Restorative Practices

involving adults in school communities

- What are Restorative Practices?
- Restorative Practices with Adults
What are Restorative Practices?
What are Restorative Practices?

- A way of viewing conflict and wrongdoing that focuses first on
  - the *harm* these cause to relationships, and
  - the *obligation* to repair that harm

- A way for people to face up to the *real consequences* of their behaviour

- A way for people affected by conflict and wrongdoing *to be heard* and to *have their say* in the ‘solution’
1. Misbehaviour/conflict is a violation of people and relationships

2. Violations create obligations and liabilities

3. A restorative approach seeks first to put things right

Fundamental Principles of Restorative Practices

(after Zehr and Mika, 1997)
A Reality

Our work in schools is *moral* work

It is also *emotional* work
Restorative Practices in Schools

BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

CLASSROOM

TEACHER TEAMS

PARENTS

Relationships
‘Traditional’ approach to conflict/wrongdoing

• What rule was broken?
• Who is responsible?
• What do they deserve?

‘Restorative’ approach to conflict/wrongdoing

• What happened?
• What harm has been done, to whom?
• What can be done to address the harm?
Underlying Belief

Those people who are *directly involved* and *most affected* are *best placed* to resolve a conflict or solve a problem.
Much, if not most, wrongdoing and conflict is *emotionally-driven*

Much, if not most, harm caused is *emotional harm*

The free expression of emotion in a safe environment enables the participants
to *metabolise this negative affect*
and work together towards solutions
A ‘Restorative’ Process is one which...

- Brings together *all those who have a stake* in a specific incident
- Recognises *who* has been affected
- Explores and acknowledges *how* they have been affected
- Identifies what needs to happen in order to *repair the harm* caused, and
- Enables the group to work out how to put *things as right as possible*
Restorative Practices with Students

- To better *educate* students towards self-directed right behaviour

- To better *promote, nurture* and *protect* healthy relationships among members of the community

- To enable students to *take responsibility* and to be accountable for the *real consequences* of wrongdoing
A ‘field of practice’

We operate restoratively by…

- Having **high expectations**
  and insisting on **high standards** of behaviour

- While providing **high levels of support**
  and care for individuals
  to meet these expectations

Focussing on **restoring any harm done**,  
and seeing incidents primarily as **‘teachable moments’**
“Behaviour is confronted with disapproval…
…within a continuum of respect and support”
The **PROBLEM** is the problem.

The **PERSON** is not the problem.
Restorative Practices with Students

A personal ‘continuum of action’

INFORMAL
- Affective Statements & Questions
- Restorative Enquiry
- Restorative Discussion

FORMAL
- Impromptu Conference
- Problem Solving Circle
- Formal Conference

Restorative Practices in Schools
Dr Lauren Abramson
Psychologist
Community Conferencing Centre - Baltimore
Community Conference

The purpose of the conference is…

to have the difficult discussions that need to occur
with the aim of repairing the harm done

within a highly-structured conversation
with specific ground rules

and led by a trained facilitator
Community Conference

Three main phases:

1. Describing and acknowledging what happened
2. Exploring and understanding the harm
3. Repairing the harm
Restorative Questions

- What happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- What have you thought about since?
- Who has been affected by what you did?
- In what way?
- What do you think you need to do to make things right?
... and for those affected

- What did you think when you realised 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?
For those responsible...
- What happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- What have you thought about since?
- Who has been affected by what you did?
- In what way?

- What do you think you need to do to make things right?

For those affected...
- What did you think when you realised 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?
Restorative Practices is a *philosophy, a way of being*…

*It’s not just a tool…*

though it obviously has implications for practice

*It’s about…*

building, nurturing and restoring healthy relationships

*It works best…*

when embedded in whole-school culture & practice
Community

Restorative Practices in Schools
Building & Nurturing School Community

A Blueprint for Positive Relationships

1. share and *maximise positive affect*;

2. share and *minimise (metabolise) negative affect*;

3. create opportunities for the *expression of affect*.

Anything that helps 1-3 builds community;

anything that prevents 1-3 threatens community

Restorative Practices in Schools
Restorative Practices with Adults
Four Patterns of Behaviour

- Withdrawal
- Attack Other
- Attack Self
- Avoidance
Some situations will necessarily require a policy, administrative, industrial or legal response.

In many cases, though, a timely restorative process can help prevent escalation to legal or industrial proceedings.

That right remains, however.
Underlying Belief

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Much, if not most, harm caused is *emotional harm*

The free expression of emotion in a safe environment enables the participants to *metabolise this negative affect* and work together towards solutions.
And Another Reality

Even where a formal response is required, according to fair process and policy, codes of conduct, etc...

There can still be a need to deal afterwards with the **emotional fallout**

The free expression of emotion in a safe environment enables the participants to *metabolise this negative affect* and work together towards solutions
Restorative Practices with Adults

Invites people to *share their stories & experiences* in a way that allows *expression of emotion*… and seeks solutions

Feeling *heard* and *understood* can itself be very powerful

A personal ‘continuum of action’
Three main phases:

- Describing and acknowledging what happened
- Exploring and understanding the harm
- Repairing the harm
Workplace Conference

For those responsible...

- What happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- What have you thought about since?
- Who has been affected by what you did?
- In what way?

- What do you think you need to do to make things right?

For those affected...

- What did you think when you realised 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?
For generalised conflict, dysfunction...

- What has happened?
- What have you done to contribute to this?
- What do you think about this?
- Who has been affected by what has happened?
- In what way?
- What has been the hardest thing for you, personally?
- What do you think you need to do to make things right?
- What can we all do to prevent this happening again?
In the Restorative Conference, 

**empathy**

is the path through the 

**negative emotion**

The free expression of emotion in a safe environment enables the participants to *metabolise* this negative affect and work together towards solutions.
Restorative Practices with Adults

INFORMAL
- Affective Statements & Questions
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Restorative Practices in Schools
TEACHER TEAMS
PARENTS
Extreme anger often masks the more vulnerable emotions of fear, shame or distress.

Understanding and empathy are antidotes to anger.

Restorative Practices in Schools

ATTACK OTHER

PARENTS

TEACHER TEAMS
Restorative Practices with Adults

Three main phases:

1. Describing and acknowledging what happened
2. Exploring and understanding the harm
3. Repairing the harm
Restorative Practices with Adults

In Restorative Practices, *empathy* is the path through the *negative emotion*.

The free expression of emotion in a safe environment enables the participants to *metabolise this negative affect* and work together towards solutions.
Restorative Practices with Adults

- Bring together *all those who have a stake* in a specific incident
- Recognise *who* has been affected
- Explore and acknowledge *how* they have been affected
- Identify what needs to happen in order to *repair the harm* caused, and
- Enables the group to work out how to put *things as right as possible*

*Embedding restorative practices in the school-wide culture*

*vaccinates* against *conflict*,
*builds trust*,
and makes having these difficult conversations *easier.*
 Behaviours Management

Classroom

Teacher Teams

Parental Relationships

Restorative Practices in Schools
For further information...

rpiassn.org

rpiqueensland.org

rpforschools.net