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**PROMOTING SAFETY
IN A POSITIVE SCHOOL
CLIMATE**

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SCHOOLWIDE CLIMATE CONTROL

School climate is the social atmosphere or learning environment in which kids experience learning. Includes:

- Relationships
- Personal growth or goal orientation
- System maintenance and system change.



WHAT INFLUENCES SCHOOL CLIMATE

- How much and how well students and staff communicate
- How students and teachers feel about their school's environment
- Environmental factors (i.e. building, etc.)
- Academic performance
- Size of the school
- How safe and respected everyone feels



WHAT CREATES A SAFE AND POSITIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE

- ❑ Reasonable expectations for behavior
- ❑ Consistent and fair application of rules and regulations
- ❑ Caring responsive relationships among adults and students
- ❑ Warm, inviting classrooms—teachers as “warm demanders”—high standards with sufficient support
- ❑ Communicate high expectations
- ❑ Attends to students’ interests, problems, accomplishments

WHAT CREATES A TOXIC SCHOOL CLIMATE

- ❑ View students as the problem
- ❑ Believe they are doing the best they can and do not search out new ideas
- ❑ Frequently share stories and history on the school that are negative, discouraging and demoralizing
- ❑ Complain, criticize, and distrust new ideas, approaches or suggestions for improvement
- ❑ Rarely share ideas, materials, or solutions to classroom problems
- ❑ Have few ceremonies or school traditions that celebrate what is good and hopeful about the school

WHAT IS RESTORATIVE JUSTICE?

WHAT IS RESTORATIVE JUSTICE?

Restorative Justice echoes ancient and indigenous practices employed in cultures all over the world.

Restorative Justice has been integrated into the Western legal system during the past 30 years as a process for victims, offenders, and communities to get a better sense of “justice” for criminal wrongdoings. The RJ field has introduced a number of techniques that have included: **mediation, conferencing and circles and different perspectives or philosophies to view wrongdoing.**

WHAT IS RESTORATIVE JUSTICE? Cont.

Restorative Justice promotes values and principles that use inclusive, collaborative approaches for being in community. These approaches validate the experiences and needs of everyone within the community, particularly those who have been marginalized, oppressed, or harmed. These approaches allow us to act and respond in ways that are healing rather than alienating or coercive.

MacRae & Zehr, H.(2004). *The Little Book of Family Group Conferences: New Zealand Style* Intercourse, PA: Good Books.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE IN SCHOOLS

Restorative Practice is a strategy that seeks to repair relationships that have been damaged. It does so by bringing about a sense of remorse and restorative action on the part of the offender and forgiveness by the victim.

Restorative Practice Schools seek to use alternative discipline strategies, moving away from zero tolerance and other punitive measures. Restorative Practices let all voices be heard and allow students to learn from their choices and make amends for the damage done.



GOALS OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE IN SCHOOLS

- ❑ Understand the harm and develop empathy for both the harmed and the harmer.
- ❑ Listen and respond to the needs of the person harmed and the person who harmed.
- ❑ Encourage accountability and responsibility through personal reflection in a collaborative process.
- ❑ Reintegrate the harmer back into the community as a valuable, contributing member.
- ❑ Create caring climates to support healthy communities.

HOW'S THAT WORKING FOR YOU?

Traditional Student Discipline
By the Numbers

2012 SCHOOL DISCIPLINE STATISTICS

- ❑ 49 million students attended schools
- ❑ 3.5 million received in-school suspension
- ❑ 3.45 million received out-of-school suspension
- ❑ 130,000 students were expelled



SCHOOL SURVEY ON CRIME AND SAFETY 2017-18

- ❑ 66% of schools reported at least one physical attack or fight without a weapon
- ❑ 3% of schools reported a physical attack or fight with a weapon
- ❑ 3,600 incidents nationwide involving the possession of a firearm or explosive device at school.

SCHOOL SURVEY ON CRIME AND SAFETY 2017-18

- ❑ 962,300 violent incidents in U.S. public schools
- ❑ 476,100 nonviolent incidents in U.S. public schools
- ❑ 71% of schools reported having at least 1 violent incident
- ❑ 65% reported having at least 1 nonviolent incident

SCHOOL TO PRISON PIPELINE

Students suspended or expelled during preschool or elementary school years are up to **10X** more likely to face jail time.

A single suspension in 9th grade doubles a student's risk of dropping out.

