

# It's the relationship - duh!

Tools for working restoratively  
and building community in schools



# Really - It **IS** the relationship!

This presentation will focus on the use of Restorative Practices to establish “community” within a school and classroom. Attendees will be exposed to restorative practice theory while participating in activities applicable to their settings.

# Our goals

✓ create a working definition of restorative practices

✓ identify relationship building techniques/tools for fostering a more positive and inclusive classroom

✓ identify potential successes and frustrations when undertaking relational/cultural change

# How did you wake up?

“I want to have the worst day possible?”

“I want to upset as many people as possible?”



# We believe

People are social beings.

People strive for connections and these connections are the keys to our happiness and success.



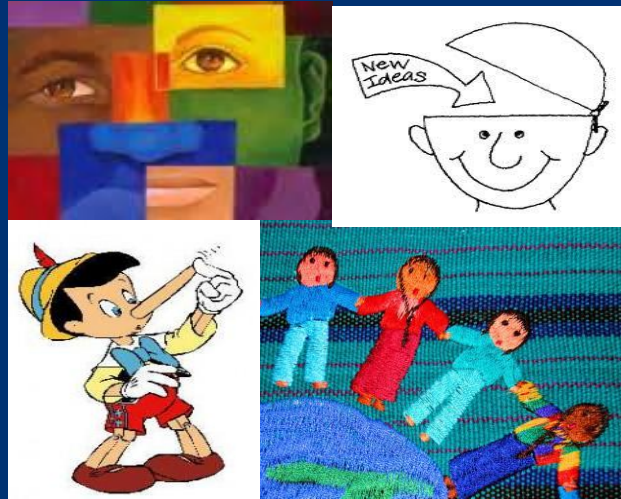
People are most productive,  
when they are in “right” relationships.

# So, what **ARE** restorative practices?

intentional  
actions meant  
to build and  
improve  
relationships

# Elements of Restorative Practices

- Fairness
- Equity
- Honesty
- Non judgmental



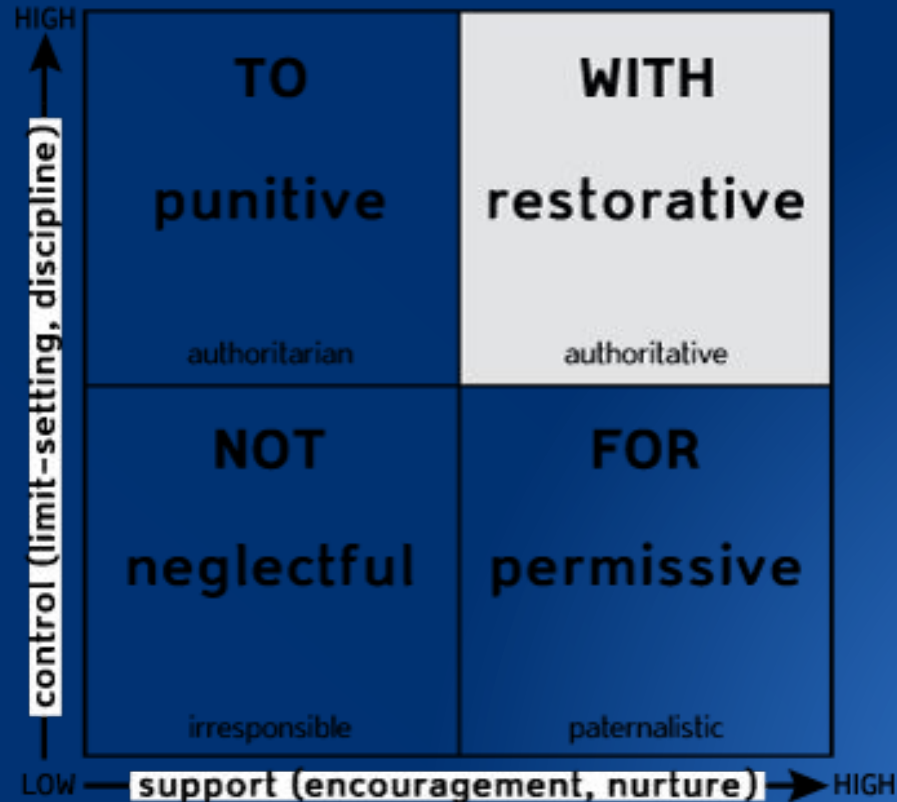


# Elements of Restorative Practices

- Acceptance
- Kindness
- Proactive
- Press and Support



# Social Discipline Window



# Restorative or Bust

- Acceptance
- Kindness
- Proactive
- Press and Support
- Fairness
- Equity
- Honesty
- Non judgmental
- ????

