



Restorative Practices: A Toolkit for Educators

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INTRODUCTION TO THE TOOLKIT

“Human beings are happier, more cooperative and productive, and more likely to make positive changes in their behavior when those in positions of authority do things WITH them, rather than to them or for them.”

– Ted Watchel

The Fundamental Hypothesis The Restorative Practices Handbook, page 1

Students’ social and emotional health and well-being have been at the forefront of district and countywide school improvement efforts in the past few years. As districts across the country deliberately move away from ineffective zero-tolerance discipline policies, a considerable shift has been made to strengthen safe and supportive schools, improve school climate, address conflict, and create positive school culture. This shift has given rise to the implementation of restorative practices.

This toolkit has been designed as a resource for educators and school staff to support schoolwide efforts in implementing restorative practices. The resources in this toolkit will describe how restorative practices can be implemented in classrooms and across the school and provide examples of the impact restorative practices have had in schools across the state and nation. In addition, the toolkit provides a framework for successful restorative practices and models of tiered supports and activities and can be used as an introduction for educators exploring restorative practices and support the work of teachers already implementing restorative practices in their classrooms.



BACKGROUND OF RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

Historical Overview of Restorative Justice

Restorative Justice rose as an alternative to approaches to the court process, such as alternative dispute resolution in the 1970s. Along with the victim's rights movement, restorative justice called for greater involvement of crime victims in the criminal justice process and the use of restitution as compensation for losses. A 1974 case in Kitchener, Ontario is considered as the start of the modern restorative justice movement that we know of today. However, restorative justice practices have its precedents and roots in the ancient traditions of indigenous peoples around the world. In these indigenous communities, justice processes reflect the understanding that crime and other acts of wrongdoing do not just violate laws, but most importantly cause harm to people, communities, and relationships.

Goals of Restorative Justice

Restorative justice programs aim to:

1. Put key decisions into the hands of those most harmed by crime.
2. Make justice more healing and ideally more transformative.
3. Reduce the likelihood of future offenses.

Achieving these goals require that:

1. Those harmed are involved in the process and come out of it satisfied.
2. Persons causing harm understand how their actions have affected other people and take responsibility for those actions.
3. Outcomes help repair the harms done and address the reasons for the offense (specific plans tailored to the needs of those harmed and the person causing harm.
4. Person harmed and person causing harm both gain a sense of "closure" and both are reintegrated into the community.

(Little Book of Restorative Justice, page 40)

Guiding Questions for Restorative Justice

The essence of restorative justice comes down to a set of questions which we need to ask when a wrong occurs:

1. Who has been hurt?
2. What are their needs?
3. Whose obligations are these?
4. Who has a stake in this situation?
5. What is the appropriate process to involve stakeholders in an effort to put things right?

(Little Book of Restorative Justice, page 41)

Restorative Justice Resources:

- [Restorative Justice – What It Is and What It Is Not](#)
- [Defining Restorative](#)

OVERVIEW OF RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

What are Restorative Practices?

- Restorative practices are processes that proactively build healthy relationships and a sense of community to prevent and address conflict and wrongdoing.
- In recent years, restorative practices have been adapted in schools as a way to improve school climate and culture by addressing youth behavior and improving relationships between students, teachers, and staff.
- Restorative practices complement other school-wide programs such as Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) and social emotional learning models.
- Holding individuals accountable and repairing harm and restoring positive relationships is the cornerstone of restorative practices.



Restorative Principles

The primary belief of restorative practices is that people are worthy and relational, and that relationships must be built, maintained and repaired.

- **Respect** – among all participants in a restorative justice process.
- **Inclusiveness** – consensus and full participation of those affected by the incident.
- **Accountability** – the person responsible for the harm, takes responsibility for his/her harmful behavior.
- **Reparation** – restorative consequences that repair the harm, determined through consensus.
- **Restoration** – through this process, the needs of the person responsible for the harm and the community are addressed.