SUSPENSIONS FOR MINOR INFRACTIONS

2011 Texas study examined 1 million middle and high school students to determine why students were being suspended:

90% were suspended for breaking school rules that did not create a direct and serious harm to students or property.

A COMPARISON: TRADITIONAL VS. RESTORATIVE

Can it get the job done?



GENERAL GOALS OF STUDENT DISCIPLINE

- ❑ Ensure the safety of staff and students
- ❑ Create an environment conducive to learning
- ❑ Hold students accountable
- ❑ Teach students there are consequences for misconduct

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PRACTICES

- Builds relationships
- Strives to be respectful to all
- Provides opportunity for dialogue and participatory decision-making
- Involves all relevant stakeholders
- Addresses harms, needs, obligations and causes of conflict/harm
- Encourages all to take responsibility

COMPARISON

Traditional:

- What happened?
- Establish blame or guilt
- Attention to rules
- Adherence to due process
- One social injury is compounded by another

Restorative:

- Problem-solving by expressing feelings/needs
- How to address problems in the future
- Attention to relationships
- Achievement of mutually desired outcomes
- Repair of social injury/damage

COMPARISON

Traditional:

- ❑ Conflict/wrongdoing viewed as the issue
- ❑ Individual/family vs. school
- ❑ Misconduct is defined as breaking school rules or letting school down

Restorative:

- ❑ Conflict/wrongdoing is recognized as interpersonal conflict with opportunity to learn
- ❑ Misbehavior defined as a harm done to one person or group

COMPARISON

Traditional:

- ❑ Accountability defined in terms of receiving punishment
- ❑ Adversarial relationship and process
- ❑ Includes an authority figure with the power to decide penalty, in conflict with wrong-doer

Restorative:

- ❑ Accountability defined as understanding the impact of actions, taking responsibility of choices and suggesting ways to repair harm
- ❑ Dialogue and negotiation
- ❑ Collaborative communication and cooperation with each other

COMPARISON

Traditional:

- ❑ School community as spectators: staff control while those directly affected are uninvolved and powerless

Restorative:

- ❑ School community is involved in facilitating restoration; those directly affected are brought into situation and empowered

Restorative practices further and grow a positive school climate

IS IT LEGAL?



Arizona Law on Student Discipline

IS THAT LEGAL?

Many Arizona discipline laws allow for discretion in the application by use of the word “may,” rather than “shall.”

The law also requires alternatives to traditional discipline!

ARIZONA LAW

Arizona Revised Statute § 15-841(B):

A pupil *may be expelled* for continued open defiance of authority, continued disruptive or disorderly behavior, violent behavior ...

§ 15-841(C):

A school district *may refuse to admit any pupil* who has been expelled ...

ARIZONA LAW

Arizona Revised Statute § 15-841(E):

As an alternative to suspension or expulsion, the *school district may reassign any pupil* to an alternative education program ...

ARIZONA LAW

Arizona Revised Statute § 15-841(F):

A school district *may also reassign a pupil to an alternative education program* if the pupil refuses to comply with rules, refuses to pursue the required course of study or refuses to submit to the authority of teachers, administrators or the governing board.

ARIZONA LAW

Arizona Revised Statute § 15-841(G):

A school district or charter school shall expel ... a pupil who is determined to have brought a firearm to a school ... except that the school district or charter school *may modify this expulsion requirement for a pupil on a case by case basis.*

ARIZONA LAW

Arizona Revised Statute § 15-841(H):

A school district or charter school shall expel ... a pupil who ... threatened an educational institution ... *except that the school district or charter school may modify this expulsion requirement for a pupil on a case by case basis* if the pupil participates in mediation, community service, restitution or other programs in which the pupil takes responsibility for the results of the threat.

ARIZONA LAW

Arizona Revised Statute § 15-841(I):

Each school district *shall establish an alternative to suspension program ...*

* * *

Pupils who would otherwise be subject to suspension ... and who meet the school district's requirements for participation in the alternative to suspension program shall be transferred to a location on school premises that is isolated from other pupils or transferred to a location that is not on school premises.

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE INTO PRACTICE



7 QUESTIONS THAT CHANGE SCHOOL DISCIPLINE

What happened?

How did it happen?

What part did you play in it?

What can you do to repair the harm?

How were you affected by what you did?

