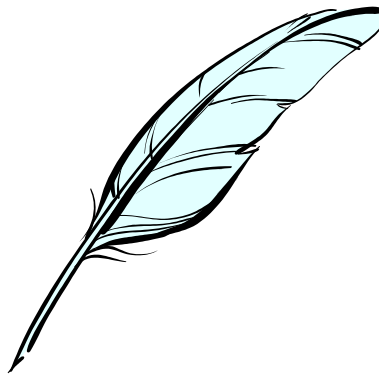


Just Education

Restorative Practices for Educators



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Introduction

We owe a debt of gratitude to indigenous people world-wide for use of their ancient practices used to create, maintain, and repair communities. Currently, Restorative Justice is internationally accepted and used in places such as Australia, Europe, Africa, Latin America, and in North America. Restorative practices have been utilized successfully in the criminal justice system, child and social welfare, workplaces, neighborhood development, and in religious and educational institutions.

In a world of escalating violence, Restorative Justice gives us not only hope but provides a structured framework for creating positive school climate. We feel a great sense of urgency for restorative practices to be taught, practiced, and implemented school-wide within all MPS schools.

Restorative practices need to be included in each school's educational plan as a viable tool to reduce suspensions and to create safe, and civil learning environments for all students. We must address the deep-rooted causes of violence brought into our schools daily, or we will continue the current unacceptable trend: "from the school house to the jail house." We must teach our students to resolve life's conflicts nonviolently, to think critically about their choices, to learn realistic and culturally diverse ways of communicating in the context of a caring school culture, and to recognize their emotional triggers and to learn strategies for anger management.

In serving the many children of poverty, use of restorative practices are key in developing two very important resources needed for academic success. First, students will develop their emotional resources of "being able to choose and control emotional responses, particularly to negative situations, without engaging in self-destructive behavior. This internal resource shows itself through stamina, perseverance, and choices. Second, students need to have frequent access to adult relationships and role models who are appropriate, nurturing, and non-destructive ." (Payne, 1996). Moreover, studies show an increased job satisfaction as emotional connections develop between adults and children in schools. Restorative practices may be used to conduct staff meetings and parent-teacher meetings.

Restorative practices in all facets of education must take priority in the curriculum taught, in order to create just schools, and provide our children with hope for a future where they can participate as well-adjusted, critical thinkers in our democracy.

With Peace,

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Getting Started

Restorative practices address the need for integrating emotional literacy, social skill development, violence prevention, and conflict resolution education into the fabric of a school.

Academic achievement will only flourish in a civil and safe school environment.

Restorative practices are based on Restorative Justice, which has its roots in indigenous practices and values. For example, the Lakota/Dakota Indian phrase “mitakuye oyasin,” we are all related, urges us to create communities of care that support healing in all relationships.

What is Restorative Justice?

Restorative justice is a *systemic* response to wrongdoing that emphasizes healing the wounds of victims, offenders, and communities. Restorative principles and practices help:

- Hold the offender accountable for her / his actions
- Provide victims with a safe place to share how the incident impacted her / him
- Include members of the community in developing a moral stance and helping the offender in making things right
- Develop an effective alternative to the traditional system of punishment

By “making things right,” restorative practices seek to knit wholeness back into a community that has been torn. In schools, restorative practices seek to build relationships so that students can focus on their school work and to keep all students as participating members of the learning community.

Circles

What are Circles?

Circles are a structured format that are used to facilitate restorative justice practices.

