaking and listening without dominating, interrupting, or being nonresponsive</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coach and remind target participant(s) to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Take turns</li> <li>○ Avoid interrupting</li> <li>○ Respond to questions</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Use timer</li> <li>• Use written script</li> <li>• Other: _____</li> </ul>
<p><b>Attention:</b> Maintaining and shifting focus as prompted; participating in a sequenced process for more than an hour</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shorten or speed up the process</li> <li>• Display time and communicate end time</li> <li>• Add movement breaks to the process</li> <li>• Have bright, hot colors in the centerpiece</li> <li>• Use sensory tools such as fidgets and specialized seating</li> <li>• Optimize lighting, smell, sound and temperature (i.e.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Memory:</b> Recalling events from the past; recounting things that have happened with consistency and detail</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Coach and remind target participant(s) to use notes</li> <li>○ Use written or visual aid such as scripts, storyboards, agenda, or typed prompts etc.</li> <li>○ Invite others with knowledge of the past</li> <li>○ Other: _____</li> </ul>

<p><b>Sensory processing:</b> Managing a variety of sensory stimuli in the environment; remaining present and attentive</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have target participant(s) habituate to the space prior</li> <li>• Use sensory tools such as fidgets and specialized seating</li> <li>• Minimize bright lighting and background noise, including with shades and headphones</li> <li>• Reduce visual distractions beyond the space</li> <li>• Other: _____</li> </ul>
<p><b>Intellectual processing:</b> Understanding complex or abstract information; following moral reasoning and logical arguments</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coach and remind target participant(s) to identify and express emotions</li> <li>• Use an emotional vocabulary chart</li> <li>• Use pre-prepared written script or recorded “testimonies”</li> <li>• Use written communication, visual aids, and/or skits</li> <li>• Coordinate with family/guardian to re-state/summarize</li> </ul>
<p><b>Emotional literacy:</b> Identifying and expressing emotions; verbally and nonverbally articulating or exhibiting past or present sadness, remorse, anger, etc</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coach and remind target participant(s) to identify and deal with triggers</li> <li>• Coach and remind target participant(s) to signal when needing a break or other support</li> <li>• Prepare with target participant(s) to identify and avoid/mitigate triggers such as retelling of events, trigger words, and proximity to individuals</li> <li>• Use sensory/somatic calming techniques (breathing)</li> <li>• Invite a professional support into the process</li> <li>• Other: _____</li> </ul>
<p><b>Physical ability:</b> Having the needed hearing, vision, and mobility</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use sign language interpretation or lip reading and instruct participants on protocols</li> <li>• Use written communication, brail, vision/hearing aids, service animals, mobility devices</li> <li>• Use an accessible space</li> <li>• Other: _____</li> </ul>

## APPENDIX D: Additional Resources

### Organizations

#### SchoolTalk Inc.

RestorativeDC is a program of SchoolTalk. SchoolTalk's youth leadership, restorative justice, and secondary transition programming creates spaces that promote self-determination and a voice for youth with disabilities and their peers by encouraging collaborative problem-solving.

#### National Association for Community and Restorative Justice

A national association that hosts the largest annual Restorative Justice conference in the summer. They have lots of resources on their website.

#### Restorative Response Baltimore

A Baltimore-based organization providing services and training in conferencing and restorative practices in schools. The website explains CCC is a conflict transformation and Community Justice organization that provides a way for people to safely collectively and effectively prevent and resolve conflict and crime. Community conferencing resolves conflicts that happened at school in the workplace Juvenile Justice conflicts in neighborhood returning from prison returning from military service and for law enforcement just to name a few.

#### Center for Justice and Peacebuilding and the Zehr Institute for Restorative Justice

Based at Eastern Mennonite University, they offer courses, workshops, and webinars on circle processes, trauma awareness and resilience, and variety of other restorative justice topics

#### Youth and Families in Crisis

A DC-based company offering RJ training and consultation

#### International Institute for Restorative Practices

A Pennsylvania-based graduate school offering degrees, training, and consultation in restorative practices

## Books

[Circle Forward](#), by Kay Pranis and Carolyn Boyes-Watson

This book provides an overview of the peacemaking circle model and a large compendium of detailed, off-the-shelf "lesson plans". RestorativeDC has ordered this in bulk, so can offer copies at a 40% discount.