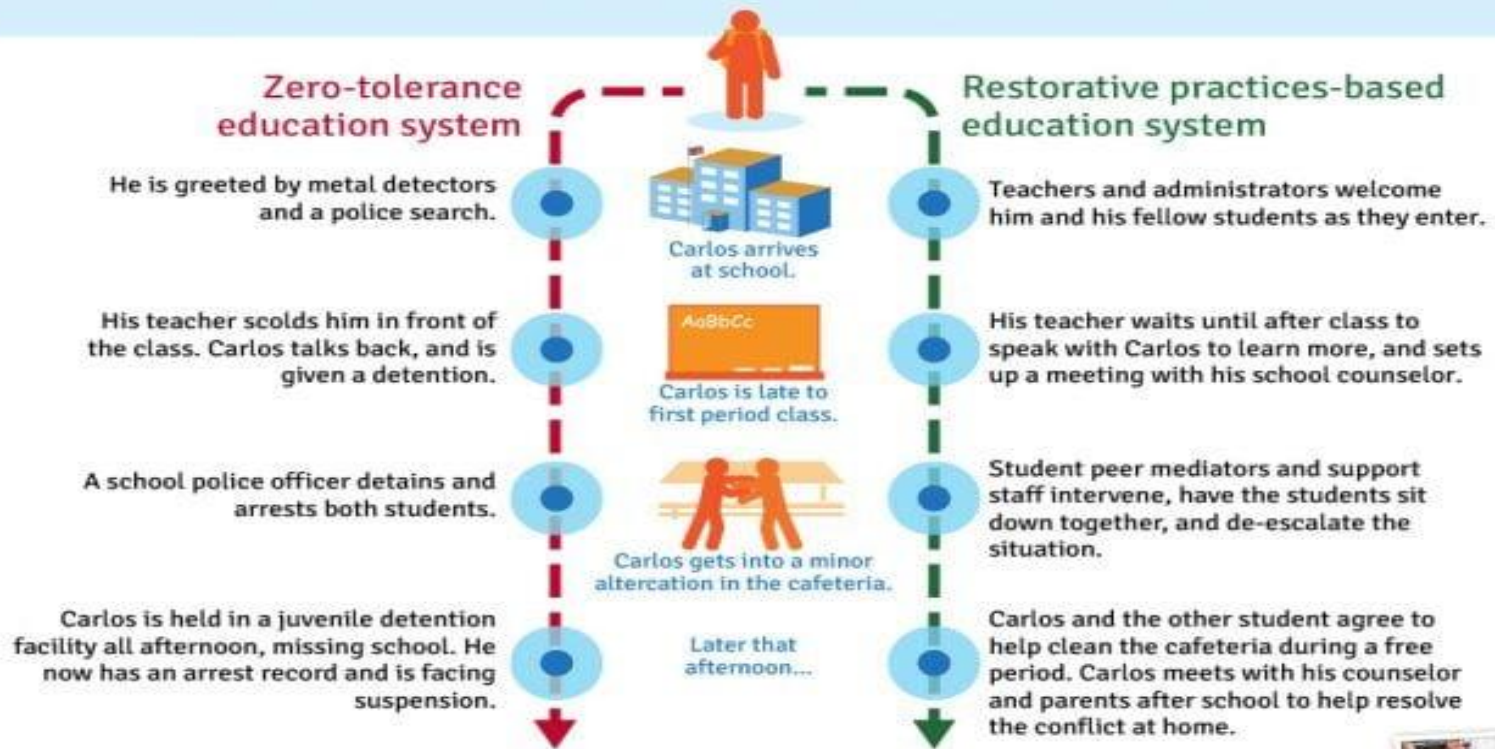
What do you need to make it right?

Who else was affected by what you did?

ONE KID – 2 PROCESSES

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.



Learn more about restorative practices:
www.otlcampaign.org/restorative-practices



INTO PRACTICE SCENARIO

Miguel and Joseph, both 6th grade students, were brought into the counseling office during their 5th period P.E. class by the security guard for fighting out in the yard during a basketball game. Miguel and Joseph were separated in the counseling office and asked to write a statement telling their side of the story.

INTO PRACTICE SCENARIO

Miguel wrote the following statement:

“Joseph kept throwing balls on the court messing up our game. We told him he couldn’t play with us because we already had enough people. I got mad that he was throwing balls into the court so I told him to stop. He started cussing me out saying he could do whatever he wanted to do, which made me more mad, so I started cussing him out too. Then he got in my face and pushed me, so I pushed him back. Then he swung at me and hit me in the chest so I started hitting him back.”

