

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

INFORMATION

Restorative Practice is not new, many schools have been using it for over 20 years. Restorative practices are a campus-wide approach that prioritizes relationships, builds community, holds communities accountable and creates a just and equitable learning environment. In addition, these practices represent a mindset that can help guide adult and youth behavior and strengthening relationships in schools. Restorative practices creates a campus environment where students, families, and staff work together to build trusting relationships, identity-safe spaces, and a sense of belonging and connection to the school community.

How are we using Restorative Practices?

- **Community Building Circles:** These circles are done weekly with the purpose of building relationships between students and teachers, as well as building a culture of respect, mutual support and inclusion.
- **Restorative Impromptu Conversations:** Brief one-on-one conversations for relationship building, academics, and preventing/addressing minor conflict. Short 3-5 minute conferences where a teacher checks in quickly with a student. These conferences are done with privacy away from the rest of the students and can be used for relationship building, academic understanding, and proactively preventing or addressing conflict.
- **Restorative Circles:** These are facilitated meetings involving a student (or multiple students) and a teacher (or multiple teachers) to discuss challenges going on and to work together to develop a restorative plan to address concerns or challenges.
- **Conflict Circles:** These are facilitated meetings involving a student or multiple students, parents and school staff in response to some sort of act of harm in order to work together to develop a restorative plan to make the situation better.
- **Formal Support Circles:** These circles are facilitated in order to provide a space for adult supporters, family members, teachers and school staff to come together with the student to discuss strengths, challenges and a plan of support and accountability. This process is used for students who have been suspended from their school community, expelled or incarcerated, or have been out of school for a long period of time.

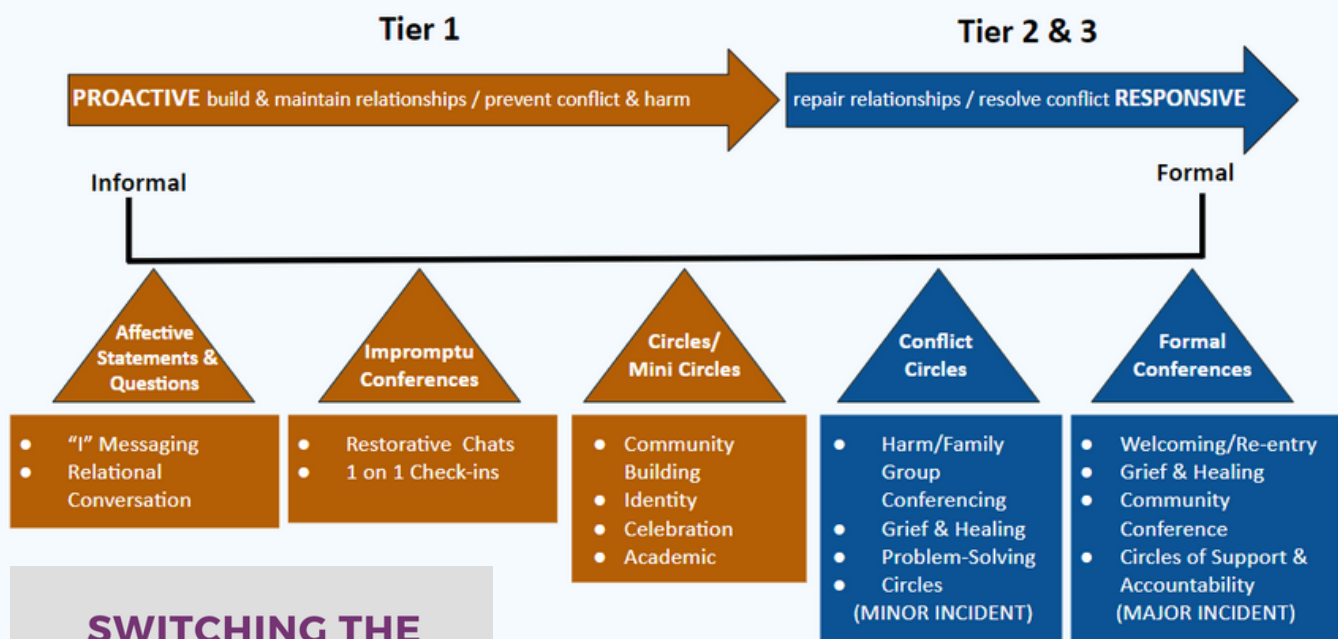
What are Circles?

Circles are spaces for intentional communication to establish values, share experiences, and build relationships with people sharing a collaborative space. The dialogue in circles is lead by a trained circle facilitator and facilitated by a talking piece. The piece is passed around the circle in order, from one person to the next. The person who is holding it is invited to speak or pass. Everyone else in the circle practices active listening, knowing that their turn will come when the talking piece comes around.



MORE ABOUT RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

Restorative Practices improves behavior and relationships by moving away from shame, blame and retribution when dealing with challenging behavior towards social responsibility and self-awareness. These practices empower people to take responsibility in solving problems and promoting healthy relationship building. Below are the "practices" and strategies of the restorative continuum that we use for implementation. "Switching the Discipline Mindset" reviews how shifting the "discipline mindset" of our schools, which are can be punitive in nature, to a more restorative mindset, Schools can grow to view "discipline" differently, and therefore, support our students in a more holistic manner.



SWITCHING THE DISCIPLINE MINDSET

APPROACHING DISCIPLINE WITH A RESTORATIVE MINDSET

Punitive Discipline	→	Restorative Discipline
Fear Teachers command respect through warnings and threats.	→	Respect Teachers gain respect by modeling it for their students.
Rules Teachers enforce rules to keep students quiet and working.	→	Engagement Classes are engaging so students want to work. Conversations is allowed.
Control Teachers tell students when they're doing something wrong.	→	Support Students reflect on their behavior and consider changes they can make.
Public Teachers use loud, strict voices to call out students who are misbehaving.	→	Private Teachers speak privately to students who need reminders in order to behave.
Anger Teachers seem angry and blame students when they misbehave.	→	Understanding Teachers use a gentle tone and show understanding when students misbehave.
Punishment Good behavior is based on fear of punishment.	→	Reflection Good behavior is based on an internal desire to do well.

Source:
www.teachingexperiment.com

To learn more about Restorative Practices or have questions, please contact: Kristy Montes Training & Technical Assistance Professional in Restorative Practices kristymontes@utexas.edu