(http://www.restorativeschoolstoolkit.org/sites/default/files/Restorative-Justice-booklet-Web-version_0.pdf, page 2)



OVERVIEW OF RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

Traditional Discipline Approach vs Restorative Practices

Traditional Approach	Restorative Approach
School rules are broken.	People and relationships are harmed.
Justice focuses on establishing guilt.	Justice identifies needs and responsibilities.
Accountability = punishment	Accountability = understanding impact and repairing harm.
Justice directed at the person causing harm, the person harmed is ignored.	Person causing harm, person harmed, and school all have direct roles in the justice process.
Rules and content outweigh whether the outcome is positive or negative.	Person causing harm is responsible for harmful behavior, repairing harm, and working towards positive outcomes.
Limited opportunity for expressing remorse or making amends.	Opportunity given to make amends and express remorse.

(http://www.fixschooldiscipline.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/FSD_EducatorToolkit_small.pdf, page 14)

Elements of Successful Restorative Practices

The core belief of Restorative Practices is that people will make positive changes when those in positions of authority do things with them rather than to or for them. A successful restorative system therefore:

- Acknowledges that relationships are central to building community
- Engages in collaborative problem solving
- Builds systems that address misbehavior and harm in a way that strengthens relationships
- Focuses on the harm done rather than only on rule breaking
- Gives voice to the person harmed
- Empowers change and growth
- Enhances responsibility

(http://www.fixschooldiscipline.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/FSD_EducatorToolkit_small.pdf, page 13)

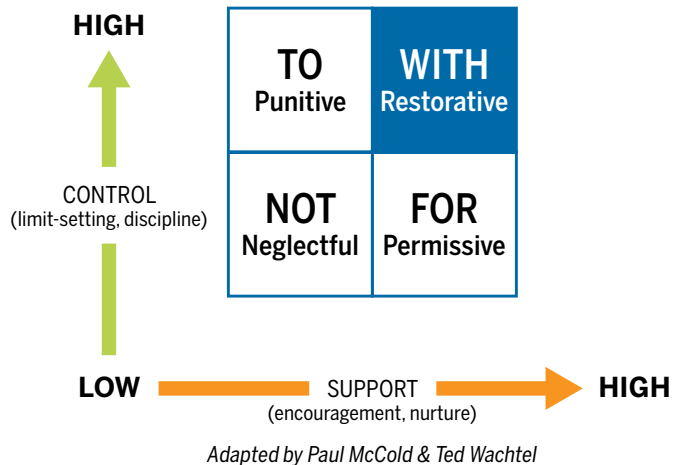
OVERVIEW OF RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

Restorative Practices Framework

There are key concepts that collectively create a framework for understanding and explaining restorative practices. Those concepts include the Social Discipline Window, Restorative Justice Typology, the Compass of Shame, Fair Process and Affect. This section provides an understanding of each of these concepts.

■ Social Discipline Window

The Social Discipline Window has broad implications in a variety of settings but ultimately serves as a model for restorative practitioners. The fundamental unifying hypothesis of restorative practices is that “human beings are happier, more cooperative and productive, and more likely to make positive changes in their behavior when those in positions of authority do things with them, rather than to them or for them.” This hypothesis maintains that the punitive and authoritarian to mode and the permissive and paternalistic for mode are not as effective as the restorative, participatory, engaging with mode (Wachtel, 2005).



THE SOCIAL DISCIPLINE WINDOW

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE TYPOLOGY

Types & Degrees of Restorative Justice Practice



■ Restorative Justice Typology

Restorative justice engages three primary stakeholders in ascertaining the best strategy for repairing harm. According to Wachtel (2016) the three parties involved in the reparation conversation include, the victim, the offender, and their communities of care. Dialogue and action between parties is designed to elicit the ownership of responsibility and reconciliation by purposefully addressing emotional needs. To actualize a truly restorative process all three stakeholders must be involved. When one or more parties are left out of the process the practice will not fully rectify what has transpired.