Schools can use circles for:

1. Conflict Resolution
2. Building school community
3. Enhancing learning – as part of the curriculum

Circle Basics

- Respect for circle: participants should remain in circle for its entirety
- Chairs to be set-up in a circle with an open space in the middle
- Center piece (an object of significance to circle e.g. candle or flowers)
 - Place in the middle of the circle
 - Creates a focus
 - Reminds participants of the purpose for the circle
 - Unites and calms circle participants
- Talking piece (an object to be passed clock-wise e.g. rock, feather, koosh ball)
 - Holder is the only one who can talk
 - Creates safe structure for communication by spreading responsibility to all participants.
 - Encourages respectful and active listening skills
- Circle agreements (posted in a manner that is visible to all participants)
 - Attentive Listening: Listen with feelings
 - No put downs or name calling
 - Mutual Respect
 - Treat Others Kindly
 - Confidentiality
 - Right to Pass
- Role of Circle keeper:

- Calls participants for circle and arranges time and place for circle
- Maintains safe space, sets tone for circle
- Reminds participants of circle agreements

Pre-circle Considerations

- There are no cookie-cutter forms for circles. Facilitators need to be able to adapt to each environment. Know the goal for each circle, but be flexible.
- The facilitator should be sure to talk with all professional adults to be included in the circle. The facilitator should suggest that they leave any authoritarian attitudes and words at the door; students should be treated as equal persons.
- A sign should be posted on the conference or classroom door, "Do Not Disturb: Important Circle Work in Progress." The school office should also be notified to withhold non-emergent phone interruptions.
- The door to the conference or classroom should be closed to provide for a more private atmosphere and to reduce distractions.
- The facilitator should understand and show appreciation for restorative justice as being a slowed-down process. As such, the facilitator should encourage everyone to take a deep breath and be centered.
- As the circle begins, be sure that the first recipient of the talking piece will talk and not pass.
- Watch the time closely, be sure to have an appropriate, and not abrupt, closure and structure the circle process accordingly.
- For large group circles:
 - If the facilitator is not the classroom teacher, the teacher should create a seating chart, strategically placing adults amidst students who lack self-control, are easily distracted, are talkers or non-talkers, and/or are deeply troubled.

- If possible, the facilitator and the teacher should meet to discuss current classroom climate and the purpose of the circle.
- The teacher should prepare students for the circle by explaining the circle process and the circle's purpose in that classroom. Students should be aware of the time and place for the circle.

Circle Procedure

The Circle Keeper / Facilitator begins by:

1. Centering the group.
2. Introducing her/himself and the circle process
 - Suggestion of opening statement to start the circle:
"We use circles to communicate and problem solve at this school. "
 - "In doing circles, we are honoring the wisdom of native peoples world-wide who have always known the importance of relationships and community."
3. Explaining the use of talking piece, the significance of centerpiece, and the importance of agreements.
4. Opening with icebreaker to promote group cohesion by non-threatening activity
 - Examples: favorite dessert, animal, singer, color, vacation spot, or summer activity.
 - Circle participants are not allowed to pass on ice breaker type questions.

The Circle Keeper / Facilitator proceeds according to the reason for the circle: (See pages 7 & 8)

1. Conflict resolution
2. Classroom community building
3. Curriculum

The Circle Keeper / Facilitator concludes the circle:

There are numerous ways in which a circle keeper can end the circle:

- If time allows, the circle keeper may ask each participant to say one word that describes how each feels at that moment.

- The circle keeper can summarize the results of the circle.
- The circle keeper can offer a last word:
 - “Thank you for letting us get to know you better”
 - “It is clear that progress was made in our circle.”
 - “We can meet again in a circle, if we want or need to.”
 - “Everyone contributed to building peace by just by being here.”
 - “Thank you all for your honesty and contributions today.”
 - “There is ripple effect for each act that we do: we are all powerful in our school’s environment”

Three Types of Circles for School Use

1. Conflict Resolution Circles

Circle keeper uses standard opening procedure (see Circle Procedure, p 6).

The circle keeper reads and answers the first question. Then, the circle keeper passes the talking piece to her left, allowing each circle participant to answer the question. It is often necessary to go around another time, to give participants another opportunity to respond to first question. “I’m going to pass the talking piece around again and give everyone the opportunity to add any thoughts or comments related to this question.”

Circle keeper follows the same sequence for questions two, three, and four.

