



4. Restorative Conferencing

Competency

Educator uses conferencing to facilitate and promote healthy relationships among students and colleagues

Key Method

The educator plans and implements conferencing as a restorative practices strategy in order to foster and promote healthy relationships, empower student voices, and repair harm.

Method Components

Restorative Justice

Inspired by indigenous practices, Restorative Justice (RJ) is a philosophy and theory of justice that emphasizes repairing the harm caused by conflict and wrongdoing. It provides an opportunity for everyone impacted by an incident to come together in a safe space to address their feelings and needs, and reach a resolution that repairs the harm and restores relationships.

Restorative Justice is based on the idea that “because crime hurts, justice should heal” (Braithwaite). The harm should not be matched by further harm but by restorative efforts.

Restorative Justice was introduced as part of the criminal justice system over 35 years ago, and was later adopted into the school system as an alternative to exclusionary disciplinary actions. The mission of Restorative Justice is to:

Repair: crime causes harm and justice requires repairing that harm

Encounter: the best way to determine how to do that is to have the parties decide together

Transform: this can cause fundamental changes in people, relationships and communities



Except where otherwise noted, this work is licensed under:

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Restorative Practices

Last Revised on Mar 17, 2022

(See more information in the Research section)

Guiding Principles

Restorative Justice is guided by these 7 principles. Restorative Justice:

1. Acknowledges that relationships are central to the building community
2. Builds systems that address misbehavior and harm in ways that strengthens relationships
3. Focuses on the harm done rather than only rule-breaking
4. Gives voice to the person harmed
5. Engages in collaborative problem solving
6. Empowers change and growth
7. Enhances responsibility

With the adverse impact of zero-tolerance discipline policy and the development of the school-to-prison pipeline, school districts across the country have looked for different ways to improve school climate and alternative ways for addressing misbehavior.

Restorative Justice in Schools (often referred to as Restorative Practice) is a set of practices and values that holistically prevents and repairs harm, builds community, and relationships resulting in a positive supportive school climate.

Repairing Harm

Repairing harm is foundational to restorative practices. According to the International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP) Restorative practices is an emerging social science that studies how to strengthen relationships between individuals as well as social connections within communities. Repairing harm is the first step in strengthening relationships that have been compromised by the intentional or unintentional actions or words.

School Wide Implementation

The following beliefs are foundational to successful implementation of Restorative Practices:

- Aim first to build classroom communities that are supported by clear agreements, authentic communication, and specific tools to bring issues and conflicts forward in a helpful way.
- Provide specific pathways to repair harm by bringing together those affected by misbehavior in a dialogue to address concerns, achieve understanding, and to come to agreement about setting things right.

Restorative Justice (practices) school implementations also needs to focus on:

- Building healthy relationships between students and school staff, as well as among adults within the school community



Except where otherwise noted, this work is licensed under:

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Restorative Practices

Last Revised on Mar 17, 2022

- Support student's healthy social and emotional development
- Create safe spaces for difficult conversations, deep emotions, and healing
- Shift the focus from intervention to prevention of disciplinary infractions
- Shift the paradigm from punitive to restorative disciplinary practices that repair harm and reduce suspensions, expulsions and arrests.

School culture and climate is the leading factor in deciding if a student is restored or punished. The entire school community (i.e., students, teachers, administrators, parents, and community members) needs to participate in the following best practices:

- Define common expectations for student behavior
- Teach and model Restorative Practices
- Allow a space for the learners' choice and voice
- Model and allow learners to resolve conflict

Restorative Conference and Agreement

To repair harm and restore the relationship(s), Restorative Conferencing can be used to address any incident of wrongdoing where harm has occurred. You should use conferencing only after students have a clear understanding of classroom/circle guidelines expectations and values. After this understanding is developed, you should use conferencing anytime unwanted behavior is noticed.

Conferencing can be between:

- Teacher-student
- Teacher-whole class
- Student-student

The following Strategies may be used during the Conference:

- Think-pair-share
- Affective Language (Using intentional, positive language; Avoiding sarcasm; Noticing the students; Expressing authentic empathy)
- A reflective piece that the student or students complete silently and then discuss in the conference

Restorative Intervention Plans

These can help to successfully reintegrate the student into the classroom. The process for completing a Restorative Intervention Plan is:

- Pre-Work: ensure all participants are made aware of the conference process, agree to participate, are provided the questions to be asked, and respond to any questions they may have.
- Conduct the meeting and allow all stakeholders to contribute to the conflict resolution process



Except where otherwise noted, this work is licensed under:

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Restorative Practices

Last Revised on Mar 17, 2022

- During the meeting develop an intervention plan that provides strategies to be used to prevent further harm from occurring.
- The last step of the meeting is to develop an agreement in the form of a contract and have all stakeholders sign it.