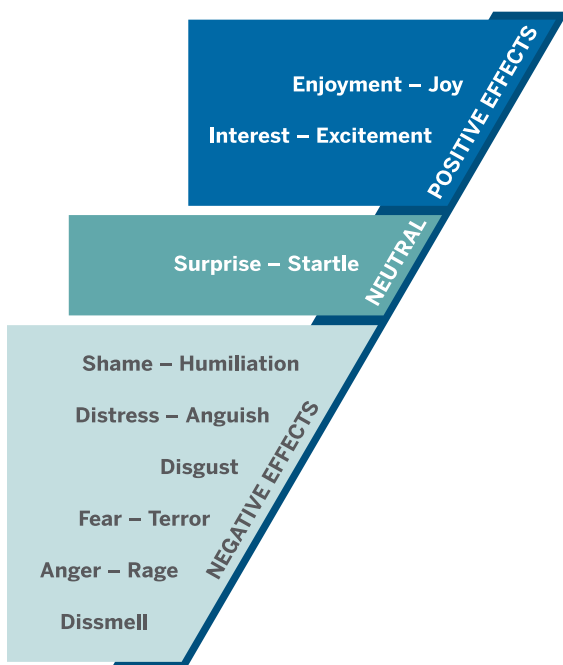
OVERVIEW OF RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

■ Nine Effects

Integral to restorative practices is the formation of relationships and restoration of bonds when harm has been enacted. A critical component to healthy human interaction is the freedom to display affect also known as emotion. Silvan S. Tompkins (1962, 1963, 1991) indicates that humans desire to maximize positive affective exchanges while minimizing negative emotional experiences, and simultaneously maintaining the ability to experience all affects. Tompkins identified nine unique affect word pairs describing mild to intense displays of human emotion. The six negative affects are comprised of anger-rage, fear-terror, distress-anguish, disgust-dismell (rejection), and finally shame-humiliation. In the neutral position on the continuum lies surprise-startle, while positive affects introduce interest-excitement and enjoyment-joy. Building community with intention can create emotional ties which bind people together, restorative practices are an ideal catalyst for relational capacity to be built and maintained. The interpersonal environment, with restorative practices, can elicit the healthiest setting where freedom of expression is present, positive affects are enhanced while negative affects are minimized (Wachtel, 1999).

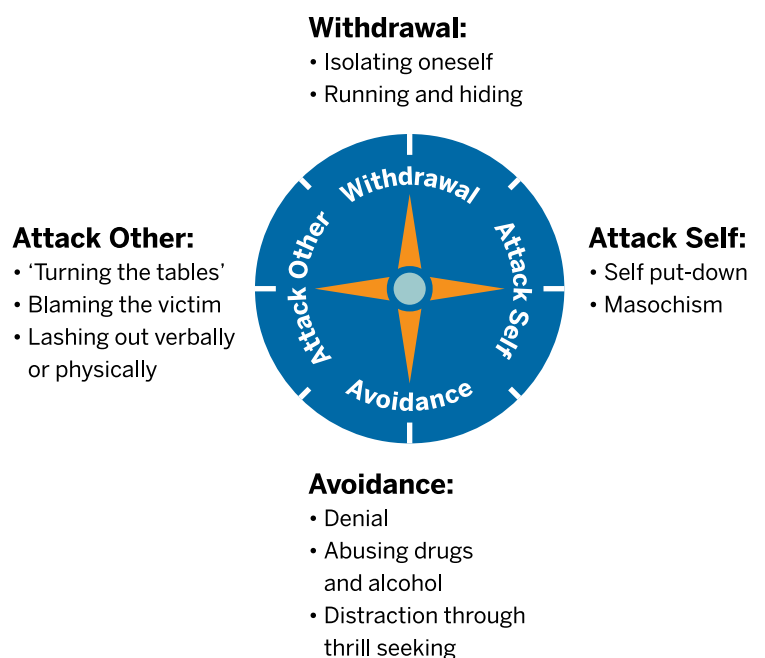
THE NINE EFFECTS

(Adapted from Tompkins, 1962, 1963, 1991)



THE COMPASS OF SHAME

(Adapted from D.L. Nathanson, Shame and Pride, 1992))



OVERVIEW OF RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

■ Compass of Shame

Shame has historically been a crucial conductor of social behavior. In order to visualize how shame can impact people, the Compass of Shame, was designed to illustrate human response to feelings of shame and the accompanying behaviors.