Four questions for conflict resolution circles:

1. What happened? Who got hurt? And how were they hurt?
2. What are your personal feelings about what happened?
3. What do you think needs to happen to repair the harm caused?
4. What are you personally willing to do to repair the harm & solve this problem?

2. Classroom Community Building Circles

The purpose for classroom community building circles is to teach empathy and self-reflection, and to create a sense of belonging through sharing stories and active listening. Using circles is a violence prevention strategy.

To begin classroom community building circles, refer to Circle Procedure, p6)

A suggested procedure for classroom community building circles is to start with several ice breaker questions. Then, continue with more thought provoking questions that guide participants towards deeper thinking. For example, start with “favorite dessert” and move to “winter break plans” and then to “Who is your role model and why.”

For ideas in implementing classroom community building circles, please refer to Appendix 1. In addition, another worthwhile teacher-friendly resource is the book Journey Toward the Caring Classroom, by Laurie S. Frank.

3. Curriculum Circles

The circle format can enhance learning by providing an interactive forum for all students to participate in the learning process, regardless of the class content.

A teacher’s choice of material and pedagogy, objectives, and method of assessment powerfully impacts students’ conduct. After using circles to teach standard curriculum, a teacher may find the need to teach students interpersonal skills.

“Students need curriculum that builds civility by teaching tolerance for others unlike ourselves and skills such as anger management, active listening, the sophisticated use of language, negotiation, and mediation. These are skills that individuals need in order to sustain a democratic community.” (Burstyn 140)

Please refer to Appendix II for Comprehensive Social & Emotional Learning Standards, as adopted in the State of Illinois.

Curriculum Circles:

- Promote active listening and provide a safe place to learn.
- Provide a place students can count on, e.g. a weekly “check-in” circle.
- Can be used to strengthen existing curricula, for example, in teaching social skills and coping mechanisms.
- Offer students tools to overcome obstacles to learning.

- Afford a safe forum for contributing to class and discussing opinions.
- Give a structure and focus to easily distracted students.
- Allow students to learn from each others' challenges and successes.
- Create a sense of belonging, which increases students' ability to learn.

Please refer to Appendix 1 for ideas in implementing Curriculum Circles.

A Note on Shaming

Current research shows that academic success is based on emotional well-being. Our students need to understand themselves emotionally so that they may have control over how they interact with others. If we feel connected with others, we can have the receptivity to learning. In our world today, employers are hiring people who can interact well with others, those with leadership abilities and those who can work as a team member. We are not equipping our children for the work force. More than ever, the emphasis is on academics – we are neglecting the emotional well-being of our young people.

Teachers and other school personnel can learn some basic yet powerful ways to help students understand and control their emotions. When students have an emotional outburst or disturbance, for the most part we suspend them. The teachable moment is lost.

We can begin by explaining the concept of Shame. There are two types of shame: healthy shame and toxic shame.