# COMMUNICATION

## SEPARATE INTENT AND IMPACT

- Intent is what you meant
- Impact is what they heard
- Talk about the intent without denying the impact

# COMMUNICATIONS

## INTERESTS AND POSITIONS

When in conflict we often get caught up in how we want to meet our needs (position) rather than the actual need itself (interest).

Positions are demands- bottom lines, e.g. “either you switch Johnny out of Ms. Jones class or I withdraw him from school

Interests are the concerns or needs underlying that demand- the why. e.g., “I want him out of that class because I’m concerned that she often singles him out.”

Positions tend to shut down communication and interests tend to foster communication.

## POSITION VS. INTEREST EXERCISE

- Position: This school is stupid. If a teacher says I have to leave my cell phone in my locker I am not even coming to class.  
Interest:
- Position: I am not changing in the locker room. I don't care if I fail PE.  
Interest:
- Position: He hit me first. My parents told me I have a right to defend myself  
Interest:
- Position: I don't know why you are calling me about your classroom discipline problems. You are the teacher, handle it.  
Interest:
- Position: If you suspend my son one more time I am going to the school board and the media.  
Interest:
- Position: I am not coming to your parent/teacher conference...all you do is badmouth my child  
Interest:

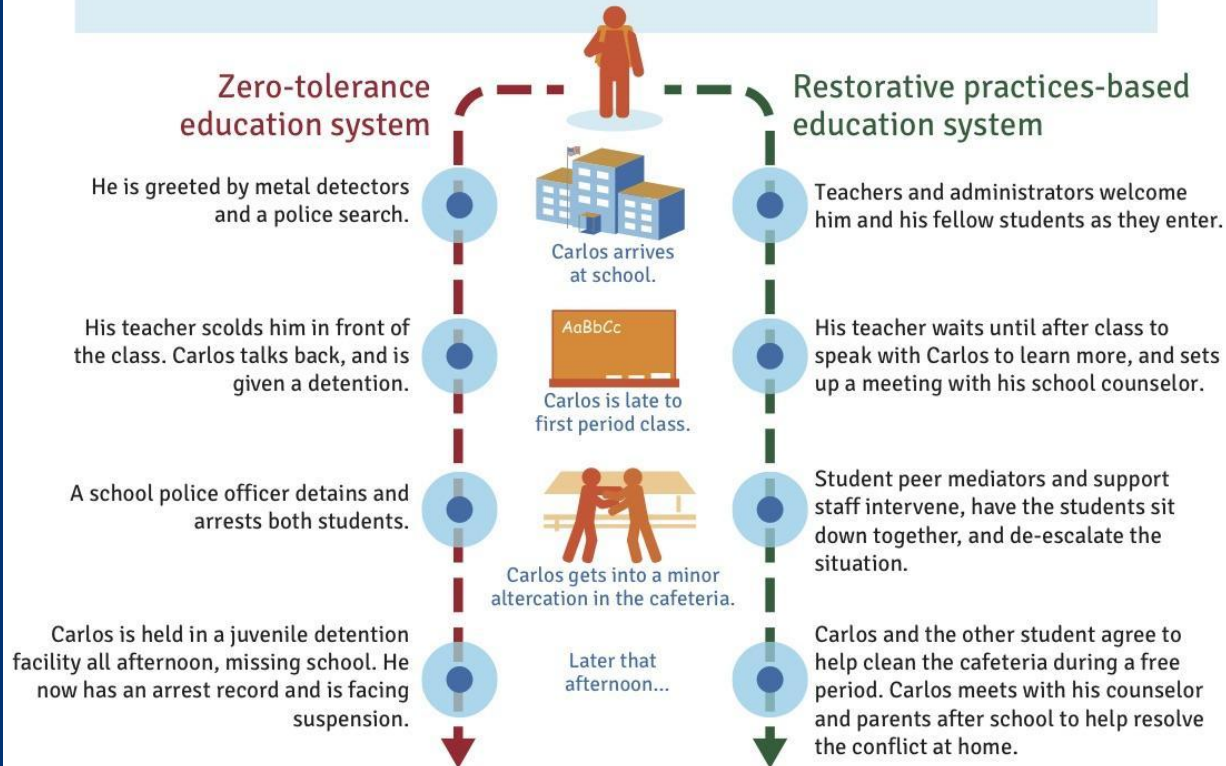
# The Art of Listening

- **Be Curious-** Be open. Suspend your own judgements and assumptions. Ask open-ended questions.
- **Listen to Understand-** Put aside your own opinions for the time being. Seek to understand what is important to the other person. Try to understand how our past affects all of us. Be aware of your own hot buttons and discomfort. Ask clarifying questions.
- **Pay Attention to Non-Verbals-** Notice tone of face, facial expression, posture, etc...including your own.
- **Notice what is not being said-** Ask questions to understand
- **Emotionally relate to how they are feeling-** Empathize. Nurture the relationship. Reflect back what is being said. Use their words, not yours.
- **Be Patient, be Present-** Listening is speedier than talking; don't jump ahead. Be aware of and allow for communication style differences



# A Tale of Two Schools

Carlos had a heated argument with his parents before leaving for school, so he's running late.  
Let's see the difference that restorative policies and practices can make.





# SCHOOL TO PRISON PIPELINE

## PRISON LIKE ENVIRONMENTS

- SURVEILLANCE CAMERAS
- DRUG DOGS
- ARMED POLICE
- METAL DETECTORS
- PHYSICALLY UNINVITING BUILDINGS
- BODY SEARCHES

