

# Cultivating Restorative School Communities

Solano County Office of Education: Tier 1 MTSS  
Restorative Circles



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# Restorative Justice Practices in Schools

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

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# What is School-based Restorative Justice Practices?

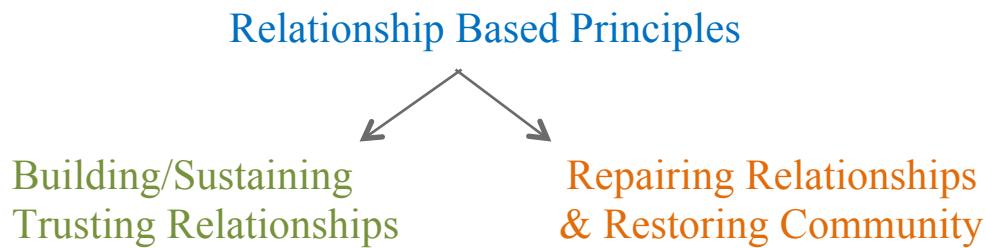
In schools, Restorative Practices are multifaceted in nature. The roots of its understanding and practice are grounded in the traditions of Indigenous Cultures around the world that underscore the value of respect, compassion, dignity, and inclusion of all members of the community.

This approach rests with the belief that everyone is an equal member of society and has a contribution to make.

Key Definition:

**Restorative Justice Practices is a system of principles and processes that build and sustain a culture of respect, responsibility and accountability.**

This is achieved through emphasizing the importance of trusting relationships as central to building community and repairing relationships when harm has occurred.



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

Restorative Justice Lens:

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

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

**“The underlying premise of restorative practices is that people are happier, more cooperative, more productive and more likely to make positive changes when those in positions of authority do things with them rather than to them or for them.”**

Ted Watchel, The International Institute for Restorative Practices

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

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

Through restorative practices, members of the school community will:

- Have opportunities to be heard
- Form connections and stronger relationships
- Understand the greater impact of one's actions
- Learn and practice taking responsibility
- Repair the harm one's actions may have caused
- Recognize one's role in maintaining a safe school environment
- Build upon and expand on personal relationships in the school community
- Recognize one's role as a positive contributing member of the school community.

## **POSITIVE OUTCOMES FOR SCHOOL COMMUNITIES**

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

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

San Francisco Unified School District, Restorative Practices, [www.healthiersf.org/restorativepractices](http://www.healthiersf.org/restorativepractices)  
Oakland Unified School District, <http://www.ousd.k12.ca.us/restorativejustice>

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

Positive Behavior For Learning, New Zealand Ministry of Education, Restorative Practice Kete Book 1, [www.education.govt.nz](http://www.education.govt.nz)

## School Culture

*“Like a hotel or car rental service, you can tell what a school is going to be like the moment you walk in. Is the office staff kind and courteous or do they make you feel like a stranger? Do students welcome and acknowledge you or push you out of the way? Are classroom doors shut, walls bare, and children grimly concentrating on the next passage in their textbook? Or are classrooms buzzing hives of activity with actively engaged children immersed in challenging learning, effortlessly using appropriate technology to demonstrate their knowledge, and sad when the lesson has to come to an end? This is called Culture---and in schools and other organizations, it’s everything.”*

Fullen & Hargreaves, *Professional Capital: Transforming Teaching in Every School*



The term school culture generally refers to the beliefs, perceptions, relationships, attitudes, and written and unwritten rules that shape and influence every aspect of how a school functions, but the term also encompasses more concrete issues such as the physical and emotional safety of students, the orderliness of classrooms and public spaces, or the degree to which a school embraces and celebrates racial, ethnic, linguistic, or cultural diversity.

Like the larger social culture, a school culture results from both conscious and unconscious perspectives, values, interactions, and practices, and it is heavily shaped by a school's particular institutional history. Students, parents, teachers, administrators, and other staff

members all contribute to their school's culture, as do other influences such as the community in which the school is located, the policies that govern how it operates, or the principles upon which the school was founded.

Broadly defined, positive school cultures are conducive to professional satisfaction, morale, and effectiveness, as well as to student learning, fulfillment, and well-being.

**The following list is a representative selection of a few characteristics commonly associated with positive school cultures:**

- The individual successes of teachers and students are recognized and celebrated.
- Relationships and interactions are characterized by openness, trust, respect, and appreciation.
- Staff relationships are collegial, collaborative, and productive, and all staff members are held to high professional standards.
- Students and staff members feel emotionally and physical safe, and the school's policies and facilities promote student safety.
- School leaders, teachers, and staff members model positive, healthy behaviors for students.
- Mistakes not punished as failures, but they are seen as opportunities to learn and grow for both students and educators.
- Students are consistently held to high academic expectations, and a majority of students meet or exceed those expectations.
- Important leadership decisions are made collaboratively with input from staff members, students, and parents.
- Criticism, when voiced, is constructive and well intentioned, not antagonistic or self-serving.
- Educational resources and learning opportunities are equitably distributed, and all students, including minorities and students with disabilities.
- All students have access to the academic support and services they may need to succeed.

Source: Great Schools Partnership: The Glossary of Education Reform  
[HTTP://EDGLOSSARY.ORG/SCHOOL-CULTURE/](http://EDGLOSSARY.ORG/SCHOOL-CULTURE/)

# Community

## Creating a Sense of Belonging and Value in a Group

### Components of Community formation:

Gibbsm J. (2001), *Discovering Gifts in Middle School: Tribes*, CA CenterSource Systems p. 74

1. **Capacity:** Communities are built upon recognizing the whole depth, the strengths, weaknesses, and the unique capacities of each member.
2. **Collective Effort:** Communities share responsibility to achieve goals for the common good, and to engage the diversity of individual talents and skills.
3. **Informality:** Interactions are based on consideration; care and affection take place spontaneously.
4. **Stories:** Reflection upon individual and community experiences provides knowledge about truth, relationships and further direction.

**“To build a sense of community is to create a group that extends to others the respect one has for oneself, to come to know one another as individual, to respond and care about one another, to feel a sense of membership and accountability to the group.”**

Thomas Likona, author on moral development and education



# Relationship-based Restorative Principles

The following principles reflect the values and concepts for implementing restorative practices in the school setting. Under each principle are some of its important implications.

## Restorative Practices:

### **1. Acknowledges that relationships are central to building community.**

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

### **2. Ensures equity of voice among all members of the community. All voices are valued, everyone is heard.**

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

### **3. Establishes a culture of high expectations with high support, emphasizing doing things “WITH” not “TO” or “FOR”.**

- Supports high standards and expectations for both learning and behavior in the school and classroom community, AND offers high levels of support to create positive change = Doing “WITH”.

### **4. Builds systems that address misbehavior and harm in a way that strengthens relationships and focuses on the harm done rather than only rule-breaking.**

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

## **5. Engages in collaborative problem solving.**

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

## **6. Enhances accountability, responsibility and empowers change and growth for all members of the community.**

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

Source: Modified from Amstutz, L., & Mullet, J., (2005), pg 29-32. *The Little Book of Restorative Discipline*, pg 26-28

# Paradigm Shift

“What’s fundamental about restorative justice (practices) is a shift away from thinking about laws being broken, who broke the law, and how we punish the people who broke the laws. There’s a shift to: there was harm caused, or there’s disagreement or dispute, there’s conflict, and how do we repair the harm, address the conflict, meet the needs, so that relationships and community can be repaired and restored. It’s a different orientation. It is a shift.”

Cheryl Graves- Community Justice for Youth Institute

# Paradigm Shift: Retributive vs. Restorative

## Three Different Questions

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

## A Different Approach

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

## Traditional, Punitive Discipline

“Traditionally, discipline was thought of as an individual’s ability to adhere to a set of school or classroom rules that were put in place to maintain good order, necessary for effective teaching and learning. Administrative responses to violations of school rules are traditionally regulated through external sanctioning systems which isolate the wrongdoer, appropriate blame, and hand down appropriate punishment from a higher authority.”

## Restorative Discipline

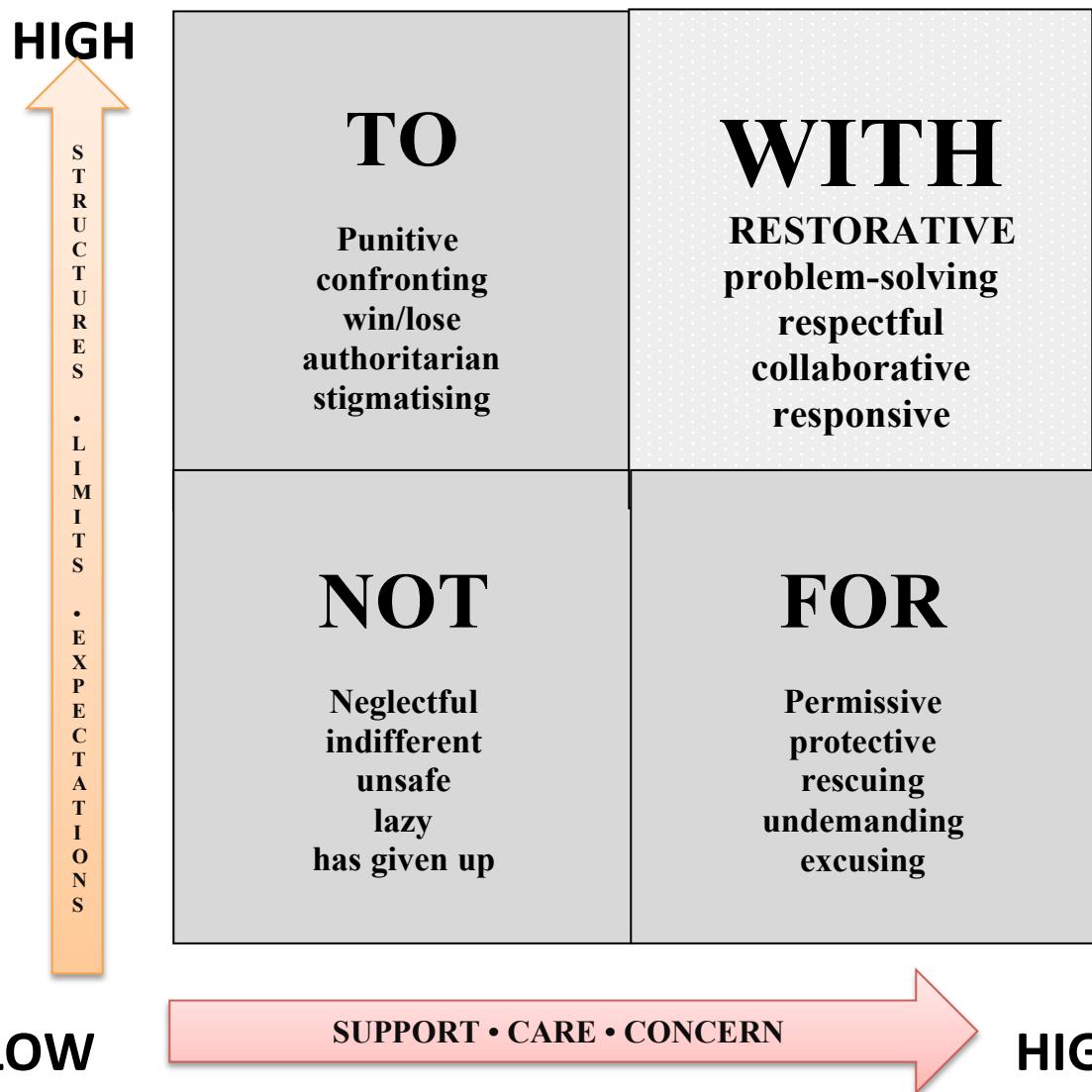
“Central to the restorative process is the maintenance of individuals’ dignity and self worth. These processes aim to harness the capacity to strengthen internal sanctioning systems through building a community of care around the individuals involved, while instilling accountability and responsibility. This involves building collective understanding about: what happened, how people were affected, determining appropriate responses to repair the harm done and ways to decrease the likelihood of further harmful behavior.”