[Connecting Across Differences](#), by Dr. Jane Connor (RestorativeDC Consultant) and Diane Killian

This is a detailed book and workbook to enhance communication skills through the basic Nonviolent Communication (NVC) model, as well as more advanced NVC practices.

[50 Dramatic Engagers for Learning and Performance](#), by Dr. Carmen White and Lennie Smith (RestorativeDC Consultants)

[The Little Book](#) series on Restorative Justice topics

These books present, in a highly accessible form, key concepts and practices from the field of restorative justice. Written by leaders in this field, they are designed for practitioners, students, and anyone interested in restorative justice.

[Restorative Practices Design Kit](#) by CircleUp

This book includes the Relationship Building Design Guide binder, three colorful circle planning sheets, multi-colored design cut outs, and three large circle planning posters to teach students and staff how to design and facilitate Relationship Building Circle Practices.

[Circle Solutions for Student Wellbeing](#) by Sue Roffey

This book puts research on wellbeing and social emotional learning into practice.

[Just Mercy](#) by Bryan Stevenson

This is a powerful true story about the potential for mercy to redeem us, and a clarion call to fix our broken system of justice an lawyer of our time.

[Touching Spirit Bear](#) by Ben Mikaelson

This is a moving story for young and old of a youth who agrees to participate in a sentencing alternative based on the native American Circle Justice.

[Peacemaking Circles and Urban Youth: Bringing Justice Home](#) by Carolyn Boyes-Watson

This explores how Circle process is being used with immigrant, gang, and street youth at a center outside Boston.

[Creating Restorative Schools: Setting Schools Up to Succeed](#) by Martha A. Brown

This book draws lessons from two Oakland Middle Schools to map the route from zero tolerance to healthy and vibrant relational ecologies at all levels.

## Implementation Guides

1. RestorativeDC Whole School Implementation Guide

2. [School-Wide Restorative Practices: Step by Step \(Denver Public Schools\)](#)
3. [Oakland Unified School District: Restorative Justice Implementation Guide, A Whole School Approach](#)
4. [Restorative Justice in Oakland Schools: Implementation and Impacts, An Effective Strategy to Reduce Racially Disproportionate Discipline, Suspensions and Improve Academic Outcomes](#)
5. [San Francisco Unified School District Restorative Practices Whole-School Implementation Guide](#)
6. [Restorative Justice: A Working Guide for Schools \(Alameda County Health Care Services Agency\)](#)
7. [Restorative Practices: Fostering Healthy Relationships & Promoting Positive Discipline in Schools Educators' Guide \(Advancement Project\)](#)

## Videos

- Student-led Community Building Circle in Oakland Unified School District  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RdKhcQrLD1w>  

This 9 minute and 31 seconds video shows how RJ circles builds a sense of community for students and show students being the circle keeper asking the questions that builds the relationships among themselves.
- Restorative Welcome and Reentry Circle in Oakland Unified School District  
<http://www.communityconferencing.org/>  

This 14 minutes video is a welcome in reentry Circle welcoming a student back after an absence due to incarceration. This circle shows how to welcome a student back into school in a healthy and positive way.
- San Francisco Unified School District  
<https://vimeo.com/47159849>  

This is a video about restorative justice practices in SFUSD with footage from their program.  
[http://www.healthiersf.org/RestorativePractices/Resources/videos.php?zoom\\_highlight=videos](http://www.healthiersf.org/RestorativePractices/Resources/videos.php?zoom_highlight=videos)  

These are 6 videos showing circles with students from kindergarten through high school. They also link an additional 4 videos about Restorative Practices including a RP Ted Talk.
- Baltimore Community Conferencing Center <http://vimeo.com/36295061>  

We recommend their video at <http://vimeo.com/36295061> for an overview of the different applications of community conferencing.
- [Why We Need Restorative Justice](#) is an interesting video concept that you might find useful for workshops or to give school staff for self-guided exploration of RJ. The video pieces together 9 different segments together taken from publicly available sources by theme and then has prompts along the way to pause the video and discuss what has been watched. The flow of the video is roughly as follows with the individual video clips lifted out here.
  - [Zero tolerance discipline and the school-to-prison pipeline](#)
    - [Arne Duncan - Educators as part of the problem](#)
    - [How the School to Prison Pipeline ruins lives before they start](#)
  - [Empathy, modeling, and relationships](#)
    - [Under the surface](#) \*I found this one to be a particularly powerful clip that helps connect empathically with what lays beneath student behavior.