Benefits of Conferencing

- Students learn active listening skills and acceptable language.
- Students are held accountable for their words and actions.
- Students experience various levels of support offered within the school and restore relationship(s) that may have been damaged by a negative incident that occurred. Allows students opportunities to problem solve and create a plan of action for prevention of the same negative outcome

Supporting Rationale and Research

Costello, B; Wachtel, T. & Wachtel J. (2009). The Restorative Practices Handbook for Teachers, Disciplinarians and Administrators. International Institute for Restorative Practices: Bethlehem, PA.

Drewery, W., & Winslade, J. (2003) "Developing Restorative Practices in Schools: Flavour of the month or saviour of the system?" Presented at AARE/NZARE Conference, Auckland, Australia.

<http://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/viewdoc/download?doi=10.1.1.214.7827&rep=rep1&type=pdf>

Fronius, T.; Persson, H.; Guckenbug, Sara; Hurley, Nancy & Petrosino, A. (2016). Restorative Justice in U.S. Schools: A Research Review. West Ed and Prevention Research Center.

https://jprc.wested.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/RJ_Literature-Review_20160217.pdf

González, Thalia, Socializing Schools: Addressing Racial Disparities in Discipline Through Restorative Justice (January 24, 2015). Thalia González, Socializing Schools: Addressing Racial Disparities in Discipline Through Restorative Justice, in CLOSING THE SCHOOL DISCIPLINE GAP: EQUITABLE REMEDIES FOR EXCESSIVE EXCLUSION (Daniel J. Losen ed.,

2014)https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2728960

Morrison, B; Blood, P. & Thorsborne, M. (2005). Practice Restorative Justice in School Communities: The Challenge of Culture Change. Public Organization Review: A Global Journal, 5: 335-357, #2006. <http://www.ibarj.org/docs/morrison.pdf>



Except where otherwise noted, this work is licensed under:

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Restorative Practices

Last Revised on Mar 17, 2022

Wachtel, T.; O'Connell, T. & Wachtel, B. (2010). Restorative Justice Conferencing: Real Justice and the Conferencing Handbook. International Institute for Restorative Practices; Piper Press: Pipersville, PA.

Resources

General

[Discipline with dignity: Oakland classrooms try healing instead of punishment. Reclaiming Children and Youth](#)

[International Institute of Restorative Practices.](#)

[Restorative Practices: Fostering Healthy Relationships & Promoting Positive Discipline in Schools](#)

[Restorative Justice: Resources for Schools: Explore resources and case studies that demonstrate how to bring restorative justice to your school or classroom](#)

Conferencing

[Center for Justice and Reconciliation - Introduction to Conferencing](#)

[Defining Restorative Conferencing](#)

[Restorative Response Baltimore](#)

[Restorative Conferencing](#)

[Defining Restorative Conferencing](#)

[Restorative Practices meeting video](#)

[Schools Restorative Conferencing](#)

Conference Script Examples

[Person Responsible Script](#)

[Restorative Group Conferencing](#)

[Reflections on Restorative Conference Script](#)



Except where otherwise noted, this work is licensed under:

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Restorative Practices

Last Revised on Mar 17, 2022

Affective Language

[Adversarial vs Restorative Language](#)

[Making Affective Statements More Effective in Restorative Practices](#)

[Restorative Implementation Guide](#)

[Using Restorative Language for Student Self Reflection](#)

Submission Guidelines & Evaluation Criteria

To earn the micro-credential, you must receive a passing score in Parts 1 and 3, and receive a proficient for all components in Part 2.

Part 1. Overview Questions (Provides Context)

(400-500 words)

Please answer the following contextual questions to help our assessor understand your current situation. Please do not include any information that will make you identifiable to your reviewers.

1. Describe your school's demographics (including cultural background)?
2. What are your school's behavior and discipline policies? What does school discipline data reveal about your school community and the implementation of these policies?
3. What are your current challenges around building healthy relationships among staff, students, and community?
4. Describe your current classroom setting and demographics?
5. What are your classroom policies, expectations, and procedures?
6. How do you currently address conflict or misbehavior in your classroom?
7. Why did you choose to work on restorative conferencing?