## In Summary

*“Traditionally, school order is maintained through establishing school rules and appropriate punishment for violation of school rules, by way of hierarchical accountability mechanisms; Restorative processes maintain school order through building a web of relationships throughout the school community that supports individuals in making responsible decisions and holds individuals accountable for harmful behavior.”*

Peta Blood, Margaret Thorsborne & Brenda Morrison  
Public Organization Review: A Global Journal 5: 335–357 (2005)

# The Social Discipline Window



From Positive Behavior for Learning, Restorative Practice Kete, Published by the New Zealand Ministry of Education. [www.education.govt.nz](http://www.education.govt.nz) All text and images copyright © Crown 2014, the Social Discipline Window on pages 17 and 38 copyright © Daniel Glaser 1964. Adapted from Wachtel and McCold, 2003 (adapted from Glasser, 1964)

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

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

# Restorative Practices Language

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

The words highlighted represent the key language of Restorative Practices.

## We are a ***community***.

Recognizing that the strength and health of the community (among students, staff, and families) directly impacts school climate (sense of belonging and connectedness) and academic achievement. Every member of the community is important and contributes greatly. Each person's actions affect the health of the community in a positive or negative way.

***Recommendation:*** constantly refer to the student, staff, and family groups as a "community", and stress the importance of having a strong, healthy community.

## What is the ***relationship*** like?

Reinforcing the importance of positive relationships is essential to the development of a strong community. Positive relationships lay the foundation for cooperation, skill development and learning.

***Recommendation:*** constantly inquire about the strength of the "relationship/s" between/among students, staff, and families. Celebrate positive relationships, and when challenged, specifically ask, "what is the relationship like between.....( students, yourself and your students, a particular student and his/her classroom peers, staff members...etc)". Self reflect on your own relationships with school community members and ask others to reflect on their relationships.

## ***What happened?***

Ask open-ended questions that allow for a genuine retelling of an experience.

***Recommendation:*** do not ask the "why" question. Instead, ask "what happened" when inquiring about specific actions or behaviors.

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

For both positive and negative actions, recognizing impact helps to teach that one's actions affect the greater community. It is equally important to reinforce positive impact, as it is to teach that negative behavior harms relationships and the health of the community.

***Recommendation:*** Consider age appropriate language to use in response to students and staff actions/behaviors, reinforcing the importance of positive relationships and community.

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

When conflict or harm occurs, it is important to recognize that ALL parties involved have resulting needs. Often times the needs of those “harmed” and those who “harmed” have similar needs. Giving individuals an opportunity to voice their needs is an important step towards identifying what must happen to repair the relationships.

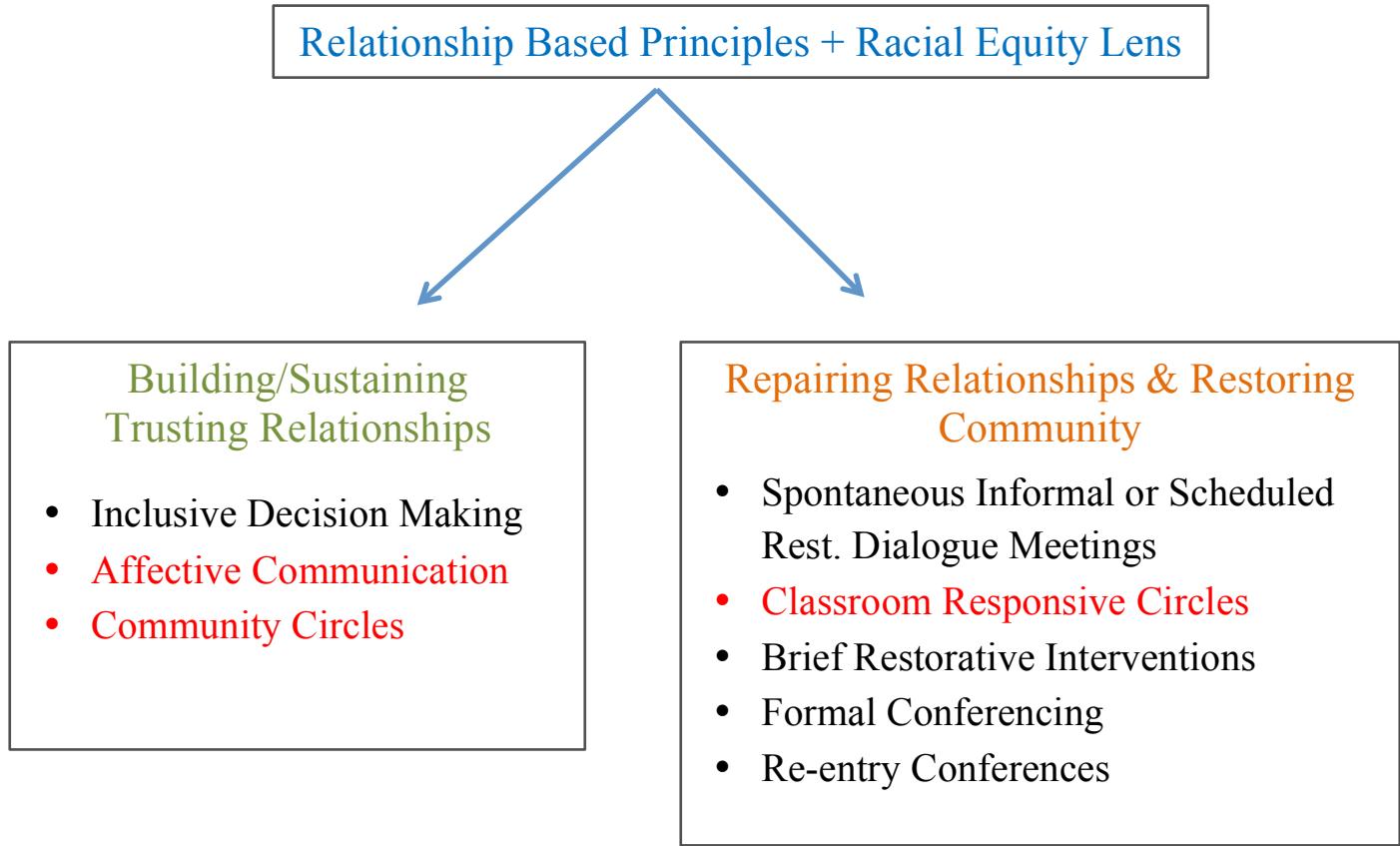
**Recommendation:** *Using age appropriate language, ask ALL individuals involved in an incident (including the teacher/family member) to share/reflect on what needs they have/had (both during the time of the incident as well as after the incident).*

## What needs to happen to **repair the harm** (make things as right as possible)?

Reinforcing the importance of repairing harm (when one’s actions have negatively impacted the community) is a critical component for the restoration of community/relationships when harm has occurred. Giving those involved in the incident an opportunity to identify what they are going to do to make things right teaches responsibility and holds one accountable for their actions.