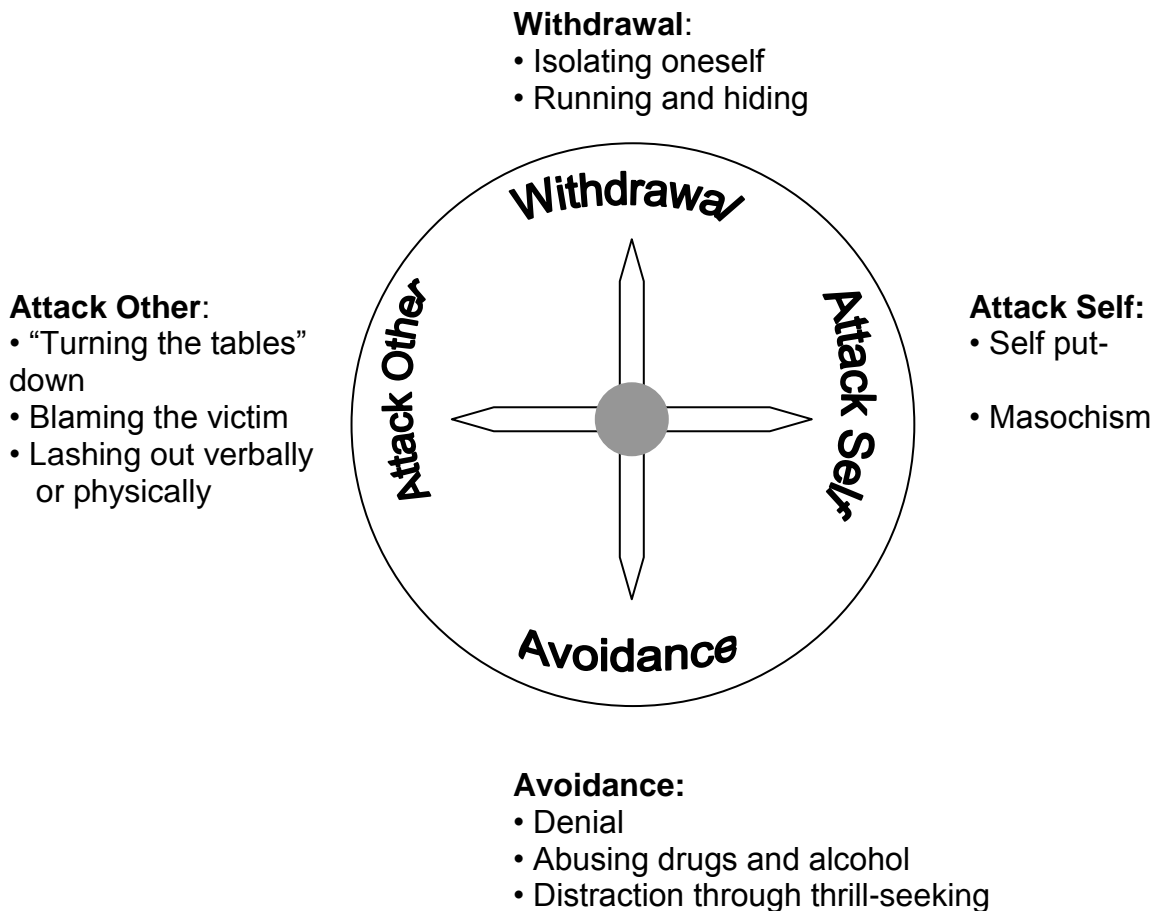
Healthy shame: In this instance, we feel that what we did was bad or wrong, not that we are bad or wrong people. Our integrity is maintained; we know we are still loved for who we are. We change the negative behavior because we feel loved and accepted.

Toxic shame: We believe that we *are* bad or wrong people. We feel humiliated and unloved. We believe that we are flawed and that there is no way back.

For example, when we suspend students, we cause them to feel resentful and shamed. We do not usually provide a way for them to be reintegrated back into the school environment. Yet, we all have a strong need to feel that we belong. To meet this need, students may seek subculture groups such as gangs. When we shame students without providing reintegration, we are encouraging gang involvement.

When we are in toxic shame, we react in different ways. We are attempting to escape from the feeling. See the “Compass of Shame” for four ways we use to escape.

The Compass of Shame



Emotional education needs to be part of the curriculum if we are to expect students to be successful citizens. When we understand ourselves, we can make healthy choices about how to react. We cannot change what we are not conscious of.

Within a restorative classroom, teachers can build a trusting climate in which students may open up and learn about how they react to toxic shame.

Restitution Triangle

In her book “It’s all about WE: Rethinking Discipline using Restitution”, Diane Gossen talks about Western discipline and the fact that it does not strengthen youth because it is based on punishment. It shames and alienates them and weakens their resolve to do the right thing. Punishment aims at breaking the group apart rather than using the strength of the group for healing. Aboriginal people created a culture in which a person may be vulnerable and then take responsibility for the harm they caused. Acceptance of human frailty is a basic premise. In other words, it is human to make a mistake. The Indians view wrongdoing as misbehavior which requires teaching. Everyone has the desire to make things right if given a chance. Aboriginal values encourage children to look inside for the answers. Western culture teaches children to look outside of themselves for a reward or to avoid consequences.

