

# BUILDING A RESTORATIVE CLASSROOM



TEACHER'S GUIDE



**SSC**  
Safe Schools Consortium



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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We would like to **thank** the following individuals for their valuable contributions to this guide:

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# INTRODUCTION

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## WHAT IS RESTORATIVE JUSTICE?

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Restorative justice is a set of practices and a philosophy grounded in indigenous teachings which question the underlying assumptions of our traditional, punitive approaches to school climate and discipline. Restorative school discipline systems increase the investment of all community members (students, family, school staff) in the collective health of the group, deterring misconduct through the development of intrinsic motivation toward pro-social behavior rather than through the threat of exclusion and other sanctions. Restorative justice involves the whole community, including those who have been harmed, in determining how wrongs will be redressed, relationships repaired, and the community made whole again. This model of accountability has a powerful effect on students' senses of connectedness and well-being, reducing the likelihood of future negative behaviors.

In short, while traditional school discipline systems orient students' thinking toward possible negative consequences for themselves, restorative systems orient students' thinking toward accountability for the community at large. Conversely, the punitive approach relies on fear of punishment to induce compliance with rules

### SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE

As awareness of the existence and impact of the school-to-prison pipeline has increased in recent years, traditional discipline practices have been subject to much scrutiny. Students of color are being suspended and expelled from our nation's schools at an alarmingly high rate. More than 25 percent of Chicago Public School students have been suspended at least once in their school careers. Despite the frequency with which traditional discipline procedures are utilized, there is no clear evidence that

they make schools safer or have any lasting positive effect on student behavior.

Clear and convincing evidence shows a critical need to change the way in which schools manage student discipline. Research shows that exclusionary practices, such as suspension and expulsion, are:

- Have long-term negative effect on student achievement.
- Disproportionately impact students of color.
- Are associated with lower test scores, decreased graduation rates, and increased incarceration rates later in life.

In response to chilling statistics on the rates at which students of color, particularly African-American boys, are being suspended and expelled from our nation's schools, community groups and advocates have embraced restorative justice as a powerful solution.

### CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS' SHIFT TO RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Making the change from traditional discipline practices to restorative justice in Chicago's public schools, which previously held the nation's record for student suspensions, requires a major shift at all levels of the district's approach to school discipline. Schools and their staff are called on to re-conceptualize the meaning of school community and the process of holding one another accountable.

Three groups with a long and well-established history of promoting social justice in Chicago Public Schools and communities have come together to form the

Safe Schools Consortium (SSC) to advocate for and support the expansion of restorative justice across Chicago's schools:

**Alternatives, Inc.** Has over 45 years of youth-development work in the community and in the Chicago Public Schools, and through one seed planted by a youth worker, Pat Zamora, in 1996 – Alternatives has continued to provide restorative justice training and practice options with students across Chicago, offers technical assistance for school administrators and teachers, and advocates for policy changes.

**The Chicago Teachers Union (CTU)** Quest Center, in its role as the CTU's professional development arm, has been promoting teacher development and best practices in education for more than 20 years.

**Voices of Youth in Chicago Education (VOYCE)** is an alliance of students of color from all across Chicago convened by Chicago-based Communities United. Whose mission is to promote youth leadership by organizing young people to advocate for the change and reform of school policies and programs that further student success and achievement.

The advancement of restorative justice practices aligns with each organization's mission, and the strategic alliance of these three dynamic institutions brings together community, pedagogical, and organizing expertise that enables the SSC to both advocate for the implementation of restorative justice and provide educators with the professional development opportunities, instructional materials, and resources to successfully implement it.

Restorative justice's greatest strength is that it calls on everyone involved (students, school staff, family members, community) to reflect on the role that they play, at a subconscious level, in reproducing and supporting behaviors and practices that create a non-restorative school climate. This level of self-reflection requires vulnerability, courage, and lots of practice.

## HOW TEACHERS CAN BRING RESTORATIVE JUSTICE TO THEIR CLASSROOMS

Concerned teachers can see the terrible consequences of traditional discipline at the system level, but that doesn't necessarily make finding alternatives to traditional discipline easier at the classroom level. When a teacher's patience is low, the appeal of sending students out of the classroom to the dean's office is high – it is merely a quick fix that allows the teachers to return to their lesson. This, however, is a dangerously slippery slope. The more students are pushed out of their classrooms, the more overloaded the discipline referral process becomes, and the more students end up with suspensions. It also sends the message that this misbehaving student is no longer part of the classroom community.