# HARSH SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

- OUT OF SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS
  - EXPULSIONS
  - ZERO TOLERANCE POLICIES
  - TRANSFERS TO ALTERNATIVE SCHOOLS
- 
- YOUTH OF COLOR, LGBTQ STUDENTS AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES ARE PUNISHED MORE OFTEN AND MORE HARSHLY THAN THEIR PEERS FOR THE SAME BEHAVIOR

# UNDER INVESTMENT

- CUTBACKS ON COUNSELORS, SOCIAL WORKERS AND MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES
- UNDERFUNDED AND UNDER-RESOURCED SCHOOLS

# PRESSURES AND UNCERTAINTY

- SCHOOL CLOSURES
- PRIVATIZATION
- HIGH STAKES TESTING PRESSURES ON STUDENTS, TEACHERS AND ADMINISTRATORS

## COMPLEX TRAUMA CALLS FOR RESTORATIVE RESPONSES

- **Acute trauma** is a one time occurrence related to a specific incident
- **Complex trauma**: exposure to multiple traumatic events.
- **Cultural trauma** is an attack on the fabric of a society, affecting the essence of the community
- **Historical trauma** is the cumulative exposure of traumatic events that affect an individual and continues to affect subsequent generations
- **Intergenerational trauma** occurs when trauma is not resolved, subsequently internalized, and passed from one generation to the next.
- **Secondary Trauma/Vicarious trauma** is commonly referred to as the stress resulting from helping or wanting to help a traumatized person. Can lead to compassion fatigue.

# **EDUCATORS CAN SUPPORT STUDENTS TO BUILD RESILIENCY BY:**

- Intentionally creating opportunities for getting to know students
- Being aware of and trying to avoid trauma triggers
- Providing a calm, consistent and structured environment
- Being aware of and offering strategies for self-regulation such as breathing exercises, art therapy, mindfulness, smudge, yoga, guided imagery....etc
- Incorporating restorative practices that focus on not causing further harm, on building relationships, and on holding people accountable for their behaviors without rejecting them as people

# HOW RESTORATIVE AM I ?

- Am I able to be open hearted, even with those who **really** challenge me?
- Do I value building relationships, even with those that make my life difficult?
- Do I **truly** listen? Do the students, parents, caregivers and my fellow colleagues feel listened to?
- Do I take into consideration race, culture and other forms of power differences when engaging people? (please don't say you are color blind) Do I actively work to shift the balance of power?
- Do I really strive to dig under the surface to understand where a disconnect is?
- Am I doing things **with** people, rather than **for** and **to**?
- Have I, at any stage, asked someone I trust to observe my practice and give me honest feedback?