- [Children see, children do](#)
- [The custodian who became a counselor](#)
- [Restorative Justice](#)
  - [Restorative Justice, it's elementary!](#) (Lansing, MI)
  - [Restorative practices in schools: Parent Peace Rooms](#) (Chicago)

## Codes and Policies

1. [Dignity in Schools Campaign Model Code on Education and Dignity](#): comprehensive code governing discipline from a human rights approach, accompanied by the [Dignity in Schools Campaign comparison tool](#) for gauging how your disciplinary policy compares to the above model policy.
2. [Advancement Projects Model Disciplinary Policy](#) based on best practices from a variety of the above school districts
3. Loudoun County Report [Ensuring Equitable Discipline: Practices & Policies](#)

IIRP's school-based programs with a variety of resources and information  
<http://www.safersanerschools.org/>

SafeSaner School is the website for The International Institute for restorative practices it contains a hopeful whole school change the restorative practice section program description program timeline and highlighted resources there are more than six videos that show the evidence of effectiveness of restorative practices.

## Websites

- SF Unified School District has lots of video and written [resources](#)  
<http://www.healthiersf.org/RestorativePractices/>, A video about restorative practices with footage from their program can be found at <https://vimeo.com/47159849>
- The International Institute for Restorative Practice's (IIRP) research study on restorative justice in schools <http://www.iirp.edu/pdf/IIRP-Improving-School-Climate.pdf>
- IIRP's school-based programs with a variety of resources and information  
<http://www.safersanerschools.org/>
- The International Institute for Restorative Practice's (IIRP) research study on restorative justice in schools: <http://www.iirp.edu/pdf/IIRP-Improving-School-Climate.pdf>
  - This 4 page report explores a wide range of positive results from restorative practices implementation. The report shows research graphs of significant reduction and behavior and punitive discipline, improve student-teacher relationships and improved trends that narrow the racial -discipline gap. It states that restorative practices isn't just for discipline but essential to high quality teaching and learning.
- Edutopia's resource page on RJ with a number of case studies and guidelines  
<http://www.edutopia.org/blog/restorative-justice-resources-matt-davis>

- This website contains comprehensive Assessments in the greatest studies Project based learning social and emotional learning teacher development and Technology integration with a host of other popular topics such as brain-based learning, classroom management, education equity just a name a few. The guidelines for successful implementation and examples of successful restorative justice programs are all included in this website.
- Another clearinghouse website with lots of information, but a little harder to navigate  
<http://www.restorativejustice.org/>
- IIRP's school-based programs with a variety of resources and information  
<http://www.safersanerschools.org/>
  - SafeSaner School is the website for The International Institute for restorative practices it contains a hopeful whole school change the restorative practice section program description program timeline and highlighted resources there are more than six videos that show the evidence of effectiveness of restorative practices.
- Restorative Works  
<http://restorativeworks.net/2014/01/restorative-practices-shows-promise-meeting-national-school-discipline-guidelines/>
  - Restorative Works is a Restorative Justice information hub and this particular story talks about the recent Departments of Justice and Education guidelines and supporting study by Dr. Gregory from Rutgers
- [Passage Works Institute's](#) mission is to support educators to integrate social, emotional, and academic learning and create relationship-based classrooms that are inclusive, meaningful, and engaged:

#### **Programs Overview**

PassageWorks programs employ “Engaged Teaching” practices, principles, and tools that integrate academic learning with social and emotional learning, mindfulness, cultural responsiveness, and whole systems thinking. PassageWorks collaborates with teachers and school leaders to develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that create safe, meaningful, and engaged learning communities that respect and honor the diverse views and experiences of students, families, and educators. This relationship-based approach to teaching and learning includes a balance of warmth, structure, and high expectations that fosters student engagement, resilience, and confidence.

#### Programs Include:

- [Courses and Workshops](#)
- [School-Based Professional Learning](#)
- [Curricular Resources](#)
- [Learning Communities](#)
- [Parent and Family Engagement](#)

**All of their programs integrate the four strands of the Engaged Teaching Approach:**



### **Social-Emotional Learning**

SEL is a set of skills and capacities that support self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills and responsible decision making. Social, Emotional and Academic Learning embraces a “relationship-based” approach to teaching and learning.