INTO PRACTICE SCENARIO

Joseph wrote the following statement:

“Miguel cussed at me so I started cussing back at him during the basketball game because I threw a ball. I got mad and walked up to him because he was cussing. I knocked into him and then we started hitting each other.”

INTO PRACTICE SCENARIO

Traditional Discipline:

1. How would the school respond to this incident?
2. What is the likely disciplinary outcome?
3. Who is held accountable, and how?
4. What does this process do for the relationship between Miguel and Joseph?
For the school community?

INTO PRACTICE SCENARIO

Restorative Justice:

A mediation is held with both students and an adult facilitator, using the following guiding questions:

1. What happened and what were you thinking at the time of the incident?
2. What have you thought about since?
3. Who has been affected by what happened and how (including community)?
4. What about this has been hardest for you?
5. What do you think needs to be done to make things as right as possible?

INTO PRACTICE SCENARIO

Restorative Justice:

Mediation revealed the following information:

- M and J were close friends through elementary school.
- They had a disagreement in the 6th grade and they haven't been friends since.
- J really wanted to play in the basketball game and felt left out when M said he couldn't play.
- Because he was upset that he couldn't play, J admitted to throwing the balls into the court.
- M has been trying very hard to control his anger over the past few months, and felt very upset with himself for letting his anger get the better of him.

INTO PRACTICE SCENARIO

Restorative Justice:

- J acknowledged that he had an anger problem.
- J and M both requested an anger management class to work on their anger issues.
- J and M both felt bad that all the other students in PE witnessed them fighting.
- J and M both acknowledged that they were sorry and would like to be friends again.
- J and M agreed that they needed to apologize to the students in their PE class.

INTO PRACTICE SCENARIO

Both students wrote apology letters which they read to the PE class.

“I felt really mad at myself for what happened yesterday. It harmed our relationship because we might not play basketball again. Fighting affects the school because when we fought a bunch of people may have wanted to jump in. I’m sorry for what everyone experienced yesterday and it will never happen again. It’s important that this won’t happen again because it effects school safety by making people feel scared.”

“I felt bad yesterday when the fight happened. It harmed our relationship by not trusting each other. That is how it affects our community, by everyone feeling that they hate one another. Fighting affects our school because it makes people not feel safe.”

The students missed one entire class period the day of the fight and 15 minutes the next morning.

INTO PRACTICE SCENARIO

Back to those traditional discipline questions:

1. How did the school respond to the incident?
2. What was the disciplinary outcome?
3. Who was held accountable, and how?
4. What did the process do for the relationship between Miguel and Joseph? For the school community?



CREATING A RESTORATIVE PROCESS IN YOUR DISTRICT

1. Introduce RP to school/district community
2. Identify an Implementation Team, including school/district lead
3. Determine level of interest through survey
4. Gather and review baseline discipline data, including IDEA/504 complaints, school climate and discipline

CREATING A RESTORATIVE PROCESS IN YOUR DISTRICT, Cont,

5. Create a system of support
6. Create a professional development plan
7. Train a selective group or team
8. Evaluate and refine efforts
9. Create a sustainability plan

CREATING A RESTORATIVE PROCESS IN YOUR DISTRICT

There must be buy-in from everyone involved for restorative justice to work.

Schools must maintain traditional disciplinary actions for circumstances where an offending student refuses to take responsibility for their actions and work with a victim.

POSITIVE OUTCOMES

- ❑ Improves school attendance
- ❑ Reduces disciplinary concerns
- ❑ Fewer classroom disruptions
- ❑ Higher academic performance
- ❑ More positive school climate
- ❑ Better relationships between adults and students
- ❑ Reduction of litigation

LAWYER'S PERSPECTIVE: BENEFITS OF RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

- ❑ An opportunity to reduce legal liabilities
- ❑ Reduce OCR Complaints (Title VI, IX, Section 504)
- ❑ Reduce due process complaints and state complaints
- ❑ Reduce tort claims, injunctions against harassment and other legal action

LAWYER'S PERSPECTIVE: BENEFITS OF RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

- ❑ Reduce attorney's fees and costs
- ❑ Reduce threats of litigation over disciplinary removals
- ❑ Promotes more positive relationships, which reduces likelihood of legal recourse as a first resort

Disclaimer

The information provided in this presentation is not intended to be legal advice for any specific situation. Please consult with your school or District's legal counsel for any specific legal advice needed.

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THANK YOU!

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