The four poles of the compass depict:

- **Withdrawal:** Isolating oneself, running and hiding
- **Attack self:** Self put-down, masochism
- **Avoidance:** Denial, abusing drugs, distraction through thrill seeking
- **Attack others:** Turning the tables, lashing out verbally or physically, blaming others

Important to understanding the human response to shame is that a person does not need to engage in a negative behavior to experience feelings of shame (Nathanson, 1997). While the feelings of shame are profound, restorative practices introduce an ideal vehicle to nullify shame's impact through examination and the expression of emotions. (Wachtel, 2016)

■ Fair Process

Fair process refers to the ways leaders demonstrate their authority and determine their actions (wachtel, 2016). These processes correlate to the “with” domain of the Social Discipline Window. Actions that engage all parties in the three principles of fair process are more likely to evoke positive changes to behavior, happier and more cooperative individuals because these actions are done with them as opposed to for them and or to them.

The three principles of fair process include:

- **Engagement:** Including individuals in decisions that impact them by listening to their views and genuinely taking their opinions into account.
- **Explanation:** Explaining the reasoning behind decision making to everyone that has been involved or affected by it.
- **Expectation clarity:** Making sure that everyone clearly understands a decision and what is expected of them in the future.



RESTORATIVE PRACTICES IN SCHOOLS

The need for innovative school discipline strategies

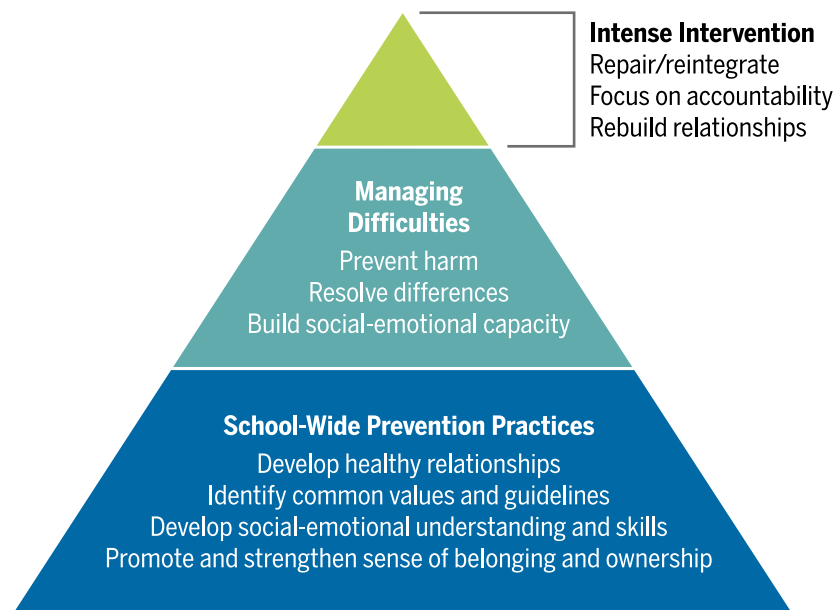
In the past decade, there has been mounting evidence showing the adverse effects of punitive and exclusionary discipline practices on school-aged youth. While the goal of Zero Tolerance discipline policies have always been to improve school safety and create a positive school climate, there have been many unintentional effects. These punitive and exclusionary practices are widely associated with increases in problem behavior, a decrease in students' sense of wellbeing, emotional safety and academic achievement, as well as a deterioration in relationships with adults. Furthermore, these practices have been shown to disproportionately impact students of color, English Language Learners, and youth with disabilities.

In response to the evidence of adverse effects of punitive and exclusionary discipline practices, researchers and practitioners developed innovative school discipline strategies that were different from the traditional concepts of discipline. The focus of discipline strategies shifted to community building and developing positive and trusting relationships among students, teachers, administrators, and caregivers. The hallmark of these strategies include explicit teaching of expected behaviors, noticing and encouraging students who follow them, and addressing the root causes of misbehavior by providing opportunities for feedback and pro-social skill building.