**Recommendation:** *Allow for the people involved in an incident to share what they need to see happen in order to address and repair the harm caused by hurtful/negative behavior. Accountability stems from taking responsibility for one’s actions and following-through with the identified plan after taking into consideration all that everyone needs to feel satisfied with the situation.*

# Restorative Justice Practices



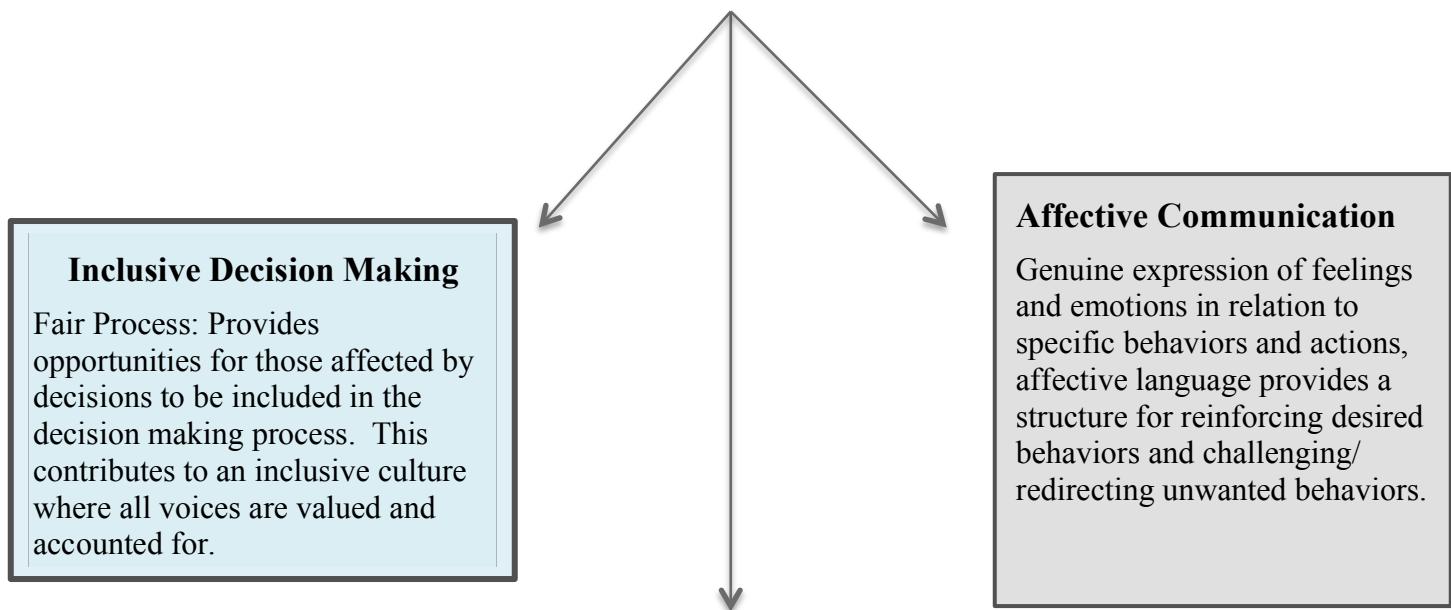
# ***Building/Sustaining Trusting Relationships***

## **Relationship Based Principles and Values (The RP LENS)**



### **Racial Equity Lens**

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



### **Community Circles**

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

Proactive Circles can be used for various purposes:

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

# ***Repairing Relationships and Restoring Community:***

## **Restorative Discipline**

### **Relationship Based Principles / Values & Racial Equity Lens**



#### **Restorative Dialogue**

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

#### **Restorative Questions:**

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



#### **Spontaneous Informal or Scheduled Meetings**

On the spot or scheduled meetings to respond to conflict, wrongdoing, or unwanted behavior.



#### **Classroom Responsive Circles**

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



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



#### **Formal Conferencing**

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



#### **Re-entry Conferences**

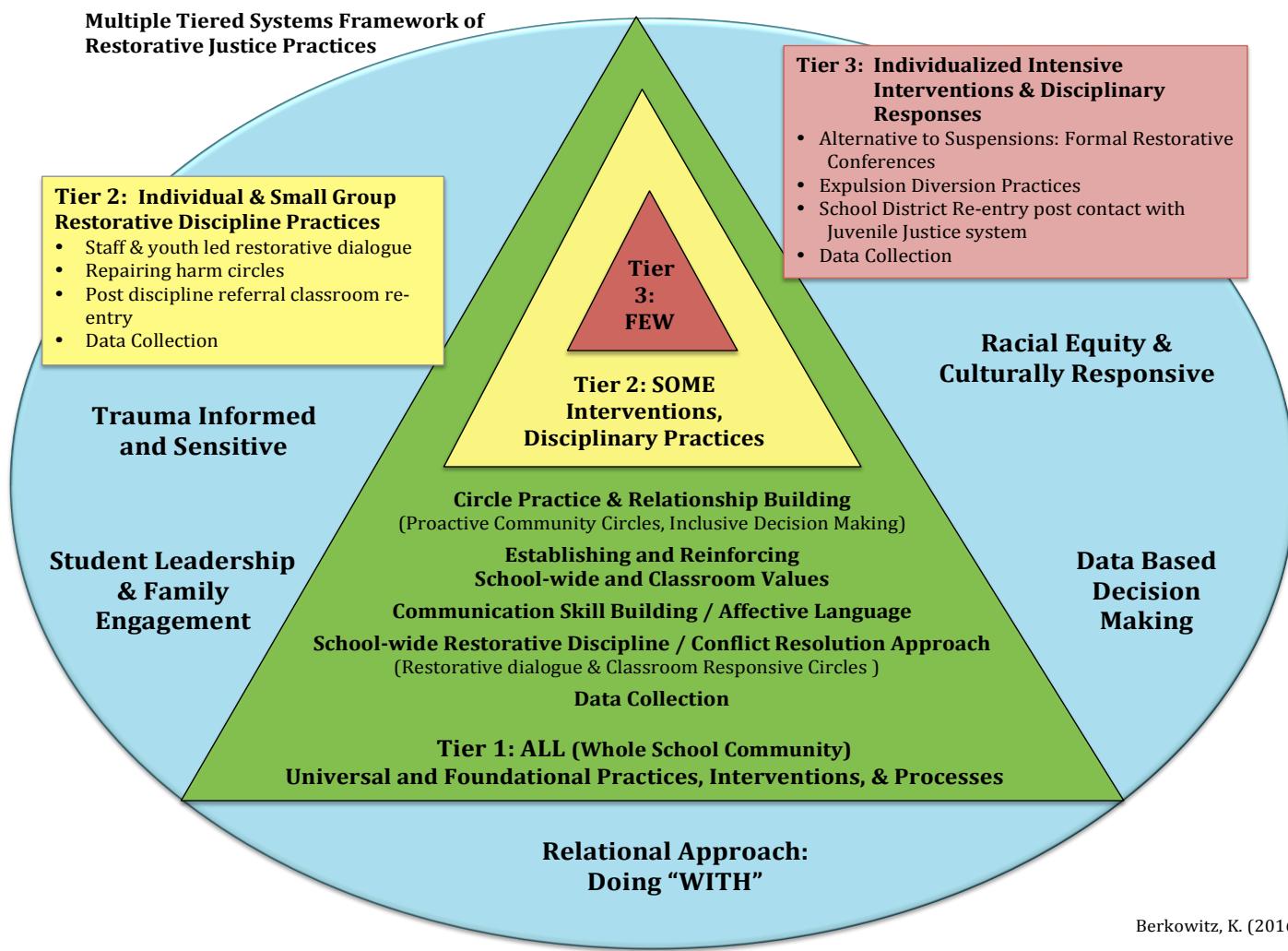
A formal process that reintegrates students back into the school and classroom after a counseling office referral or an out of school suspension to re-establish connection with the community.

## Multiple Tiered Systems Framework

A Multiple Tiered Systems framework (MTSS) is a proactive, prevention based approach that allows schools to highlight and reinforce the importance of establishing a positive environment for all members of the school community and more systematically deliver needed supports, interventions, and disciplinary responses to the students as needed. A MTSS model embeds an inclusive culture of reciprocal relationships and shared responsibility, and emphasizes the use of evidence based practices to enhance the academic and behavioral performance of all students. This intentional effort to build strong community as well as the emphasis on early identification and intervention helps to reach students in a preventative rather than reactive mode. (Lynass, L, 2015).

The MTSS framework is typically presented as a triangle divided into three tiers of practice and intervention responses. Tier 1, lays the foundation of school-wide and classroom universal practices that are intended for all students (and adults in a whole school model).

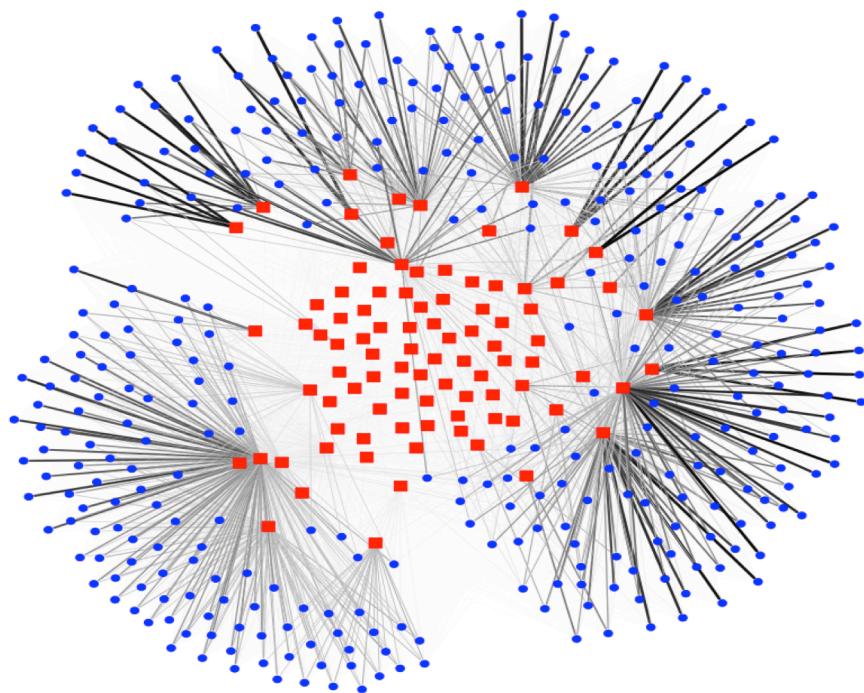
While Tier 1 will meet the relational and behavioral needs of most students across the school, some students will require more targeted interventions and disciplinary responses at the Tier 2 and 3 levels. Therefore, an additional set of restorative practices is available for use at Tier 2 and 3 level and involves a more formal response to behavior infractions and harm through the use of small groups and individualized behavior support.



*School-wide MTSS model of Restorative Justice Practices developed for the District-wide roll-out of Restorative Practices across Santa Rosa City Schools.*

# Building and Sustaining Trusting Relationships and Community:

## *Proactive Practices*



re·la·tion·ship

rə'lāSH(ə)n, SHip/

*noun*

1. A connection, association, or involvement.
2. Connection between persons by blood or marriage.
3. An emotional or other connection between people:

*The relationship between teachers and students*

‘A relationship is a connection between two people in which some sort of exchange takes place’.

(George Goetschius and Joan Tash, 1967) Dictionary.com

# **Relational Approach = Awareness + Intentions + Actions**

## **Relational Awareness**

- Recognition that humans are influenced by relationships.
- Recognizing that a positive teaching and learning experience is determined by the quality of one's relationship between the teacher, the students and their parents.
- An examination of relationships within the context of school and community.