Passing: Feedback provides evidence of comprehension of restorative practices as the reason for choosing this micro-credential to address specific needs. Current context is described fully. Challenges are articulated. Classroom policies, procedures, and expectations are described. Current responses to conflict and misbehavior are explained.

Part 2. Work Examples/Artifacts/Evidence

To earn this micro-credential, please submit the following **three artifacts** as evidence of your learning. *Please do not include any information that will make you or your students identifiable to your reviewers.*



Except where otherwise noted, this work is licensed under:

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Restorative Practices

Last Revised on Mar 17, 2022

Artifact 1: Conference Referral Document

Submit a completed Conference Referral Document.

- If your school/district does not already have one, design a one-page referral document for your classroom/school to report harm in the school community.
- Upload a completed referral form that was submitted by one of your students.

Artifact 2: Conference Script

Create and submit a script for facilitating a conference for the above referral.

Components that should be included:

- Welcome
- Setting the Intention and stating potential benefits
- Introductions
- Ground rules
- Format
- Information sharing
- Restorative Plan
- Agreements and Approvals

See resource section for examples of conference script

Artifact 3: Conference Video

(5-10 minutes)

Provide a video or audio recording of you facilitating a conference and using the script you have created.

Part 2. Rubric

	Proficient	Basic	Developing
Artifact 1: Conference Referral Document	Referral is completely filled out by the person who was harmed. Both parties agree to the conference.	Referral is partially filled out by the person who was harmed. Both parties agree to the conference.	Referral is not filled out by the person who was harmed. Both parties did not agree to the conference.
Artifact 2: Conference Script	Conference script includes all of the following components: -Welcome	Conference script includes most of the following components: -Welcome	Conference script includes a few of the following components: -Welcome



Except where otherwise noted, this work is licensed under:

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Restorative Practices

Last Revised on Mar 17, 2022

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Setting the Intention and stating potential benefits -Introductions -Ground rules -Format -Information sharing -Restorative Plan -Agreements and Approvals <p>Affective language is used in all parts of the script.</p> <p>Script is clear and easy to follow.</p> <p>Script allows for all voices to be heard.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Setting the Intention and stating potential benefits -Introductions -Ground rules -Format -Information sharing -Restorative Plan -Agreements and Approvals <p>Affective language is included in some parts of the script.</p> <p>Script is not easy to follow.</p> <p>Script allows for some voices to be heard.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Setting the Intention and stating potential benefits -Introductions -Ground rules -Format -Information sharing -Restorative Plan -Agreements and Approvals <p>Affective language is not included in the script.</p> <p>Script is not clear enough to follow.</p> <p>Script allows for only the facilitator's voice to be heard.</p>
Artifact 3: Conference Video	<p>Audio or Video is clear enough for the reviewers to be able to follow what is going on.</p> <p>Script is followed closely.</p> <p>All parties have an opportunity to express themselves.</p> <p>Affective language is consistently used by the facilitator.</p>	<p>Audio or Video is clear enough for the reviewers to be able to follow some of what is going on.</p> <p>Script is followed loosely.</p> <p>Some parties have an opportunity to express themselves.</p> <p>Affective language is used some of the time by the facilitator.</p> <p>An agreement was made and most</p>	<p>Audio or Video is missing or not viewable.</p> <p>Script is not followed.</p> <p>Only the facilitator has an opportunity to express themselves.</p> <p>Affective language is not used by the facilitator.</p> <p>An agreement was not made.</p>



Except where otherwise noted, this work is licensed under:

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Restorative Practices

Last Revised on Mar 17, 2022

	An agreement was made and all participants approved it.	participants approved it.	
--	---	---------------------------	--

Part 3 Reflection

(400-500 word limit)

Use the word count as a guide to write a personal reflection about your work on this micro-credential. For tips on writing a good reflection review the following resource:

[How Do I Write a Good Personal Reflection?](#)

Please do not include any information that will make you identifiable to your reviewers.

1. How did the reality of using the script match with your expectations?
2. What were the challenges that you had to overcome?
3. What worked well?
4. What didn't work well?
5. What are your next steps?
6. Have you noticed a difference in the relationships among and between stakeholder groups? Why or why not?

Passing: Reflection provides evidence that this activity has had a positive impact on relationships among and between stakeholder groups, or thoughtfully reflects on why not. Specific examples are cited directly from personal or work-related experiences to support claims. Also included are specific actionable steps the demonstrate how new learning will be integrated into future practices.



Except where otherwise noted, this work is licensed under:

<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Restorative Practices

Last Revised on Mar 17, 2022