While students receive the greatest benefit when whole schools make the shift to restorative discipline, individual educators work in partnership with students to make a positive difference with their students by implementing these practices at the classroom level.

The activities in this guide can assist classroom teachers in establishing community-oriented norms and accountability systems among their students even in the absence of a whole-school restorative framework. Restorative justice practices align with the social and emotional learning standards of both the Illinois State Board of Education and the Chicago Public Schools' Framework for Teaching, which are highlighted throughout the guide.

This five-section guide clearly articulates the rationale and research behind the push for a more inclusive approach to classroom management. It contains activities, resources, and prompts for teacher reflection.

All of these materials have been carefully designed to help educators and their students make the shift toward viewing justice not as a process of assigning blame and punishment, but rather as an opportunity for bolstering healthier community ties and building deeper relationships.

# LETTER TO TEACHERS

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## DEAR FELLOW TEACHERS,

Welcome to the Teacher's Guide to Restorative Justice! In this guide, you will both deepen your understanding of restorative justice (RJ) principles and philosophy, and learn strategies to help live these principles with your students. As a sixteen-year teaching veteran, I can say that adopting restorative justice practices has been the most important, transformative decision of my career. Regardless of which initiatives come and go in the district or school, RJ can remain a constant in your practice. As teachers, we wear many hats, and although we are not the counselor, social worker, or nurse, we are a counselor, social worker, and nurse because our students come to us with disparate experiences. Intentionally implementing restorative justice practices honors those youth and experiences with dignity, which includes learning about and experiencing authentic accountability.

More than likely, you probably already do/believe some of the things you are going to find in this guide; some of it might feel like a natural extension of your teaching. On the other hand, while some of it might feel clunky or unnatural, stay with it. When I started doing weekly talking circles, I was very nervous about implementing them in some of my "livelier" classes. I did it anyway, and although some students had to practice the process more than others, it became evident that those students in those classes needed the talking circles the most. On student evaluations of my class, students consistently communicate that they feel safe and respected in my class and identify our talking circles as one of its best features. On the first day of class this year, students whom I had previously taught asked if we would be doing talking circles again. To me, this is the greatest indicator of the importance of this practice.

I hope that these principles and practices have as profound an impact on your practice as they have had on mine. As I continue to grow and develop my RJ practices, I am excited that more and more of you are on this journey with me.

Happy Reading,

**Missy Hughes**  
**TEAM Englewood Community Academy**



# THE SAFE SCHOOLS CONSORTIUM (SSC)

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## ABOUT THE SSC

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The SSC aims to create safe and supportive learning environments by dismantling exclusionary discipline and promoting restorative justice practices that support the social and emotional development, behavioral health, and academic success of all students, especially young people of color who are disproportionately impacted. The SSC works with teachers and students in Chicago Public Schools (CPS) and beyond to transform school-level disciplinary practices, build restorative school climates, and advance systems change to support the long-term success and sustainability of restorative justice practices throughout the district.

The SSC is a unique collaboration of three partner organizations: Alternatives, Inc., Chicago Teachers Union (CTU) Quest Center, and Voices of Youth in Chicago Education (VOYCE). This was made possible with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF). The partner organizations are committed to a collective impact approach, bringing together expertise in youth development, teacher professional development, and systems change.

Alternatives, Inc. pioneered restorative justice practices in the Chicago Public Schools, leading the way with the very first high school peer jury in 1996. They have trained well over 10,000 CPS students and teachers in restorative justice practices that have been shown to successfully reduce the use of harsh discipline methods and their disproportionate impact on young men of color.

CTUF Quest Center is the professional development (PD) arm of the Chicago Teachers Union Foundation and has been providing PD to Chicago Public School teachers for more than 25 years, engaging thousands of teachers in classroom management and learning environment PD. CTUF Quest Center also places a

special emphasis on nurturing teachers to be leaders within and outside of the schools in which they teach and maintains a strong commitment to social justice.