Restorative Practices – Whole School Approach

At its core restorative practices are all about community building and developing trusting and lasting connections among all stakeholders. When a whole school is infused with restorative principles, it becomes easier to create a positive, supportive, and caring culture. Brenda Morrison (2005) made use of a pyramid to illustrate how restorative practices can be applied- from prevention to intense intervention. The main concept is to address preventive issues at the base, manage difficulties at the second tier, and the fewer intensive interventions at the top tier.

(https://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/D2_Restorative-Justice-Paper_Alfred.pdf, page 10)



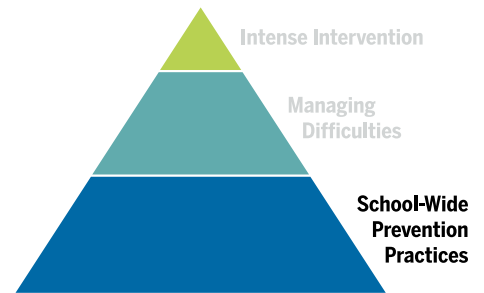
RESTORATIVE PRACTICES IN SCHOOLS



School-wide prevention practice

Setting a school climate that allows for the development of positive and healthy relationships, developing social-emotional understanding and skills, identifying common values, and promoting a sense of belonging in the school community; is the primary goal of a school-wide prevention practice. This prevention practice allows schools to resolve issues before they evolve into real problems. The skills developed at the base of the pyramid can be used when conflict first appears. Allowing groups to explore and understand their shared values fosters the development of deeper relationships between teachers/staff and students, and among students themselves.

SCHOOL-WIDE PREVENTION PRACTICES



Activities:

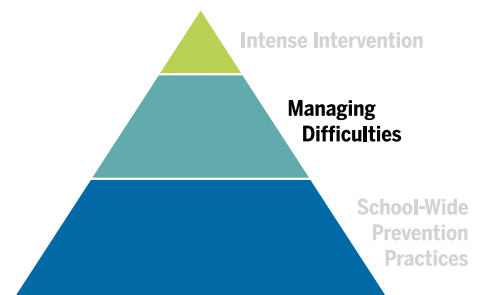
- **Relational Practices:** working to understand how individuals in the classroom or school community relate to one another.
- **Circles:** coming together to facilitate student and teacher connectivity.
- **Routines:** creating classroom values such as Classroom Constitutions, adhering to them, discussing them, and questioning them.

(https://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/D2_Restorative-Justice-Paper_Alfred.pdf, page 11)

Managing Difficulties

In the second tier of the restorative approach pyramid, behavior concerns provide students with teachable moments. Managing difficulties should start by responding to these behavioral situations with restorative intention by setting the tone and providing the student with the opportunity to take responsibility, by answering questions that provide support. Asking the student to answer restorative questions allows the youth to understand a harm or potential harm and facilitates self-discipline.

MANAGING DIFFICULTIES



Activities:

- **Problem-Solving Circles:** making space in the classroom to resolve conflict and solve problems.
- **Restorative Conversation:** having informal conversations using restorative dialogue to repair or prevent harm.
- **Hallway Conferences:** using quick conversations to understand how people were affected and take steps to prevent harm.
- **Restorative Conference:** meeting formally to prevent harm, enable people to resolve differences, and build social-emotional capacity through empathy.
- **Peer Mediation:** using a peer mediator to help resolve conflict before it becomes harmful.

(https://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/D2_Restorative-Justice-Paper_Alfred.pdf, page 12)

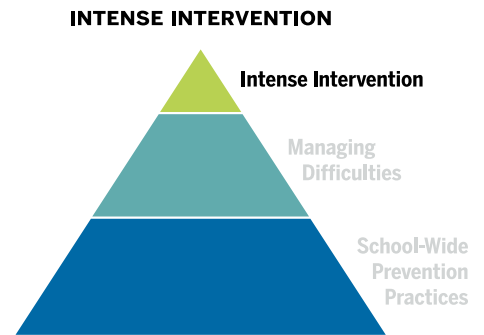


RESTORATIVE PRACTICES IN SCHOOLS

Intense Intervention

The goal of intense intervention is to rebuild relationships and repair harm. This tier focuses on facilitated dialogue with those affected to determine what the harm was, what needs have arisen in its wake, and who has the responsibility to address those needs.