+

## **Intentions**

- Self-reflection on what guides one's action
- Does one desire to be in good relationship

+

## **Relational Actions:**

- 1. Interpersonal:** Develop and sustain strong connections to create a foundation for positive trusting relationships to thrive.
- 2. Systems:** Protocols/routines to establish an environment and conditions for the building and sustaining positive trusting relationships.

# Just Listen

“The most basic and powerful way to connect to another person is to listen. Just Listen. Perhaps the important thing we ever give each other is our attention.”

## “Just Listen” by Rachel Naomi Remen, M.D.

I suspect that the most basic and powerful way to connect to another person is to listen. Just listen. Perhaps the most important thing we ever give each other is our attention. And especially if it's given from the heart. When people are talking, there's no need to do anything but receive them. Just take them in. Listen to what they're saying. Care about it. Most times caring about it is even more important than understanding it. Most of us don't value ourselves or our love enough to know this. It has taken me a long time to believe in the power of simply saying, “I'm sorry,” when someone is in pain. And meaning it.

One of my patients told me that when she tried to tell her story people often interrupted to tell her that they once had something just like that happen to them. Subtly her pain became a story about themselves. Eventually she stopped talking to most people. It was just too lonely. We connect through listening. When we interrupt what someone is saying to let them know that we understand, we move the focus of attention to ourselves. When we listen, they know we care. Many people with cancer talk about the relief of having someone just listen.

I have even learned to respond to someone crying by just listening. In the old days I used to reach for the tissues, until I realized that passing a person a tissue may be just another way to shut them down, to take them out of their experience of sadness and grief. Now I just listen. When they have cried all they need to cry, they find me there with them.

This simple thing has not been easy to learn. It certainly went against everything I had been taught since I was very young. I thought people listened only because they were too timid to speak or did not know the answer. A loving silence often has far more power to heal and to connect than the most well-intentioned words.

# Listening Skills

1

**Stop Talking** “*If we were supposed to talk more than we listen, we would have two tongues and one ear.*” Mark Twain.

Don't talk, listen. When somebody else is talking listen to what they are saying, do not interrupt, talk over them or finish their sentences for them. Stop, just listen. When the other person has finished talking you may need to clarify to ensure you have received their message accurately.

2

**Prepare Yourself to Listen: Relax.**

Focus on the speaker. Put other things out of mind. The human mind is easily distracted by other thoughts – what's for lunch, what time do I need to leave to catch my train, is it going to rain – try to put other thoughts out of mind and concentrate on the messages that are being communicated.

3

**Put the Speaker at Ease: Help the speaker to feel free to speak.**

Remember their needs and concerns. Nod or use other gestures or words to encourage them to continue. Maintain eye contact but don't stare – show you are listening and understanding what is being said.

4

**Remove Distractions: Focus on what is being said.**

Don't doodle, shuffle papers, look out the window, pick your fingernails or similar. Avoid unnecessary interruptions. These behaviors disrupt the listening process and send messages to the speaker that you are bored or distracted.

5

**Empathize: Try to understand the other person's point of view.**

Look at issues from their perspective. Let go of preconceived ideas. By having an open mind we can more fully empathize with the speaker. If the speaker says something that you disagree with then wait and construct an argument to counter what is said but keep an open mind to the views and opinions of others.

## 6

### **Be Patient: A pause, even a long pause, does not necessarily mean that the speaker has finished.**

Be patient and let the speaker continue in their own time, sometimes it takes time to formulate what to say and how to say it. Never interrupt or finish a sentence for someone.

## 7

### **Avoid Personal Prejudice: Try to be impartial.**

Don't become irritated and don't let the person's habits or mannerisms distract you from what the speaker is really saying. Everybody has a different way of speaking - some people are for example more nervous or shy than others, some make excessive arm movements, some people like to pace whilst talking - others like to sit still. Focus on what is being said and try to ignore styles of delivery.

## 8

### **Listen to the Tone: Volume and tone both add to what someone is saying.**

A good speaker will use both volume and tone to their advantage to keep an audience attentive; everybody will use pitch, tone and volume of voice in certain situations – let these help you to understand the emphasis of what is being said.

## 9

### **Listen for Ideas – Not Just Words: You need to get the whole picture, not just isolated bits and pieces.**

Maybe one of the most difficult aspects of listening is the ability to link together pieces of information to reveal the ideas of others. With proper concentration, letting go of distractions, and focus this becomes easier.

## 10

### **Wait and Watch for Non-Verbal Communication: Gestures, facial expressions, and eye-movements can all be important.**

We don't just listen with our ears but also with our eyes – watch and pick up the additional information being transmitted via non-verbal communication.

Source: <http://www.skillsyouneed.com/ips/listening-skills.html#ixzz4AaLyfSzn>

# Affective Language

## Description and Purpose:

### Affective Statements:

- Are central to all restorative processes.
- Are personal expressions of feeling in response to specific positive or negative behaviors of others.
- Provide feedback on the impact of intended or unintended harm resulting from negative behaviors.
- Provide information that can be used to restore a good feeling between people when harm has occurred between them.
- Are humanizing and allow for deep relationship building.
- Have a significant and cumulative impact in a school community.

## Constructing an Affective Statement:

When responding to behavior (either to reinforce positive behaviors or re-direct negative behaviors with any member of the school community), the following three steps will assist in the construction of an affective statement.

- Step 1 – Self-identify what you are feeling or how you are impacted
- Step 2 – Identify the specific action or behavior that you are responding to (separate the doer from the deed)
- Step 3 – Bring step 1 and 2 together in an authentic expression of:
  1. your feeling or how you are impacted, by the
  2. specific behaviors or actions you are reinforcing or redirecting.
- Step 4 – Close with a request

Ex. Phillip, I get very distracted when you continuously tap your pencil on the table.

It makes it difficult for me to concentrate.

*\*\*Be mindful to always consider the needs of the students when addressing them. It is important to take responsibility for your own feelings and not impose your feelings on others. The purpose of affective statements is for people to learn how their specific behaviors impact those around them—it is not for the purpose of them having to carry the load of everyone's feelings—this is very important, especially for our students who have experienced severe or complex trauma in their lives.*

# Honest Expression:

Observation  
Feeling  
Need  
Request

When I...



[Add your observation]

I feel...



Happy



Sad



Angry



Annoyed



Excited



Worried



Scared



Hurt



Embarrassed



Confused

Because  
I Need...

## Survival:

Food  
Shelter  
Water  
Rest  
Safety  
Health  
Wellbeing  
Security

## Love & Belonging:

Friendship  
Community  
Family  
Respect  
Cooperation  
Support  
Acceptance  
Understanding  
Connection  
Empathy

**POWER:**  
**RECOGNITION**  
**SUCCESS**  
**IMPORTANCE**  
**ACHIEVEMENT**  
**INFLUENCE**  
**ORDER**  
**GROWTH**  
**EQUALITY**  
**TRUST**  
**SELF-WORTH**

## FUN:

Laughter  
Learning  
Change  
Enjoyment  
Play  
Excitement  
Inspiration  
Celebration  
Movement

**FREEDOM:**  
Choice  
Independence  
Solitude  
Individuality

Would you be willing to?

# Affective Language Practice: Classroom Scenario

**Scenario:** Over the past couple months you have observed that John's use of profane language as well as putdowns towards other students has significantly increased.

You notice an increase in inappropriate and hurtful language and a greater number of heated verbal altercations in general among the students in your class.

## Restorative Practice

Affective  
Language  
(statements)

### Example of application

#### Positive statements to John:

1. *Ten minutes into class you notice that John has yet to say anything hurtful to another student, you say, "John, I am appreciating the fact that you are speaking respectfully to the other students in class so far. Keep up the good work!"*
2. "John, I was impressed to see that you did not verbally respond to Kyle when he yelled at you from across the room. Keep it up."

#### Positive statement to the entire class:

*At the end of class one day you say, " I am feeling very proud of you all because I heard a lot of supportive, positive discussions in class today. I would like to continue seeing you all support one another like this."*

#### Redirecting statements to John in private:

1. "John, I feel very disrespected when you raise your voice and speak over me while I'm teaching the lesson. I need for you to wait until I call on you before you speak to your friends."
2. "When I hear you saying hurtful things to the other students in class I feel concerned that the classroom becomes an unsafe place. I ask that you follow our guidelines of respectful speech in our classroom so we can all feel comfortable here."

#### Redirecting statement to the entire class:

*In the past 10 minutes you have heard 4 different students putdown one another, you say: "Everyone, can I please have your attention up front for a moment. In the past ten minutes I have heard four different people put down one another. I am noticing this happening more and more in our class and I am feeling very uncomfortable with it because it creates a very negative environment in the class. I would like to see an end to all the putdowns "*

# Circles

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

Derived from aboriginal and native traditions, circles are built on caring relationships, positive expectation messages, and opportunities for meaningful participation.