Voices of Youth in Chicago Education (VOYCE) is an alliance of students of color from across Chicago. Its mission is to develop youth leadership to advance systems change to build supportive, restorative school culture, and promote positive outcomes for youth. VOYCE is convened by Chicago-based Communities United. Over the past year, VOYCE youth leaders have advanced state and district level policy reforms that eliminated the use of zero-tolerance policies and shifted emphasis to restorative alternatives.

## THE PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

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The purpose of this guide is to aid teachers and support staff in building a trauma informed, intentional relationships with students to help prevent school push out. This document is not a curriculum. It is, however, a useful tool for educators to use in their classrooms. It is meant to empower teachers to interrupt the school to prison-pipeline at the classroom level and to help build a core set of student skills, including: collaborating, self-managing, decision making, listening, speaking, perspective-taking, and reflecting.

This guide is aligned with state and local standards. It focuses on several components of the CPS Framework for Teaching, such as:

- 2a. Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport
- 2b. Establishing a Culture for Learning
- 2c. Managing Classroom Procedures
- 2d. Managing Student Behavior
- 4a. Reflecting on Teaching and Learning
- 4c. Communicating With Families

In addition, this document addresses many of the Illinois Social Emotional Learning (SEL) Standards, such as:

- G1. Develop Self-Awareness and Self-Management Skills to Achieve School and life Success
- G2. Use Social-Awareness and Interpersonal Skills to Establish and Maintain Positive Relationships
- G3. Demonstrate Decision-making Skills and Responsible Behaviors in Personal, School and Community Contexts

This guide contains five sections. Each section begins with an explanation of the skills associated with the content as well as its specific alignment with the CPS Framework for Teaching and Illinois SEL Standards. This is followed by a discussion of the philosophy and an in-depth explanation of the restorative practice highlighted in that section. Each section also includes a series

of reflection questions designed to prompt educators to apply the information to their own teaching. Each section concludes with a real world story from the classroom taken directly from the work that Alternatives, Inc. has done in CPS. Finally, each section includes a series of classroom activities that further restorative justice practices in the classroom. These activities are meant as a jumping off point for educators and should be modified to fit a range of classrooms.

### THE SSC'S APPROACH: FORGED BY ON-THE-GROUND EXPERIENCE

This guide was developed through collaboration between Walter Taylor, Professional Development Facilitator at the CTU Quest Center, Restorative Justice Practitioners from Alternatives, Inc. and with input and feedback from Voices of Youth in Chicago Education (VOYCE). Walter Taylor at the CTU Quest Center played a critical role in envisioning the teachers' guide, ensuring teacher engagement in the development of the guide, and aligning the guide with the CPS Framework for Teaching.

Alternatives, Inc. began its restorative justice work in 1996 at Senn High School with a group of youth who felt that students should have a voice in the school discipline system. This occurred soon after the passing of zero-tolerance discipline policies and students were being suspended in high frequency for interpersonal conflicts and minor behavior issues that stemmed from strained student-teacher relationships. The students knew that suspensions did not effectively resolve the underlying issues, and felt that if they could talk peer-to-peer with the students in conflict they might be able to come to a better understanding of the issue and a solution that kept the students in school. Thus, the Alternatives, Inc. Restorative Justice Program and first Chicago school-based Peer Jury were created. Since that time, Alternatives, Inc. has partnered with CPS to provide professional development, technical assistance, and youth programming to schools.

Alternatives, Inc. also played an influential role in changing the CPS Student Code of Conduct to include

restorative justice practices in 2007. VOYCE has continued that work, working with allies to create sweeping changes to the CPS Student Code of Conduct as well as ground-breaking statewide policy changes to end the use of zero tolerance in Illinois and promote a shift towards supportive, restorative alternatives.

Alternatives, Inc. maintains a strong approach emphasizing the following priorities:

**Capacity Building:** Our goal is to develop a school's capacity to implement restorative discipline by strengthening knowledge, skills, and systems for effective implementation.

**Youth-Driven:** Peer conferences and Circles are led by youth in order to foster leadership and positive peer relationships, which are best practices in youth development.