Discipline concerns under intense intervention often involve people who were directly harmed. Involved stakeholders which include classmates, teachers, administrators, and caregivers, are provided an opportunity to participate in making a plan to repair the harm to the degree possible.



Activities:

- **Intervention Circles:** making space in the classroom to resolve conflict and solve problems at the intense intervention level
- **Peer Juries:** designating youth judge, jury, prosecutor, and defense attorneys.
- **Restorative Conferencing:** meeting formally with those involved to repair harm, enable resolution of differences, and build social-emotional capacity through empathy.

(https://www.courts.ca.gov/documents/D2_Restorative-Justice-Paper_Alfred.pdf, pages 13-14)

Restorative Practices in California Schools

- [Oakland Unified School District](#)
- [Los Angeles Unified School District](#)
- [Santa Ana Unified School District](#)



RESTORATIVE PRACTICES CONTINUUM

The goal of Restorative Practices is to build community and manage conflict by repairing harm and building and strengthening relationships. Eighty percent of restorative practices within schools should be focused on building relationships and strengthening connections between students, teachers, and school staff. When these practices that focus on relationship building are implemented with fidelity, twenty percent of the school's efforts will be concentrated on activities that are designed to repair harm.

Restorative practices are not limited to formal processes but range from informal to formal. On a restorative practices continuum, schools may choose to implement informal restorative practices such as affective statements, affective questions, impromptu restorative conferences. More structured and formal restorative processes include group circles and formal conferences. These more formal restorative processes involve more stakeholders/participants, require more planning and time, and are more structured and complete. Informal processes are more proactive, are less structured and simpler, but have a cumulative impact because they are a part of the everyday routine in schools. More formal and structured practices on the other hand are more reactive and often have more dramatic impact, but is typically more appropriate for repairing harm and restoring relationships.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES CONTINUUM

Informal, Proactive

Less time & structure, higher frequency

Formal, Response

More time, planning & structure



Relational Positive Behavior Support	Affective Statements	Restorative Questions	Impromptu Conferences	Class Circles	Re-entry Circles	Restorative Conferences
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Exploring the Restorative Practices Continuum

■ Relational Positive Behavior Support

When teachers establish relationships with all their students, they are more likely to learn and engage in positive behaviors. These daily practices intentionally imbedded in the class routine, concentrate more attention and emotional intensity in acknowledging what students are doing right and less attention to reprimanding negative behavior. Focus is also given to consistent modeling of desired behaviors across the school community.

- **Activities include:** [Welcoming students with a smile each morning](#), [making connections at the door and greeting by name daily](#), [acknowledging students for following expectations in the classroom](#)

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES CONTINUUM

■ Affective Statements

Affective statements are non judgemental personal expressions of feelings in response to others' behaviors. Affective statements can be used at any time and when implemented with fidelity, can reinforce positive actions and explain feelings without assigning blame or shame.

- **Resources on Affective Statements:** [How to use affective statements](#), [Affective statements in restorative practices](#), [Affective statement stems](#), [Positive Discipline Feeling Faces](#), [How are you feeling? \(early childhood\)](#)

■ Restorative Questions

Restorative questions are a tool to process an incident of wrongdoing or conflict. While restorative questions fall on the informal side of the restorative practice continuum, it is central to all of the restorative processes. Restorative questions are also known as affective questions, and allow students the opportunity to reflect on the impact of their behavior on others and the nurture empathy towards those who are affected. Those who are harmed are also provided the opportunity to be heard and all stakeholders have a part in developing the solution.