**Circle processes are a valuable practice that serves numerous purposes in our school communities.**

## Why Circle?

- **Creates a place of belonging**
  - In circle everyone is equally important, everyone has an equal voice
- **Relevant and engaging**
  - Speaking from the heart
  - Sharing personal experiences and story telling
  - Peer support
- **Promotes social skill building**
  - Listening
  - Communication
  - Expression of feelings, thoughts, ideas
  - Problem solving
- **Creates connection and bonds**
  - Equalizes power
  - Shared effort & common purpose
  - Builds trust (there is vulnerability in sharing)
- **Allows for targeted inquiry**
  - Exploration of impact
  - Behavior ownership
  - Taking responsibility for actions

**Participants gain valuable life skills that will not only positively contribute to improved interpersonal relationships and academic success, but will also prepare them for their future endeavors and relationships.**

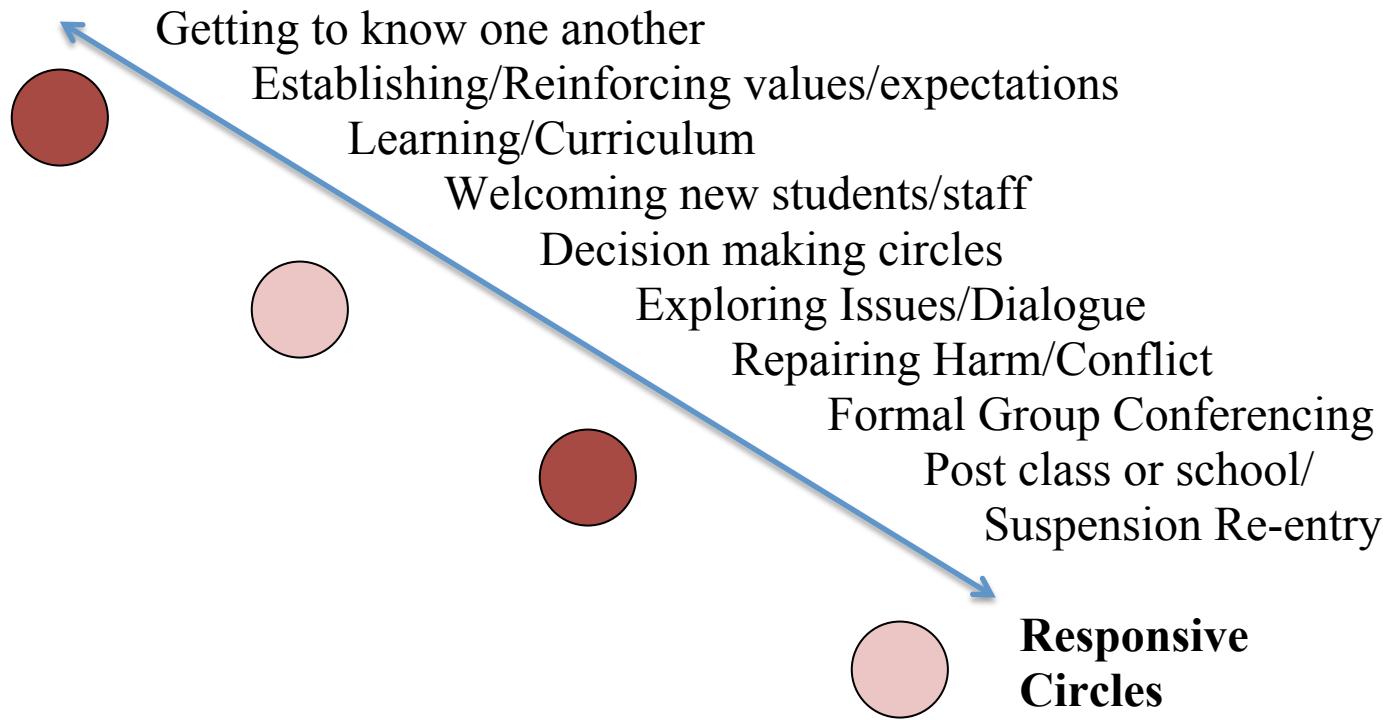
**The circle process provides a way of bringing people together in which:**

- \* Everyone is respected and gets a chance to talk without interruption
- \* Participants explain themselves by telling their stories
- \* Everyone is equal- no person is more important than anyone else
- \* Emotional aspects of individual experiences are welcome



# Types of Circles

## Pro-active (prevention based) Circles



Proactive: Building strong community in the classroom and school

Responsive: Problem solving/ addressing issues

Proactively Responsive: Addressing problems or anticipating problems proactively

Academic: Academic content (prep, new, reflection)

## Proactive Circles can be used for:

- Relationship building
- Establishing and reinforcing values and behavior expectations
- Goal setting
- Celebrations, recognition, achievements
- Dialogue around topics of interest
- Relevant content instruction
- Class progress (behavior and academics)

# Values and Principles of the Circle and Community



## Typical Circle Structure:

1. Chairs are placed in a physical circle, enough chairs for all participating members with no additional furniture blocking any participants
2. The facilitator is called the “keeper”, and leads the meeting (may possibly be lead by a student)
3. The keeper makes introductory comments, often including a discussion of the values that guide the success of the process, and may place the written values/positive agreements on the floor in the middle of the circle for all participants to see.
4. The keeper poses a question or topic (of which depends on the purpose of the circle)
5. A talking piece is introduced and passed, usually clockwise around the circle
6. The only person authorized to speak is the person holding the talking piece (one person at a time), participants may choose not to speak if they wish
7. When a person is finished speaking, they pass the talking piece onwards to the next person
8. The process of passing the talking piece around the circle may continue for a number of rounds. Since only one person speaks at a time, it's important to offer participants a chance to reflect on what the others are saying in the circle.

## Circle Flow

- **Sequential:** Passing talking piece around the circle from person to person
- **Non-sequential:** Using the talking piece, but not passing it around the circle from person to person
- **Fishbowl:** Small inner circle discusses a particular subject matter with larger outer circle observing. One seat is left open in the inner circle for someone from the outside circle to step into the circle to make a comment or ask a question and then re-join the outer circle.

# Circle Format

This format can be amended depending on the amount of time or topic. While it can be tempting to skip the guidelines and values round, it is important that you do not unless you are in a group that has been meeting in a circle for a while and have covered values in previous circles. A reoccurring group should always revisit the guidelines and values even if just briefly.

- 1. Introducing the Circle**
- 2. Opening**
- 3. Guidelines / Values**
- 4. Introduction of Talking Piece**
- 5. Check-In/ Connection Round**
- 6. Main Activity: Content Rounds**
- 7. Reflection/Check out**
- 8. Closing**

\* Modified from Oakland & San Francisco Unified School District circle resources

## **1. Introducing the Circle**

**Purpose:** to clearly introduce the purpose of the circle so participants know what to expect. The circle keeper speaks from their heart expressing the importance of the circle and reason for coming together. The framing of the circle to the participants strongly influence their openness to the process.

## **2. Circle Opening**

**Purpose:** to create a special space where everyone will come together to share in ways we ordinarily don't have the opportunity to do. Also to ground everyone, set a positive tone for participants to transition into the circle process.

**Examples of an opening:** poems, quotes, guided meditation or breathing exercise

**Suggested opening language:** "We have come together today to learn more about one another and to be together in a way which will make our school community (or our class or group) stronger, closer and safer."

## **3. Values and Guidelines**

**Purpose:** to allow Circle participants to identify values and agree upon shared guidelines for the circle. It's very important to convey the importance of, and hold participants accountable to the guidelines as they directly impact the success of the circle.

### **Circle guidelines:**

**Respect the talking piece:** Everyone listens; everyone has a turn

**Speak from the heart:** Your truth, your perspectives, and your experiences

**Listen from the heart:** Let go of stories that make it hard to hear each other

**Trust that you will know what to say:** No need to rehearse

**Say just enough:** Without feeling rushed, be concise and considerate of the time of others.

**Suggested guideline language:** “Here are the core circle guidelines. Are there any other guidelines you would like to add?” Pass the talking piece around the circle and chart any other guidelines.

**Values:** Circle participants identify and agree upon personal and shared group values which everyone will honor during the circle. Note: The traditional way is to ask people to bring their “best selves” to the discussion. Values are a reminder for how to ‘be’ in Circle. Respect, honesty, trustworthiness, courage, are examples of such values.

## **4. Introduction of the Talking Piece and Center Piece**

**Purpose:** to create an equitable environment for sharing. Everyone gets a chance to speak or have the right to pass. For those that do not have the talking piece, it is an opportunity to actively listen to the speaker.

Sometimes the talking piece may be suspended to encourage spontaneous sharing or brainstorming.

**Example of a talking piece:** Meaningful objects that community members can relate to or something that has meaning to someone or is relevant to the topic to be discussed.

**Suggested language:** The person holding the talking piece is the only one who may speak. Everyone else in the circle is actively listening and trying not to spend time thinking about what they are going to say.

The talking piece usually moves in a circular format (clockwise or counter clockwise). Every person has the opportunity to speak and the right to pass if they choose. Even though someone may pass, they must still be present and participate.

## **5. Check-In / Connection Round**

**Purpose:** to invite participants to talk about how they are feeling on physical, mental or emotional levels at the moment.

**Suggested check in language:** Q: Name one word describing how you are feeling? If you could be a weather pattern, what pattern would describe how you are feeling right now (today)?

## **6. Main Activity: Content Rounds**

**Purpose:** Can be a single question or a series of questions that are directly related to the purpose of the circle.

If this is a new group and you are just getting to know each other, you may ask people to share what is important to them about being in this community.

A good prompting question for a circle will allow people to speak from a personal perspective about something that relates to the group. After asking a question that allows people to tell a story, you may ask a question that encourages people to speak about the issue or reason they were brought into the circle today (community building, celebration, general check in, current event etc.)

### **What to Consider when Crafting Questions:**

Questions are driven by the purpose of the dialogue.

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

## **7. Check out / Reflection**

**Purpose:** to invite participants to express how they are feeling as the circle is about to end, what they are taking with them from the circle experience, or how they did honoring the guidelines/values  
**Suggested check out language:** Share one word about how they are feeling at the end of the Circle or about what they most appreciated about the process.

## **8. Closing**

**Purpose:** to close the circle with intention and allow participants to smoothly transition out of circle and acknowledge the work done in circle.

**Examples of a closing:** poems, quotes, do a guided meditation or breathing exercise, etc..

- You may suggest that everyone stand shoulder to shoulder and take three deep breathes together. You may also read a short poem or quote and with an expression of gratitude to all present for their participation.

## **Role of Circle Keeper:**

Circle keepers are the caretakers of the circle process; they are not facilitators. As a keeper, it is your job to ensure that everyone takes responsibility for making the circle a welcoming, safe place for open dialogue. Very often, and usually unconsciously, participants will situate the keeper as an authority figure, looking to him or her to direct or make decisions for the group. When it seems the process isn't going smoothly or is taking a direction different than you imagined, it is important to remember that your role is merely to guide the group. It is your job to introduce questions that empower the group to do the work they need to do. As soon as you intervene in a more directive way, participants become less accountable for their actions and decisions. Resulting agreements become much less a reflection of their process and needs and more about what you think the group needs.