**Individualized:** While restorative practices are grounded in a set of values and utilize a continuum of practices, they are flexible and can be used in a variety of contexts. We ensure that our training and coaching meet the individual needs of schools.

**Holistic:** We integrate our restorative justice work with positive youth development theory\* and social emotional learning standards. We also encourage schools to integrate restorative practices beyond the formal disciplinary process and into the everyday culture of the school.

\*See appendix for a chart describing the intersection of positive youth development and restorative justice.

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## SECTION

# 01

## Foundation of Restorative Justice

### **CPS FRAMEWORK ALIGNMENT:**

- 2a. Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport
- 2d. Managing Student Behavior
- 4a. Reflecting on Teaching and Learning
- 4d. Growing and Developing Professionally

### **SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL ALIGNMENT:**

- G3: Demonstrate Decision-Making Skills and Responsible Behaviors in Personal, School and Community Contexts

### **SKILL DEVELOPMENT:**

Reflecting, Analyzing, and Synthesizing



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## WHAT IS RESTORATIVE JUSTICE?

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Restorative Justice is a philosophy that maintains that all members of a community have a collective responsibility to develop and sustain positive relationships in order to prevent harm from occurring, and that when conflict does occur, it should be addressed in a way that focuses on the harm caused, rather than on the rule/law that was broken. Restorative Justice says that those who are most affected by the incident must have a say in how the harm is addressed and repaired.

Restorative Justice is a values-based philosophy rooted in dignity, trust, compassion, and respect. It is implemented using a variety of restorative practices, the goals of which are to strengthen relationships, promote accountability and healing, and encourage skill building. Some practices are preventative and based on building relationships, while others address healing and repairing harm that has already been caused. As shown in Figure 1.1.

“Creating a restorative school culture is transformative because students are able to engage in the process of redressing harm, discipline becomes focused on rebuilding and strengthening relationships, and students develop essential social-emotional and academic skills that are transferable and beneficial beyond the school setting.”

- *Walter Taylor,*

*NBCT, Director of Professional Development  
at the Chicago Teachers Union Foundation Quest Center*