- **Resources on Restorative/Affective Questions:** [RP Affective Questions for Impromptu Conferences](#), [Affective Statements and Restorative Questions](#), [Time to Think: Using Restorative Questions](#), [Affective Language: restorative Questions](#), [Affective Statements](#)

■ Impromptu Conferences

Impromptu conferences make use of affective questions and are most effective when used for immediate issues to solve a problem within a short period of time, allowing the student to return the students to the classroom. Short impromptu conferences can solve minor problems in the classroom, playground, cafeteria, hallways, and even during school trips.

- **Resources on Impromptu Conferences:** [Small Impromptu Conferences](#), [Restorative Practices: Impromptu Meeting \(Video\)](#)

RESTORATIVE QUESTIONS

- Can you explain what happened?
- How did it happen?
- What was the harm?
- Who do you think was affected?
- How were you affected?
- How were they affected?
- How do you feel about what happened?
- What needs to happen to make things right?
- How are you doing now in relation to the event and its consequences?
- What were you looking for when you chose to act?
- What would you like to offer and to whom?



RESTORATIVE PRACTICES CONTINUUM

■ Class Circles

The circle is a powerful symbol of community, belonging, and acceptance. In the context of Restorative Practices, circles are used for proactive and preventive as well as restorative and reparative processes. Circles can be used by both students and school staff for a variety of purposes including building community, addressing issues, and taking action. The circle process encourages students to take responsibility for their actions and learn how to cooperate and support others.

- **Resources on Restorative Circles:** [Circles as a Restorative Practice](#), [Restorative Justice in Oakland Schools: Tier 1 Community Building Circles](#), [Using Dialogue Circles to Support Classroom Management](#), [Restorative Problem Solving Circle in School](#), [Community Circles - Leading Legacy, Manual: Teaching Restorative Practices Using Classroom Circles](#)

■ Re-entry Circle/Restorative Welcome

A re-entry circle or restorative welcome is a formal process of welcoming youth returning from secure setting, long-term suspension or expulsion, or extended absence. This circle is important in re-engaging the student who has hopefully had time to reflect on the incident and focus on what needs to be done moving forward.

- **Resources for Re-entry Circles:** [Restorative Welcome and Re-entry](#), [Re-entry Circles Script](#), [Restorative Conference and Re-entry Circles](#)

■ Restorative Conferences

A restorative conference can be used in the place of traditional disciplinary processes. As a structured meeting between the person causing harm, the person harmed, and other stakeholders, restorative conferences provide a venue for all those affected by the incident to deal with the consequences of the wrongdoing and make decisions on how to repair the harm caused, without shame. This process is designed to be victim sensitive and straightforward problem solving method that illustrates how community members can work towards the resolution of their conflicts when given the constructive forum to do so.

- **Resources for Restorative Conferences:** [Restorative Conferences](#), [Defining Restorative](#), [Restorative Conferencing: A Guide](#), [What Does Real Accountability Look Like](#)

RESOURCES

	Data Source	Description
Media Article	KCET (Public Media Group of Southern California)	Circles: Healing Through Restorative Justice
Manual/Guide	San Francisco Unified School District	Circles Overview
Manual/Guide	Center for Restorative Process	Teaching Restorative Practices Using Classroom Circles
Manual/Guide	School Health Services Coalition - Alameda County Health Care Services Agency	Restorative Justice: A Working Guide For Our Schools
Guide	International Institute for Restorative Practices	Defining Restorative
Guide	Schott Foundation for Public Education	Restorative Practices: Fostering Healthy Relationships & Promoting Positive Discipline in Schools- A Guide For Educators
Guide	Orange County Department of Education Center for Healthy Kids and Schools	The Continuum of Restorative Practices
Protocol	Alameda County Office of Education	Restorative Justice Virtual Discussion Protocol
Video	Katy Independent School District	Community Circles- Leading Legacy
Video	EdSource	Restorative Justice at Oakland's Fremont High
Video	Alameda County Office of Education	Restorative Justice in Oakland Schools: Tier One. Community Building Circle
Professional Journal Article	Principal Leadership	Restoring Community and Trust
Website	Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth	RJOY
Website	International Institute for Restorative Practices	IIRP