### **Circle Keepers:**

- Do not control the circle but help participants uphold its integrity.
- Help to hold a space that is clear, open, respectful, and free. This means knowing when/how to interrupt, when to open and close the circle, when to take a break, and how to remind people to adhere to the agreed-upon guidelines.
- Are participants in the circle, not observers
- Don't need to be a mediator or group facilitator in the usual sense; it's not a position of power, but it is a responsibility to others to keep to the values of the circle.

### **Suggested language for circle keepers:**

**Promote Equality;** "We all have important experiences and something to offer."

**Generate Respect;** "We are different but we all have something to learn from each other."

**Share Responsibility;** "We all have a responsibility for finding solutions."

**Encourage New Ideas;** "Every idea is a good one. We work together to find solutions."

**Seek Solutions that Benefit Everyone;** "Can we find a way to meet the needs of all involved today?"

**Maintain Positive Perspective;** "This is difficult work, and at the same time, we are moving toward a positive outcome."

## **The Talking Piece:**

- Is an object of focus accepted and used by the group. Often something is used that has special meaning to the group.
- Provides greater opportunity for listening and reflection since a person has to wait for the talking piece to come around before speaking. Participants tend to focus more on what people are saying than on preparing an immediate response.
- Prevents one-on-one debates since people cannot respond out of turn.
- Encourages shared responsibility for discussion.
- Reinforces equality in the circle since it provides equal opportunity for all to participate.
- Provides more opportunity for those who are often silent to be heard since they don't have to compete with those who are more verbal.

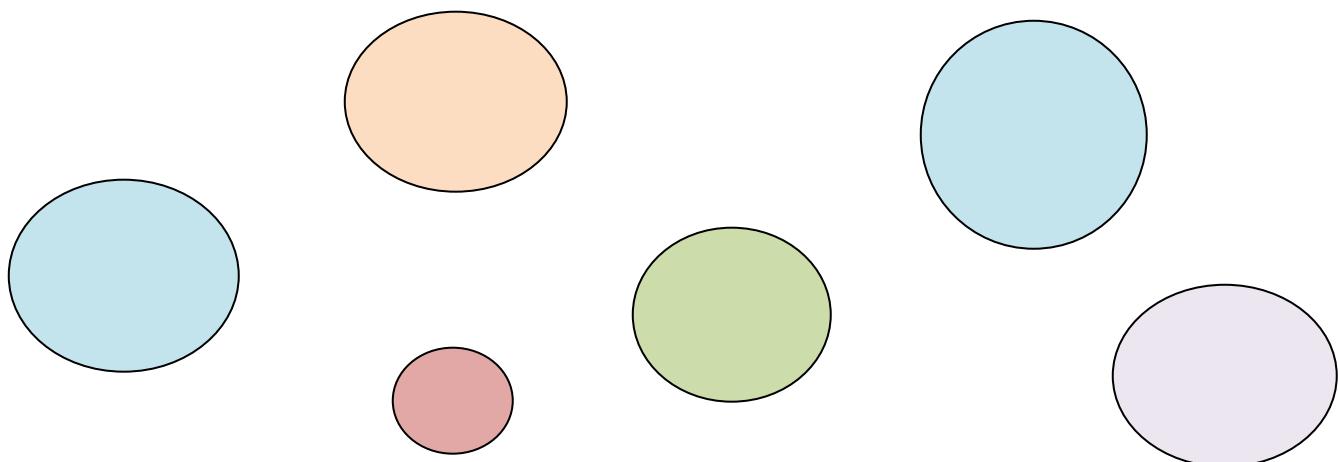
## **Time:**

Circles can form for as little as 10 minutes through an entire class period depending on the need and purpose for the circle.

## **When to Use Circles:**

Depending on the need to bring people together, circles will serve different purposes. Always guided by the same values and principles, circles may be called for:

Community building	Problem-solving	Reflecting	Introducing new students
Conflict resolution	Brainstorming	Support	Farewell to students leaving
Repairing Harm	Diffusing tension	Family issues	Community violence debriefing



# Community Building: Proactive Circles

Circles foster attentive listening, empathy, sharing, and equal opportunities of participation for all members, therefore, the circle process helps cultivate a strong sense of belonging.

## Proactive Circles:<sup>1</sup>

- Provide opportunities for students to share feelings, ideas and experiences in order to build trust, mutual understanding, shared values, and shared behaviors.
- Are NOT held in response to an incident or problem.
- Ideally should account for no less than 80 percent of all circles a student experiences.
- Are based on topics intentionally selected and sequenced to increase risk-taking over time.
- Build the social capital necessary to support successful Responsive Circles.
- Are used to set up behavioral expectations prior to events that occur outside the regular classroom.
- Can be used to help students with academic goal setting and planning.
- Can be used to set ground rules for projects and activities.
- Can be used to build or monitor understanding of academic content.

## Examples of Proactive Circles

### Beginning-of-day/class circles:

(adopted from the Little Book of Restorative Discipline for Schools)  
Circles at the beginning of each day/class can help develop common understandings of guidelines, expectations, and values. They can also be used to address tensions or problems that may have arisen the day before. A daily circle process provides a chance to check in with questions or issues such as:

- What are your thoughts or reflections on today's assignment?
- Clarifying details and expectations of daily schedules.

### Anytime circles:

(adopted from the Little Book of Restorative Discipline for Schools)  
Circles can be used at any point when tensions or problems have arisen, or when decisions need to be made. They provide a problem-solving forum that teaches values such as honesty, accountability, responsibility, and compassion.

Possible uses include:

- **Curriculum:** enhance learning by providing an interactive forum for students to participate in the learning process. Examples include, content review, reading debriefs, topic discussions, goal setting, news articles, current events, books, controversial topics.
- **Having fun** or doing a cooperative activity such as telling jokes and story telling.
- Engaging in **student-chosen discussion** topics.
- **Student/Family/Parent Support/ Staff Support:** truancy, IEP, suspension reentry, peace circles, parent meetings, staff meetings...etc.

### End-of-day circles:

(adopted from the Little Book of Restorative Discipline for Schools)  
Circles are often used at the end of the day for purposes such as these:

- To share something that happened to each participant that day.
- To address a problem or conflict that has arisen during the day
- To address feelings and tensions that may have developed inside the classroom, in other areas of the school, or even in the outside world (ex. Disturbing events in the news).

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<sup>1</sup> The International Institute for Restorative Practices: Whole School Implementation overview and essential elements

K. Berkowitz (Aug, 2017)

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## Circle Preparation

- Understanding role of Circle Keeper
- Circle set up
- Identifying clear purpose of Circle
- Thoughtfully selecting Circle prompts (considering high and low risk questions)
- Selecting talking piece
- Setting up circle centerpiece

## Circle Keeping Process

- Introducing the Circle
- Circle Opening
- Reviewing Circle Guidelines/Values & Introducing the talking piece
- Connection/check-in round
- Content rounds: Introducing prompts
- Reflection/check-out round



# Circle Planning Guide

**1. What is the purpose or goal of your circle?** (ex. Community building, check-in, address specific classroom issue, curriculum/content...etc.)

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**2. Circle Introduction:** [How will you introduce and convey the reason for the circle to the participants?]

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**3. Establish core guidelines:** (What are the core guidelines you would like to introduce to the participants? What additional questions will you ask to create shared guidelines and values? Do you have them written on a poster board for all to see?)

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**4. Circle Opening** (How will you open the circle? A poem, quote, song, breathing, story...?)

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**5. Introduction of Talking Piece.** [What object are you using and Why?]

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**6. Check-In** [What question will you ask for the initial check-in round? ex. On a scale of 1-10, today I am a .....]

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**7. Discussion Rounds** [What needs to be addressed in the circle? What questions will you ask? How many rounds will you facilitate?]

To consider: Are the questions you are asking high or low risk?

Does the question directly or indirectly address the goal and purpose for the circle?

What are some potential challenges that may surface? How will you handle them?

**8. Reflection/Check out** [What question do you want to present to bring closure to the circle? ex. how are people feeling right now? How did we do following our circle guidelines?, What is one take away you are carrying with you from our circle today?]

**9. Closing** [How will you close the circle, celebrate the participation of the circle members? poem, quote, song, breathing, story...?]

# Responsive Circles

Responsive circles follow the same structure as a community-building circle, with the restorative questions and language introduced during the circle content rounds. Responsive circles addresses incidents or patterns of disruptive behaviors that negatively impact the class learning environment and relationships.

## Format:

1. Introducing the circle
2. Circle opening
3. Reviewing circle guidelines and values
4. Connection/check-in round
5. Content rounds: Sequence of restorative questions to
  - Explore issues (What happened and what everyone was thinking and feeling at the time of the incident and afterwards)
  - Who was affected by what happened and how?
  - What needs to be done to make things right moving forward?
  - How to ensure this doesn't happen again?
6. Reflection
7. Closing of circle

## *Using the Restorative Questions*

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

Restorative conversations follow a set of questions that explores:

- The quality of **relationships**.
- Those **impacted** or **affected** by conflict or wrongdoing.
- Potential resulting **harms**.
- The **needs** of those involved.
- Problem solving solutions to **repair the harm, restore the community, and prevent future harm**.

## **Restorative Questions:**

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

## **Modified Restorative Questions for Elementary School**

1. What happened?
2. I felt .....when this happened.
3. Now I feel.....
4. Who was hurt and how?
5. What is the hardest part for you?
6. What needs to happen now to make things right?

**The restorative questions lay the foundation for and act as the building blocks for all forms of restorative processes that seek to discover the root cause/s of challenging behavior, determine impact, repair harm, and ultimately restore damaged relationships.**

### **Restorative questions:**

- Are non-blaming and open ended
- Allow for storytelling and attentive listening
- Separate people's behavior from their intrinsic worth as a person
- Allow for all people involved to identify their thoughts and feelings associated with particular actions
- Provide a forum for meaningful expression of emotions (affective language)
- Focus on impact and how others (people and community) were affected by the action/s
- Are an inclusive and collaborative approach to problem solving, emphasizing finding solutions rather than assigning blame
- Holds people accountable
- Requires people to take responsibility for their actions
- Attends to the needs of those harmed
- Resolves underlying issues that act as the root cause of challenging behavior.