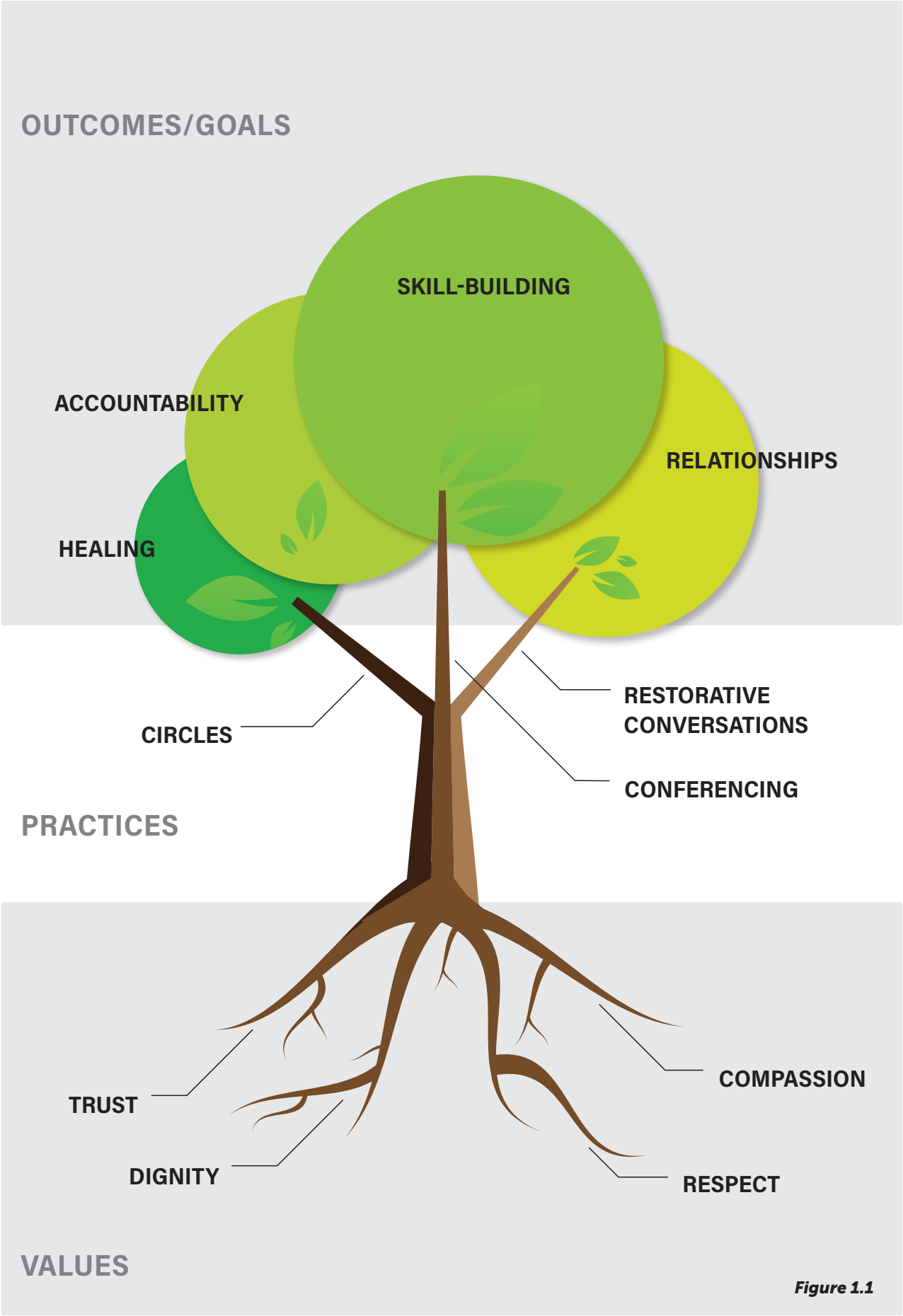


Figure 1.1

## **PUNITIVE PRACTICES FEED THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE**

Since the school shootings of the mid-1990s and the subsequent passage of Zero Tolerance policies, schools have been increasingly concerned with preventing violence and establishing safe and supportive climates for learning. In an attempt to create safe environments, schools have endorsed and practiced discipline policies that relied heavily on suspensions, expulsions, and arrests to deter student misconduct.

An over-reliance on exclusionary discipline practices, in which teachers and staff are left out of the discipline process once a student is sent to the disciplinarian, has resulted in a disconnected system. While punitive discipline is frequently used to address conflicts and misbehavior, research shows that this approach often does not create the desired impact of lasting, positive change. When those most affected by a student's actions are not involved in addressing the underlying issues that motivated the behavior, any disciplinary action is ineffective, and any improvement in the student's behavior is often short lived because authentic change has not occurred. When those most affected are able to express how they were impacted by a student's behavior, it allows the student to reflect about the harm caused and take ownership of repairing that harm with those individuals. Research supports this assertion:

- **As of 2013, Chicago had the highest rate of suspensions in the nation. CPS had 82 high schools where over 25% of the students have been suspended, amounting to 74,125 students who have been suspended at least once. While rates have begun to decline, suspension rates are still strongly related to students' prior test scores, their race, and their gender.**
- **Suspensions and expulsions do not improve students' behavior.**
- **The higher a school's rate of suspension and expulsion, the lower the academic achievement of its students -- even when taking socio-economic status out of the equation.**
- **Suspensions and expulsions have damaging, long-term effects on student behavior and learning. Students who are suspended even once are twice as likely to drop out.**
- **Young people who drop out of high school are eight times more likely to be incarcerated as those who graduate.**

### A STRONG SENSE OF SCHOOL CONNECTEDNESS PREDICTS:

- Fewer school conduct problems
- Higher grades
- Lower levels of depression
- Greater optimism



### DISCIPLINE PARADIGMS

The chart across explains the two differing paradigms' foundational frameworks and how they approach harm. While a punitive lens focuses on the laws or rules that are broken, a restorative lens focuses on the relationships of the individuals and the harm they experienced.

### WHY IS SCHOOL CLIMATE SO IMPORTANT?

How a school approaches discipline is directly connected to the overall school culture and climate. This culture and climate affects not only students' behavior, but also their overall success as students. According to the National Longitudinal Study on Adolescent Health (1997), when students feel connected to the school they attend, valued by teachers, and close to people at school, they have stronger emotional health and are less likely to engage in risky behavior.