### **Mindfulness**

Mindfulness is a natural human capacity to pay attention to our experience as it is happening in real time. When we intentionally cultivate this capacity through practice we enhance our ability to focus, to regulate our emotions and to extend compassion and kindness to ourselves and others.

### **Cultural Responsiveness**

Culturally responsive practice builds learning communities of “inclusive excellence.” The ongoing practice of cultural responsiveness includes conscientiously interacting with other people and with systems—with an awareness of our own histories, contexts, filters and habits of mind AND with curiosity and an open heart. We enter each encounter willing to be informed and changed by the interaction and each other’s cultural perspective.

### **Whole Systems Thinking**

Whole Systems thinking fosters cross-system collaboration and integrated interventions that honor and build on the wisdom and intelligence in the existing community to create sustainable long-term change.

## **Resources for Teachers**

[Heritage Poetry Writing Ideas](#), Poetry templates

[Brain Gym Exercise for Students](#) – 3 minute brain activating exercises to do before a test

The Teaching Well is an organization whose mission is to help Teachers focus on their own well being before they hit that burnout point. This resource is important to help Teachers remember that their mental and emotional health is important.

<http://uproxx.com/life/teaching-well-support-teachers/>

These next two resources really speak to the shift for punitive to restorative behaviors for Teachers.

How to Stop Yelling at Your Student's – Cult of Pedagogy

<http://www.cultofpedagogy.com/stop-yelling-at-students/>

10 Reasons Why You Should Never, Ever Yell At Students – Smart Classroom Manager:

<https://www.smartclassroommanagement.com/2011/01/08/10-reasons-why-you-should-never-yell-at-students/>

## Cultural Cool Down Corner

I interviewed Brandi Mack who is the Restorative Justice Care Manager at Castlemont High School in Oakland. Here are some of her ideas to Help Teachers deal with disruptive classroom behavior. She has created what is a Cultured Cool Down Corner. A Cultured Cool Down Corner, is an area set up in a classroom, that uses culturally sensitive tools to provide restorative support for students and teachers, with the intention to promote mindfulness and restorative justice practices in the classroom. Cool Down components are kinesthetic, auditory, visual. Doodle kits, appeal to the kinesthetic, Relaxation Station, for auditory, and the FU or Affirmation wall for the visual.

## I Create What I Believe

Nancy Marie wrote *Passage of Change, A fable based on the research of Bruce Lipton, Ph.D.*. the *ICWIB!* Program is helping students or children learn to self-regulate, restore balance, and approach life in a more positive manner. This in turn is also affecting their social, emotional, and cognitive development.

The *ICWIB!* Introductory DVD for FREE on the *I Create What I Believe!* website.

If you would like to explore the *I Create What I Believe!* Program more fully, we invite you to explore some of the *ICWIB* FREE art activities and videos.

### **Program Basics**

- 1) [ICWIB Introductory DVD \(14 minutes long\)](#)
- 2) [Dr. Bruce Lipton talks about how the ICWIB program is a scientifically sound and effective way to bring about internal and positive change.](#)
- 3) [Parent and Teacher Resources and Suggestions](#)

### **Test Drive some Activities**

- [Just Scribble, ICWIB Activity One: Version One video](#)
- [Just Scribble, ICWIB Activity One \(text\)](#)
- [Just Scribble, ICWIB Activity One: Version Two video](#)
- [Just Scribble, ICWIB Activity One: Version Three video](#)

- [ICWIB Instructional Guide: Part One](#)
- [ICWIB Instructional Guide: Part Two](#)
- [ICWIB Instructional Guide: Part Three](#)
- [Labyrinth, ICWIB Activity Four](#)
- [Labyrinth, ICWIB](#)

**More ICWIB Links:**

<https://www.facebook.com/ICreateWhatIBelieve>

<http://icreatewhatibelieve.com/newsletter>

For more information about the *I Create What I Believe!* Global Classroom:

<http://icreatewhatibelieve.com/global-classroom/>

For more information about teacher training via Skype:

<http://icreatewhatibelieve.com/presentations-and-trainings/>