# Punitive and Restorative

**“Just 1 suspension day in 9th grade  
can double a student’s risk  
of dropping out  
before graduation.”**

<http://www.colorlines.com/articles/race-disability-and-school-prison-pipeline>



# Tools of restorative practices

-Stop Cards

-Circles

-Restorative conferences

# Stop and pause cards



*and think about  
what you are doing...*



- 1) What are you doing?*
- 2) Who else is affected by your actions?*
- 3) What will happen if you continue?*
- 4) What should you be doing?*

# What happens in a circle?

Participants get opportunities to learn about each other and build relationships.

These relationships help to build a classroom community.

# Why the circle format?



equality

trust

responsibility

connections



# Circle Types

UNDERSTANDING:  
allows for introductions

LESSON:  
share or provide feedback on material

REENTRY:  
return from suspension or classroom removal

ONGOING:  
provides connection/cohesion in an existing class room

HEALING:  
discussion of problematic incidents

# The “Circle” Process

**\*REVIEW**

**\*REFLECT**

**\*QUESTION**

**“CIRCLE UP”**

**\*RESPOND**

**\*REFRESH**

# Circle up





# Circle Agreements

- Respect the talking Piece-explain
- Speak from your heart- your truth
- Listen with your heart- open minded
- Speak with respect- words can hurt
- Listen with respect-body language
- Say just enough- one or two sentences
- Honor Privacy
- Bring our Best Selves



WHY DON'T WE LOOK  
AT A SYSTEM OF  
RESTORATIVE JUSTICE?



# Restorative Questions

For challenging behavior:

- What happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- What have you thought about since?
- Who has been affected and how?
- What do you need to do to make things right?

# Restorative Questions

For those who were harmed:

- What did you think when you realized what had happened?
- What impact has this incident had on you and others?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?
- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

## Tips and tools to build relationships and stronger communities

- 1) work to de-escalate conflict and tension, pay attention to how you approach situations
- 2) take time out to get to know your students, show interest
- 3) don't assume, talk to your students, ask questions about what's going on with them
- 4) "breaking bread" and eating together is a community builder in itself
- 5) use praise and positive reinforcement to motivate
- 6) be honest, fair, consistent and hold high expectations
- 7) work to redirect poor behavior choices as opposed to seeking only punitive consequences
- 8) reflect regularly on the ways that you work/don't work with students
- 9) use affective statements to let students know how you feel and how their actions affect you and others in the school community
- 10) model positive behavior (smile, have a good attitude, etc.)
- 11) show perseverance when working with students and let them know that you aren't giving up (even if they appear to give up)
- 12) use rituals and routines to teach students what to expect in your classroom
- 13) separate the "deed from the doer" and remember that our students are still kids, who are learning and growing
- 14) celebrate successes, even the small ones
- 15) regardless of ability, ethnicity, socio economics, gender, age or anything else, warmly welcome all learners

# Look out for...

- It's a journey
- Rp is not an add on
- Cultural competency is a must
- walk the talk
- Politics

# Implementation

- **Top Down and Bottom Up**
- **Top-** District supports, Administration and school staff need to know the philosophy and practices of restorative practices in order to know how to support the work in schools
- **Bottom Up-** Youth need to be involved in every aspect of implementation. This helps ensure that those most impacted by school practices and policies are included in the planning.
- **Proactive before Reactive-** Remember that 80% of a schools restorative practices should be community building. Building familiarity and comfort with circles lays foundations for circles addressing harm and escalated incidents
- **REMEMBER- RESTORATIVE PRACTICES ARE NOT-** Platforms to push punitive consequences (example-Teacher: “Lets circle up, I want to talk about how I’m being disrespected”) (Lord of Flies example) ... Or mandated and imposed on individuals (example- “I saw you two push each other, come in and apologize now”)