Throughout her book, Gossen refers to the Restitution Triangle which reflects many of the ideas of Aboriginal culture. When we approach a student who has been involved in some type of wrongdoing, using this model, we seek to first of all stabilize the student. When we are in a highly anxious state, we are in a defensive mode and we cannot take in new information. For example, when a student is called down to the office, that child is likely to be in a state of fear and anger. Current brain research supports the idea that when we are upset, the brain resorts to primitive functioning and we are incapable of deciphering the moral component of our actions. So we must initially seek to stabilize the student if we expect them to learn from us.

Side 1 of the Restitution Triangle says, “It’s okay to make a mistake. You’re not the only one. We can solve this problem together. You are not alone.”

Side 2 of the Restitution Triangle supports the restorative idea that, at any given moment we are all doing the best we know how. Therefore, the student didn’t make the worse choice and the student could have done worse. We explore the ways in which the student could have made worse choices. Doing this helps to draw the student into understanding his/her behavior. It also helps students come out of the overwhelming shame state they may be in. All behavior is motivated by an attempt to meet a need. All behavior is purposeful. And so, in side 2, we can tell the child that it is good to try to meet his/her needs and that he/she could have done worse. Using a restorative approach, we ask youth to

analyze their needs as well as the needs of others. The emphasis is not on designing a consequence. By teaching youth to focus on their intent, they learn to self-manage.

Side 3 addresses values and assists the youth in thinking about the kind of person they want to be and taps into their own moral sense. We ask the student if their behavior is in line with their family and community values. We ask if they are being the kind of person they want to be. This moves them in the direction of become *internally* motivated. Through the use of the process in the triangle model, we accomplish five important ends, 1) the child feels relief that they did not do the worse thing and 2) the child is able to identify the personal values she is protecting by her behavior, 3) The child begins to have a sense of hope, 4) the child will have no need to lie, 5) the child will spontaneously move toward solving the problem.

The outcome of using the triangle model is that the child has greater self-understanding and the child has a strengthened relationship with us.

Gossen talks about 5 different positions of control we use with students:

- 1) The **Punisher** – yells and points (Do it my way or else).
- 2) The **Guilter** – preaches and “shoulds” (I’m disappointed in you).
- 3) The **Buddy** – makes excuses for the student (You couldn’t help it).
- 4) The **Monitor** – counts and measures (What’s the rule? What’s the consequence)?
- 5) The **Manager/Mentor** – RESTORATIVE – asks questions (What do we believe? Do you believe it? If you believe it, do you want to fix the problem? If you fix it, what does that say about you? Who are you becoming? How are you going to make things right? What’s your plan to solve the problem)?

In his book, The Control Theory, William Glasser talks about needs. All people have basic needs for:

Love (Belonging)
Power (Mastery)
Freedom (Independence)
Fun (Generosity)
Survival (Safety)

When students understand their needs, they can identify what needs are driving their behavior. For example, sad and lonely feelings tell us we have unmet needs for **love**. Angry or aggressive feelings reflect a need for **power**. A lack of **freedom** is usually brought on when we feel smothered or overloaded. We feel **unsafe** when we feel fearful, cold or hungry. Boredom or numbness signals a need for **fun/creativity**.

Students can be taught to view their “negative” feelings as signals that tell them what they need. When we know what we need we are more likely to try to get those needs met appropriately.

Strength is *not* about pushing our emotions down or denying them. Our emotions will always tell us what we need. Strength is about having our feelings, realizing what we need and learning to meet our needs.

It is important to develop *beliefs* rather than rules with students. Why? Beliefs are more internally motivating. We have more energy and enthusiasm about following beliefs than we do about following rules. Every time we address a belief, we are strengthening our youth and community. You could have a discussion with a class when developing beliefs using the following questions and comments:

“We can’t allow anyone to hurt what we have built to help everyone learn. We want you be a thinking people. Question everything. Do it with respect. Think about the kind of person you want to be and how you want to be treated. Think about whether you can be in harmony with the group. Our group beliefs protect each individual. Each of us has an obligation to the group for safety and freedom we are guaranteed.”