# DISCIPLINE PARADIGMS

## PUNITIVE

**Inappropriate behavior violates the rules and authority**

- Violations create guilt
- Justice requires school authority to determine blame and impose punishment

**KEY QUESTIONS:**

- What rule or law has been broken?
- Who did it?
- What punishment should they receive?

**CENTRAL ASSUMPTION:**

Punishment and fear of future punishment will deter future misconduct.

A **PUNITIVE** Discipline Structure is inflexible and defined by generalized responses without consideration for relationships between the people involved or the situation's complexity, and are punitive in nature. The severity of each intervention escalates with the intention of punishing youth to "teach them a lesson". It does not address the harm or teach new skills.

## RESTORATIVE

**Inappropriate behavior is a violation of people and relationships**

- Violations create obligations
- Justice involves persons harmed, those who caused harm, and school community members in a process to repair the harm

**KEY QUESTIONS:**

- Who has been hurt?
- What are their needs?
- What needs to be done to repair the harm and to prevent any future harm?

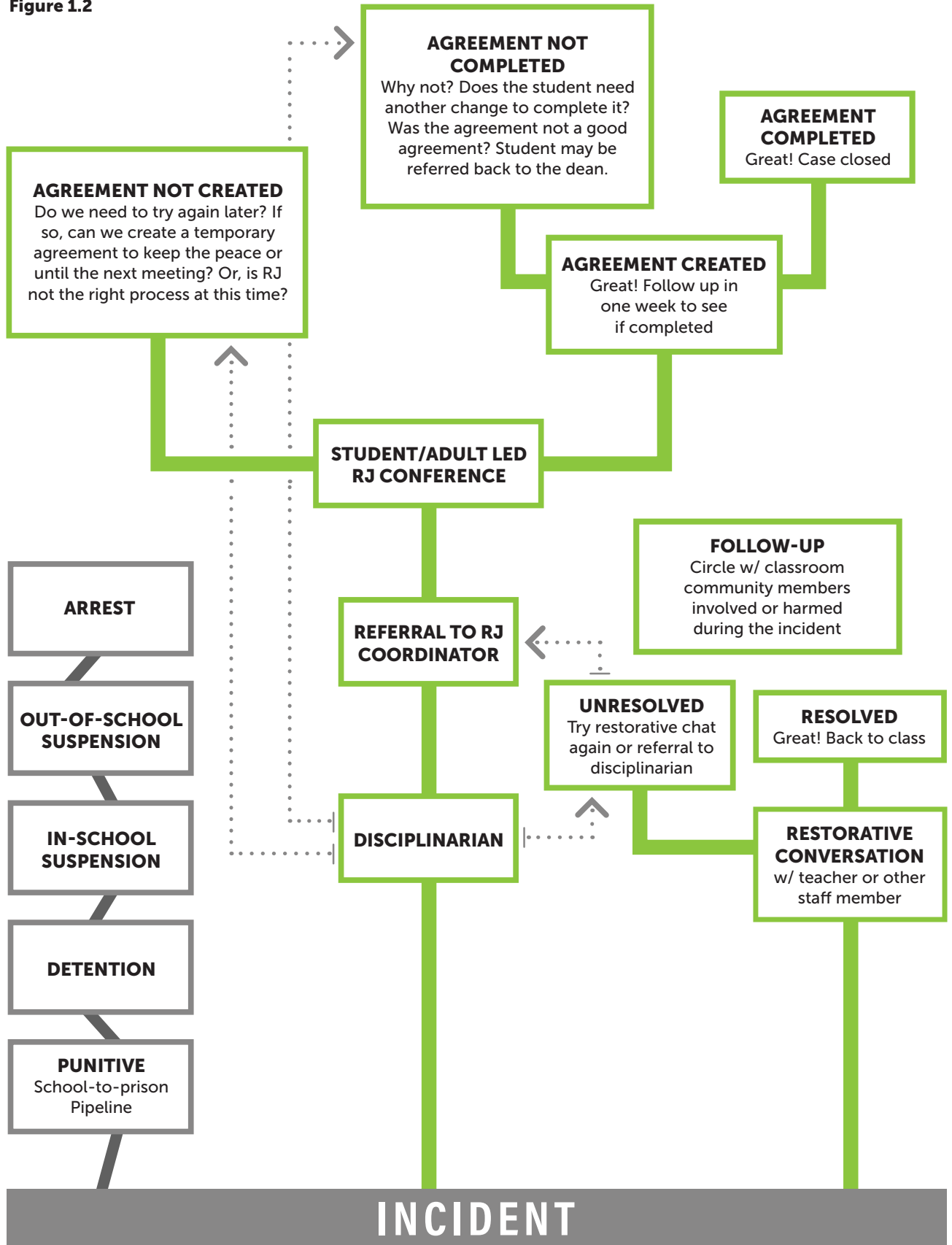
**CENTRAL ASSUMPTION:**

Strengthening relationships and holding people accountable for repairing harm will deter future misconduct.

A **RESTORATIVE** Discipline Structure includes restorative practices at each level. The more severe the harm, the more involved the practice. This requires more time, people and a robust plan for making things right as we move up the structure. The structure is specific to the incident and those involved. Flexibility is required to maximize the effectiveness.

# RESTORATIVE VS PUNITIVE

Figure 1.2



## A WHOLE SCHOOL RESTORATIVE APPROACH

A whole school approach requires commitment and involvement from all stakeholders in all areas of school life. While a whole school approach is needed to transform school culture, this guide focuses on the role of the teacher in that transformation. Even if there isn't buy-in yet from all the stakeholders in your school, beginning to implement a restorative approach at the classroom level can have a powerful impact on students' interactions with one another.