**Conflict is natural and likely to occur when people with diverse opinions and experiences unite. Restorative practices views conflict as an opportunity to foster meaningful learning experiences and strengthen relationships.**

# Repairing Harm



## ***Repairing Harm Agreements:***

When reaching consensus on agreements/ actions to make things right, ensure that all agreements are SMART

- ***Specific:*** what, where, when, and how
- ***Measureable:*** everyone should know when complete
- ***Attainable:*** all items are realistic and possible
- ***Relevant to the harm and/or root cause***
- ***Time-bound:*** a date when each item will be completed

## ***Apologies:***

Apologies are an important component of the healing process for all individuals involved. If an apology is given or requested, it's important that the person making the apology:

- *Identifies the behavior for which they are apologizing*
- *Acknowledges how it affected others*
- *Expresses heartfelt apology*
- *Makes a commitment to change the behavior so that it does not happen again.*

# Sample Prompting Questions/Topics for Circles

*Please note:* It is always important to carefully select which questions or topics to pose to the group depending on the needs of the group. The health of each member of the circle is always to be strongly considered.

\*Be prepared and know that some of the circle prompts may bring up a lot of emotions for the circle members.

## Getting Acquainted

- Share a happy childhood memory.
- If you could be a superhero, what super powers would you choose and why?
- How would your best friend describe you?
- What would you not want to change about your life?
- If you could talk to someone from your family who is no longer alive, who would it be and why?
- If you had an unexpected free day, what would you like to do?
- If you were an animal, what animal would you be and why?
- Name two things or people who always make you laugh.
- I like to collect....
- If you could have a face to face conversation with anyone, who would it be and why?
- Describe your ideal job.
- Describe your favorite vacation.
- If you could change anything about yourself what would it be?

## Exploring Values

- Imagine you are in conflict with a person who is important in your life. What values do you want to guide your conduct as you try to work out that conflict?
- What is your passion?
- What do you keep returning to in your life?
- What touches your heart?
- What gives you hope?
- What demonstrates respect?
- What change would you like to see in your community? What can you do to promote that change?
- A time when you acted on your core values even though others were not.

## Storytelling from our lives to share who we are and what has shaped us (to build community)

Invite participants to share:

- A time when you were outside of your comfort zone
- An experience in your life 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.

- An experience of causing harm to someone and then dealing with it in a way you felt good about.
- An experience of letting go of anger or resentment.
- A time when you were in conflict with your parents or caregiver.
- An experience where you discovered that someone was very different from the negative assumptions you first made about that person.
- An experience of feeling that you did not fit in.

### **Relating to Curriculum:**

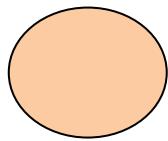
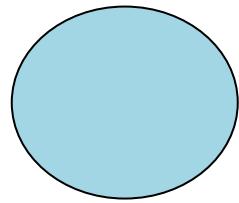
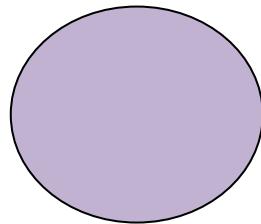
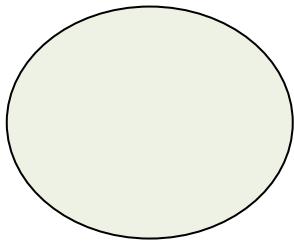
- The best/worst thing about this science project is...
- The main character in the book we are reading is like/not like me when...
- These math problems make me feel...

## **Additional Circle Starters:**

1. I feel happy when...	27. I enjoy learning about...
2. I feel sad when...	28. I laugh at...
3. I feel angry when...	29. The best thing that has happened...
4. I feel scared when...	30. My favorite place is...
5. I feel excited when...	31. If I could travel anywhere, I would go...
6. I feel stressed when...	32. Today I feel...
7. I feel alone when...	33. When I think of blue, I think of...
8. The scariest thing...	34. When I think of red, I think of...
9. My favorite hobby...	35. When I think of green, I think of...
10. My favorite pet...	36. When I think of yellow, I think of...
11. My favorite food is...	37. When I think of black, I think of...
12. My favorite T.V. show is...	38. When I think of brown, I think of...
13. My favorite weekend activity is...	39. When I think of white, I think of...
14. My favorite song is...	40. If I were an animal, I would be...
15. My favorite sport is...	41. If I were a famous actor/actress, I would be ...
16. My favorite color is...	42. If I were a famous athlete, I would be...
17. My favorite weather is...	43. When I graduate from high school, I want to ...
18. Rain makes me feel...	44. When I become an adult, I want to...
19. Wind makes me feel...	45. When I start my career, I want to ...
20. Sunshine makes me feel...	46. I can't wait until...
21. My favorite vacation...	47. Friends are ...
22. One skill or talent I have...	48. Families are...
23. My hero is...	49. Putdowns make me feel...
24. The silliest thing...	50. Appreciations make me feel...
25. My greatest quality is....	
26.	

\*\* Adopted from Kristi Cole and Paul Dedinsky's packet of Restorative Justice Practices, Milwaukee Public Schools. Safe Schools/Healthy Students.

# Circle Video links



## **Kindergarten teacher facilitating community building circle:**

Leonard R. Flynn, San Francisco, CA

<https://vimeo.com/119910230>

## **5<sup>th</sup> grade teacher facilitating community building and end-of-year circle:**

Dianne Feinstein Elementary School, San Francisco

<https://vimeo.com/120055518>

## **High School students facilitating a community building circle in homeroom:**

MetWest High School, Oakland CA

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RdKhcQrLD1w>

## **Responding to classroom homework issue: Ireland**

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vucxpu0\\_zoI&t=327s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vucxpu0_zoI&t=327s)

## **Classroom Fishbowl:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RwxnBv-dNBI>

# Circle Openings and Closing Readings

*Heart of Hope Resource Guide  
Center for Restorative Justice, Suffolk University*

## Take Time

Take time to live-  
It is what life is for;  
Take time for justice-  
It is the beginning of peace;  
Take time to look afresh-  
It will fill you with surprises;  
Take time to search-  
It is the secret of perpetual youth;  
Take time to laugh-  
It is music to the soul;  
Take time for solitude-  
It revives the spirit;  
Take time with the earth-  
It speaks of harmony and balance;  
Take time at home-  
It renews the heart;  
Take time to sow-  
It gives perspective on life;  
Take time to reap-  
It brings gratitude;  
Take time to heal-  
It is full of hope;  
Take time to love-  
It is the reason for living.  
-Unknown Poet

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Hope is a state of mind  
Hope is a state of mind, not of the world or a particular situation  
Hope is a choice we make  
We can keep it alive within us, or we can let it die  
It is a dimension of the soul  
It is an orientation of the heart  
It is a motivation of the spirit  
Hope transcends the world and situations that are immediately experienced  
It is anchored somewhere beyond its horizons  
Hope is deep and powerful in its greatest sense  
It is not the same as joy when things go well and lead to success  
It is the ability to work for something  
Because it good and worthwhile  
Hope is the vitality that keeps life moving  
It is the courage to be  
Hope grows the spirit bigger than the problems we face  
Hope is the quality that helps you go on in spite of it all  
I can light my way with hope through joy and hardship and sorrow  
Embracing both joy and sorrow is to be at peace with life in all its fullness.

-A 13 year old named Carlos De Pina blended this piece from writings of former Czechoslovakia President Vaclav Havel and Martin Luther King

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### **The Concept of Circle in Nature**

Everything the Power of the World does is done in a Circle.

The sky is round, and I have heard  
That the earth is round like a ball, and so are all the stars.  
The wind, in its greatest power, whirls.  
Birds make theirs nests in Circles,  
For theirs is the same religion as ours.  
The sun comes forth and goes down again in a Circle.

The moon does the same, and both are round.  
Even the seasons form a great Circle in their changing,  
And always come back again to where they were.  
The life of person a is Circle from childhood  
And so it is in everything where power moves.

-Black Elk, from Neihardt, Black Elk Speaks, 194-95.

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## Turning to One Another

There is no power greater than a community  
Discovering what it cares about.

Ask, “What’s possible?” not “What’s wrong?”  
Keep asking.

Notice what you care about.

Assume that many others share your dreams.

Be brave enough to start a conversation that matters.

Talk to people you know.

Talk to people you don’t know.

Talk to people you never talk to.

Be intrigued by the differences you hear.

Expect to be surprised.

Treasure curiosity more than certainty.

Invite everybody who cares to work on what’s possible.

Acknowledge that everyone is an expert about something.

Know that creative solutions come from new connections.

Remember, you don’t fear people who story you know.

Real listening always brings people closer together.

Trust that meaningful conversations can change the world.

Rely on human goodness.

Stay together.

- Margaret Wheatley

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## A Wise Women’s Stone

A wise woman who was traveling in the mountains found a precious stone in a stream. The next day she met another traveler who was hungry, and the wise woman opened her bag to share her food. The hungry traveler saw the precious stone and asked the woman to give it to him. She did so without hesitation. The traveler left, rejoicing in his good fortune. He knew the stone was worth enough to give him security for a lifetime. But a few days later he came back to return the stone to the wise woman. “I’ve been thinking,” he said, “I know how valuable the stone is, but I give it back in the hope that you can give me something even more precious.” “Give me what you have within you that enabled you to give me the stone.”

-Unknown

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## Circle Poem

*People in a circle  
Share stories, values, dreams  
Create a unity  
Of life ongoing  
Universal wisdom  
Wedded with hope  
Of world renewed  
And no one left out*

-William Tweed Kennedy

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Listening with your heart invites you to stay open to another even if their feelings are much different from yours, even if the expression of those feelings is stronger than you expect. In doing so, your heart will lead you to encounters with your own wholeness too.

You cannot separate the one from the other.

-James E. Miller, The Art of Listening in a Healing Way, 41.

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## The entire ocean in a drop

You are not a drop in the ocean.  
You are the entire ocean,  
In a drop.

-Rumi

# Circle Closing Suggestions

Some Suggestions As How To Close A Circle Include, But Are Not Limited To:

## 1. Three Reflective Words (This can also be used to open a circle)

The Three Reflective Words technique asks participants to reflect on the Circle by sharing three words that express their thoughts about the Circle that just completed. This technique is particularly effective for large groups and when there is limited time.