To change from a rule-based school to a belief-based school, these examples may help.

Change No Harassment to RESPECT.

Change No Violence to SAFETY.

Change No Drugs to HEALTH.

Change NO Weapons to SAFETY.

Change NO Direct Defiance to LEARNING.

As we move from a punitive, authoritarian system to a restorative one, we begin to truly educate our children.

Getting your school to buy-in

Why use Restorative Justice in schools?

- An approach to reducing suspensions
 - Actively involves the offender
 - Addresses bullying
 - Prevents escalating conflict
 - Teaches self-motivation & self-discipline
 - Encourages accountability & responsibility through personal reflection

- An approach to improving classroom & school climate
 - Increases awareness of problems facing children
 - Is a collaborative planning process
 - Creates empathy & self-responsibility
- An approach to create and maintain caring communities
 - Reduces disconnect students face after suspensions
 - Bridges the gap between home & school
 - Ensures a sense of belonging for all students
 - Teaches social skills needed to solve conflicts non-violently
 - Helps students acquire and practice effective verbal skills

Models of Discipline Practice

Retributive	Restorative
Does something to the students	Actively involves the offender
Rewards and consequences	Teaches self-motivation & self-discipline
Removes students from class	Restores relationship to school community
Shames the student	Creates empathy and self responsibility
Focuses only on short-term solution	Focuses on long-term goal of teaching self-control
Teacher solves the problem	Student solves the problem

“A school can become free of conflict as the result of coercive management and discipline. In such a school, there is zero tolerance for any form of misbehavior.

. . . Though many conflicts are repressed or avoided in that type of environment, it represents a prison, not a school. Coercive management and discipline are incompatible with our goals. A whole school approach to violence prevention is a model, where all students, as well as adults, learn to practice skills of non-violence and civility, where care, cooperation, and democratic human relations create an environment in which conflict is not repressed, but becomes constructive, and a site for individual and collective growth.”

- Creating the Peaceable School (1994).

Whole School Restorative Practice

	RESTORING (Repairing harm done to relationships and community)	RELATING (Developing/nurturing relationships and creating community)
Processes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undisputed responsibility: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restorative conferencing Family group conferencing Victim / offender mediation Disputed responsibility, conflict, mutual recrimination <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mediation Peer mediation Family group conferencing Problem-solving circles Restorative inquiry 	Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Circle time for staff (for planning, review, support, and team building) Circle time for students Student counseling Circle of friends Peer counseling & mentoring Whole school development of relationship management (Behavior management, which tends to be student-focused)
Skills	<div style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin: 10px auto; width: fit-content;"><u>Relationships</u></div> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div style="width: 45%;"> Skills include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Non-violent communication Active non-judgmental listening Conflict transformation Developing empathy & rapport Having difficult conversations Restorative debriefing after critical incidents Understanding & managing anger </div> <div style="width: 45%;"> Skills include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emotional literacy Developing & maintaining self-esteem Valuing others explicitly Assertiveness Acknowledging & appreciating diversity Constructively challenging oppression and prejudice Connecting across differences </div> </div> <div style="text-align: center; margin-top: 10px;">← Much overlap →</div>	

- Just Schools, (2004).

Tips on promoting restorative justice in your school:

- Talk at staff meetings and grade-level meetings
- Talk to receptive teachers and start doing circles in classrooms, such as a 4-week session on feelings or values
- Be on the learning team in your school and suggest inclusion in the educational plan as the implementer for restorative justice circles

- Talk to your assistant principal asking for her help in identifying students who may be approaching a suspension and call a circle for student, parent(s), administrator, and teacher.
- Take the initiative:
 - Call circle yourself: circles speak for themselves
 - Invite students and teachers and administrators to circle
 - Write up and distribute a summary of the circle to all those who have contact with the student (e.g., teacher, administrators, specialists, etc.)
- Create a flyer to advertise your services
- Encourage circle format to be used in peer mediation
- Be Creative, Patient, & Courageous!!