## RESTORATIVE PRACTICES IN SCHOOLS

The following are restorative practices used in Chicago Public Schools. They range from purely preventative community building practices to more formalized discipline strategies used to address harm; however, they are all rooted in and work toward restorative justice goals and values.

## RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PRACTICES PROMOTE STUDENT SUCCESS AND SAFETY

Unlike exclusionary discipline practices, which impede growth and have been shown to disproportionately affect young men of color, restorative practices build a school climate of connectedness and facilitate the development of critical social-emotional skills. The focus is on healing for those who have been harmed, those who caused the harm, and the community as a whole.

The impact of these practices is just beginning to be shown in research findings, but the evidence so far has validated what restorative justice practitioners see every day:

- School districts that have focused on decreasing suspensions have seen an increase in graduation rates.
- Stronger relationships among students, staff, and parents make a school safer. Even if a school is at a disadvantage in other ways, efforts focused on developing trust and respect among all in the school community are more likely to succeed.
- Restorative practices have been shown to result in student improvement in the areas of adaptability and stress management.

# LEADERSHIP TEAM

## TEACHERS:

Teachers can manage their classroom restoratively and use restorative conversations to build and repair classroom community. They can request and participate in restorative discipline processes for students who receive write-ups.

## SUPPORT STAFF:

Support Staff like recess monitors can lead circle rituals for smoother transitions to and from recess. Security can have restorative conversations with students in the hallways and participate in restorative processes for incidents in which they are involved.

