

# RESTORATIVE PRACTICES IN SCHOOLS



## RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

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Restorative justice refers to “an approach to justice that seeks to repair harm by providing an opportunity for those harmed and those who take responsibility for the harm to communicate about and address their needs in the aftermath of a crime”

**CONNECTING BEFORE  
CORRECTING**



## RESTORATIVE JUSTICE IN SCHOOLS

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Restorative justice (RJ) provides a way for schools to strengthen community, build relationships among students and between students and staff, and increase the safety and productivity of the learning environment. In the incidents of violence, as the restorative justice attempts to repair harm. The goal of RJ in schools is to create a welcoming, respectful, and positive learning environment.

## BENEFITS

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Restorative justice is not just a technique for controlling students better, but it adds up to an alternative approach to what schools should be fostering in students. It offers an alternative approach when responding to behavioral problems in school.

Benefits of using restorative justice in a school are:

- Reduces exclusionary discipline, overall stress in the school community,
- Improves student academic performance and encourages all parties to take responsibility.

When put into practices, restorative practices are not only about disciplining students. They are rather a foundation for a whole-school approach that establishes common values and norms, promotes a sense of belonging to the school community, and builds trusting relationships among teachers and students.

## CULTURE OF CARE

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To build a culture of care in school and encourage practicing positive behavior in school, it requires a significant shift away from how schools have traditionally attended to discipline and school culture.

In a restorative school environment, students are provided with an environment where they can express their feelings in a healthy and productive way.

The use of affective statements can be one of the practices which focus on the perceptions and feelings of the speaker rather than the actions of the listener.

For example, instead of saying, “You humiliated me”, a student might say, “ I felt humiliated when you scolded me in front of all.” This reflects a key principle of restorative practice which is to criticize the deed, not the doer.



## CARE CIRCLES

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Teaching can be a rewarding and painful occupation as the relentless challenges of the daily routine in schools can disconnect educators from the positive energy of their original vision of themselves as meaningful and influential people in the lives of young people.

School staff members including teachers and principals need reconnection with their deep inner motivation in order to reclaim their original vision of themselves as guides in the lives of young people.

School staff can support and heal one another when a safe space is created that nurtures their natural capacity for listening deeply and caring for one another. In the field of restorative practices, the circle process has emerged as a powerful tool for healing and building community.

The care circle can create that space for listening deeply and taking care of one another which is needed in schools. The circle is a structured dialogue process that allows every participant an opportunity to speak and encourages attentive listening and truth-telling. The circle nurtures connections and empathy which welcomes difficult emotions and difficult realities while maintaining a sense of positive possibilities.

Principal along with other school administrators and teachers can practice the circle process and maintain empathy, care and support within each other.



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