The more you do circles, the more you will want to do them!

Appendix I.

Practical Uses for Circles in Schools: A Short Guide

Restorative Justice circles are most often thought of as being useful for conflict resolution and discipline. However, there are a myriad of uses beyond conflict resolution and discipline.

These are some examples:

- Morning Check-in Circles – Create a community in your classroom by allowing each student to simply “check-in” with something new and important in their lives. This may serve as an outlet for difficult situations at home, or may serve as a centering moment for the student, helping her/him to transition into the learning environment.
- Review Circles – Testing on a unit. Each person has an opportunity to say what s/he learned from a unit. Each successive participant may not repeat what has been said before.
- Discuss a topic – Each person shares a thought about the given topic, such as: the war in Iraq, what to do about litter on the playground, etc.
- Share a Fact – Each person shares a fact about the given topic, such as: Plants, Wisconsin, etc.
- What was compelling to you about this story/article? Assign a particular reading (book, chapter, article). Each participant decides what the most important idea or quote from the reading is, and shares the quote along with her/his rationale for choosing that section as the most important.
- What is one new idea or fact you learned? After watching a video, or hearing a guest speaker, ask each participant to share one new fact or idea that s/he learned or something that s/he liked about a presentation. This can be particularly appealing to guest speakers who receive feedback on their presentation.
- Teaching and Discussing Values – Read a storybook whose major theme is a particular value. Lead a guided discussion about the theme by 1) asking a general question that relates to the theme, e.g. what does it mean to be teased? 2) Ask a personal question, e.g. tell about a time when someone teased you. How did you feel? 3) Brainstorm a solution: e.g. What are we going to do to make this teasing problem go away?
- Presenting Moral Dilemmas – Moral dilemmas become avenues for open discussions and thinking about personal values that one holds in relation

to the broader society. Present a sticky moral dilemma slightly to challenge the participants.

- Proactive Behavior Management – Circles can be effective tools to help create community in a classroom or school. Role play a situation, or invite someone who has actually been impacted by negative behavior of a class to participate, e.g. a substitute teacher who was “eaten alive”. Allow the affected party to explain how s/he felt and then ask the circle participants:
 - 1) “What happened when Ms. _____ was here?”
 - 2) “What did you do to make things worse when Ms. _____ was here?”
 - 3) “What were you thinking when Ms. _____ was here?”
 - 4) “What could you have done differently when Ms. _____ was here?”
 - 5) “Is there anything you want to say?”
- Truancy – Relying upon the circle process to help a student and her/his family deal with a truancy problem has proven beneficial. Giving the parent and student some sense that they are active participants in solving the problem - as opposed to simply being “talked to” – is empowering and gets away from the authoritarian model of one up/one down. Asking the student who her/his favorite teacher is, and then asking that teacher to participate in the circle conference is but one way to empower the family.
- Individualized Education Plan – By using the circle process to discuss the student’s educational progress with a parent, the school staff is being more inclusive of those who know the student.

YOUR IMAGINATION AND CREATIVITY!

Thanks to David Lerman for this handout. Mr. Lerman is Assistant District Attorney, Coordinator of Restorative Justice Program at Milwaukee County District Attorney’s office. He does Restorative Justice trainings at Milwaukee Public Schools.

Resources

Books

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Websites

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Restorative Solutions: www.restorativesolutions.us

Restorative Justice Initiative: www.law.marquette.edu/jw/restorative

Victim Offender Mediation Association: www.voma.org

Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning: www.casel.org

Restitution North: www.restitutionnorth.ca

Oshkosh, Wisconsin Restorative Justice Initiative:

www.oshkosh.k12.wi.us/aboutus/restorative.cfm