## 2. Deep Breathing

Deep Breathing is one of the best ways to lower stress in the body. This is because when you breathe deeply it sends a message to your brain to calm down and relax. The brain then sends this message to your body. Those things that happen when you are stressed, such as increased heart rate, fast breathing, and high blood pressure, all decrease as you breathe deeply to relax.<sup>1</sup> For Circles that may be tense such as a Repairing Harm Circle, this is also a possible way to open the Circle. Participants can sit with their eyes either open or closed for a few minutes breathing deeply or sighing before beginning.

## 3. The Relaxing Sigh" Breathing Technique

Sighing and yawning during the day are signs that the body is not getting enough oxygen. A sigh releases a bit of tension and can be practiced at will as a means of relaxing.

1. Sit or stand up straight.
2. Sigh deeply, letting out a sound of deep relief as the air rushes out of your lungs.
3. Let new air come in naturally.
4. Repeat this procedure eight to twelve times whenever you feel the need for it, and experience the feeling of relaxation.

(USF College of Education)

## 4. State a Color (This can also be used to open a circle)

Stating a Color to reflect how a participant is feeling is a great indicator for the facilitator to gage both how the Circle went and get a sense of how participants are feeling in preparation for the next Circle.

## 5. State a Positive Hope and/or Expectation for the Next Circle

The technique of Stating a Positive Hope and/or Expectation for the Next Circle begins building momentum and anticipation for the next Circle. While it does not necessarily offer "closure" in the traditional sense, it lends itself to the anticipation of the next Circle by already creating both a positive and hopeful expectation for future Circle outcomes.

## 6. The Kinesthetic Close

The Kinesthetic Close works most effectively when there is a Kinesthetic opening. This technique involves the creation, any creation, of connecting to others in the Circle by some form of touch of the person to either the right or the left of you. For example, clapping your hands together and then uttering "whoosh" is a way to

either open or close a Circle. The first person then designates that the person either to their right or the left goes next. A group of kindergarteners created their version of closing a Circle by clapping three times, then putting palms together with the person next to them, then moving their body in a side to side shoulder motion. A bumping of elbows, a smile and a nod, anything is acceptable as a Kinesthetic Close for a Circle. This technique is one that is created on the spot by one of the participants, not the facilitator. This technique is more “fun” in nature so you will have to use your discretion to determine its level of appropriateness based on the topic and level of intensity of your Circle.

## **7. The Honest Reflection**

The Honest Reflection method to close a Circle allows for an honest and authentic verbal assessment from participants in the Circle. Each person in the Circle gives a sentence or two of feedback about the themes that surfaced during the Circle. This approach may be higher on the risk Geiger scale, as it cannot be predicted how participants will respond, but it is precisely because of the higher risk factor that, in the long run, participants come to know and expect that the facilitator is open to hearing the true thoughts and comments of the participants paving the way for honestly both after the Circle and for the future conversations.

## **8. Best Practices**

The Best Practices closing approach is a low-risk way to determine participants' thoughts after a Circle. The posed question, “What did you like best about today's Circle?” This question guides participants to focus on that which was specifically positive and redeeming about the Circle by encouraging positive feedback, a wonderful contagion.

## **9. Weather Report (This can also be used to open a circle)**

The Weather Report allows the facilitator to get a pulse of how participants are feeling by using the analogy of a weather report. For example, a participant might share that at the close of the Circle, their weather report is sun-shiny, while another might indicate that their weather report is overcast with a chance of rain. Of course there is no one or correct response, rather an opportunity for participants to honestly express how they are feeling. The purpose is to assess the emotional status of the participants.

## **10. A Personal Thought**

A Personal Thought closing allows participants to express a couple of sentences that reflect their feelings about what surfaced while listening to the other members of the group that surfaced during the Circle.

## **11. Holding Hands (This can also be used to open a circle)**

The Holding Hands closing technique is a simple way for the group to connect and acknowledge the experience of the Circle. This can be done either by everyone

joining hands at the same time, or, one person reaching out to her neighbor, then the next person, and so on until all hands are connected.

**12. Silence (This can also be used to open a circle)**

Everyone in the group holds a moment of silence and reflects silently on the process of the Circle, or holds a moment of silence to hold others in regard, or to silently acknowledge others.

**13. Acknowledgment / Appreciation (This can also be used to open a circle)**

The closing process of Acknowledgement / Appreciation provides the opportunity for each participant to make a statement of acknowledgment or appreciation for something someone else in the group shared during the Circle.

**14. Snapshot**

The use of the Snapshot method to close a Circle allows participants to capture one moment, the essence of a powerful statement or idea that was shared during the Circle as a reflection, a synthesizing idea.

## Additional Resources

For additional information videos and resource materials, visit San Francisco Unified School District Restorative Practices Website at:  
[www.healthiersf.org/restorativepractices/](http://www.healthiersf.org/restorativepractices/)

### Restorative Practice In Schools: Resource List

#### Restorative Practice in Schools

*Building and Restoring Respectful Relationships in Schools: A Guide to Restorative Practice*  
(2009) Richard Hendry. Routledge, London ISBN-10: 0415544270.

*Restorative Solutions: Making it Work* (2008) Colin Newton and Helen Mahaffey. Inclusive Solutions UK Limited ISBN-10: 0954635140.

*Restorative Practices in Classrooms: Rethinking Behaviour Management* (2004) Margaret Thorsborne & David Vinegrad. Incentive Publishing, Milton Keynes. ISBN: 1904407056.

*Just Schools: A Whole School Approach To Restorative Justice* (2004) Belinda Hopkins. Jessica Kingsley Publishers. ISBN: 1843101327.

*The Little Book of Restorative Justice* (2002) Howard Zehr. Good Books. Intercourse PA. ISBN: 1561483761  
*“The Restorative Classroom: Using Restorative Approaches to Foster Effective Learning”* (2011) Belinda Hopkins, Optimus Education, ISBN-10: 1906517290 ISBN-13: 978-1906517298.

#### Online Resources

Minnesota Department of Education, <http://education.state.mn.us>. Click on “Safe and Healthy Learners.

Discipline that Restores <http://disciplinethatrestores.org/> is an activity of the Fresno Pacific University

Center for Peacemaking and Conflict Studies (<http://peace.fresno.edu/rjp/>) that explores restorative discipline in schools.

Center for Justice and Peacebuilding [www.emu.edu/cjp/](http://www.emu.edu/cjp/) was established in 1994 at Eastern Mennonite University, and supports the personal and professional development of individuals as peace builders and strengthens the peace building capacities of the institutions they serve.

The Centre for Restorative Justice at Simon Fraser University, <http://www.sfu.ca/cfrj/>, has made significant contributions to the paradigm of restorative justice over the last decade.

Barron County (WI) Restorative Justice Programs, Inc. [http://www.bcrjp.org/school\\_init.html](http://www.bcrjp.org/school_init.html), Click on ‘Practices in School Communities.’

#### Books

*Circle in the Square: Building Community and Repairing Harm in Schools*, Nancy Riestenberg, Living Justice Press, 2012; [www.livingjusticepress.org](http://www.livingjusticepress.org).

*Discipline that Restores*, Ron & Roxanne Claassen, BookSurge Publishing, South Carolina, 2008;

(<http://disciplinethatrestores.org/> ) comes with a Book Study Guide. Contact Ron Claassen, Fresno Pacific University, Director, Center for Peacemaking and Conflict Studies, 559-453-3420, [rlclaass@fresno.edu](mailto:rlclaass@fresno.edu), [www.peace.fresno.edu/](http://www.peace.fresno.edu/).

*Heart of Hope: a guide for using peacemaking circle to develop emotional literacy, promote healing & build healthy relationships* Carolyn Boyes-Watson & Kay Pranis, Center for Restorative Justice, Suffolk University, 2010, <http://www.suffolk.edu/college/1496.html>.

International Institute on Restorative Practices (IIRP), <http://www.restorativepractices.org/> titles include: *Restorative Circles in Schools*, *The Restorative Practices Handbook*, *Beyond Zero Tolerance*, *Safer, Saner Schools* and *The Transformation of West Philadelphia High School*.

*Just Schools: A whole school approach to restorative justice*, Belinda Hopkins, Jessica Kingsley, Publishers, 2004, <http://www.transformingconflict.org/resources.html>.

*Little Books of Restorative Justice and Peacemaking Series*, Kay Pranis, Lorraine Stutzman Amstutz, Judy H. Mullet, Howard Zehr and others Good Books, Intercourse, PA [www.goodbks.com](http://www.goodbks.com)

*Peacemaking Circles, From Crime to Community*, Pranis, Stewart and Wedge, and *Peacemaking Circles and Urban Youth*, Watson, Living Justice Press, 2003; [www.livingjusticepress.org](http://www.livingjusticepress.org)

*Re-engaging Disconnected Youth: transformative learning through restorative and social justice education*, Amy Vatne Bintliff, Peter Lang Publishing; 2011.  
[http://amyvatnebintliff.com/Amy\\_Vatne\\_Bintliff/Home.html](http://amyvatnebintliff.com/Amy_Vatne_Bintliff/Home.html)

*Restorative Justice Pocketbook: how to resolve disciplinary matters by enabling those involved to repair the harm done to people and relationships*, by Thorsborne and Vinegrad [www.teacherspocketbook.co.uk](http://www.teacherspocketbook.co.uk) .

*Restorative Practices in Schools: rethinking behavior management*, and *Restorative Practices and Bullying: rethinking behavior management*, Thorsborne and Vinegrad, <http://www.thorsborne.com.au/> click on "Resources, Training manuals."

*Restoring Safe School Communities: a whole school response to bullying violence and alienation*, Brenda Morrison, Federation Press, 2007, [www.federationpress.com.au](http://www.federationpress.com.au).

*Taking Restorative Justice to Schools; A Doorway to Discipline*, Jeanette Holtham (2010).  
<http://www.amazon.com/Restorative-Justice-Schools-Doorway-Discipline/dp/0982270615> Youth Transformation Center [www.YouthTransformationCenter.org](http://www.YouthTransformationCenter.org) 9979 Blackbird Circle, Highlands Ranch, CO 80130.

*Touching Spirit Bear, (fiction)* Ben Mikaelson, 2002, <http://www.benmikaelson.com/index.html>

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