## PARENTS, FAMILY, & COMMUNITY:

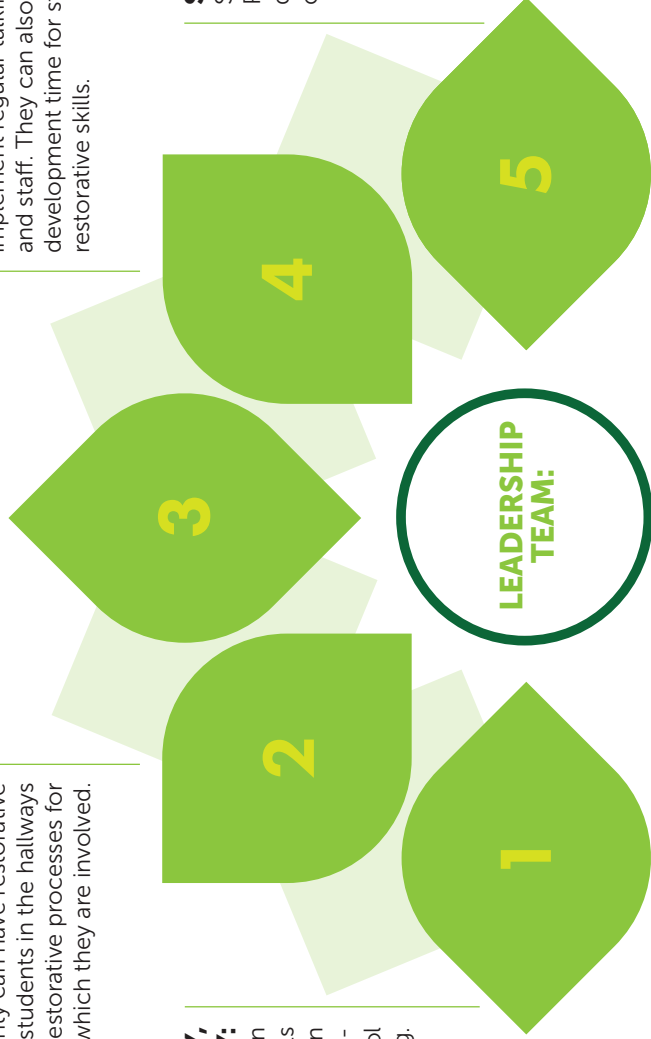
Parents, Family, & Community can participate in Local School Councils and Parent Advisory Committees can be trained on applying RJ to strengthen parent engagement in the school and to support their own parenting.

## ADMINISTRATION:

Administrators can model restorative conversations when holding their staff accountable and implement regular talking circles for teachers and staff. They can also dedicate professional development time for staff to learn and develop restorative skills.

## STUDENTS:

Students can get trained to be Peace Ambassadors and handle discipline referrals or learn to co-keep circles in the classrooms.



In a Leadership Team, representatives from all stakeholders meet to strategize and problem solve for schoolwide culture shift. Make plans to promote restorative practices within the school and ensure that the messaging around restorative justice is consistent and visible.

Figure 1.3

**CONFLICT OR HEALING CIRCLES**

Conducted to heal and generate a plan to address harm after a fight or other major incident

Can involve family members or members of the school community who were affected such as teachers, counselors, etc.

Can occur when a student returns from suspension

Circle Keeper

Family members (sometimes)

Those most closely involved in the situation

**PEER CONFERENCES**  
(Formerly Peer Jury and Mediation)

Structured process led by trained students or staff

Response to classroom misconduct, conflicts with teachers, tardiness, minor property damage, name-calling, threats, etc.

Referrals usually come from the discipline office or directly from teachers or students

1 trained staff member

2-4 trained students (sometimes)

Referred student(s)

Deans

Referring teacher

**RESTORATIVE CONVERSATION**

One-on-one semi-structured conversation between staff and student(s) in response to a behavior that is causing a negative impact

Includes mediation between students or students and staff

May, in some situations, resolve issues before they escalate to a discipline referral

Staff member and individual student or small group of students

**TALKING CIRCLES**

Used for check-in and check-out at the start/end of the class or week

Build relationships and community in the classroom

Provide opportunities for students to talk about a topic with multiple opinions, make a group decision by consensus, discuss a difficult topic, etc

Whole classrooms

Teams

After-school clubs

Advisories

Students in in-school suspension

Staff and/or parents

## EXAMPLES OF RESTORATIVE PRACTICES WORKING IN SCHOOLS

- Senn High School:**  
Each school year, Senn holds over 50 restorative Circles and hundreds of restorative conversations. 88% of students come to 'agreements' and 90% of them complete their agreements. 75% of referred students say that going through the process helped them build skills in empathy and communication.
- Sullivan High School:**  
After implementing restorative justice, misconduct episodes dropped by 45% and attendance rose from 80% to 90% while out-of-school suspensions were reduced by 73%.
- Uplift Community High School:**  
In 2014-2015 over 600 days of suspension (both in-school, ISS, and out-of-school suspension, OSS) were avoided because of RJ. Nearly 90% of youth referred to peer conferences completed their agreements.
- TEAM Englewood High School:**  
In 2014-2015 over 350 days of suspension (both in-school, ISS, and out-of-school suspension, OSS) were avoided because of RJ.

## EXAMINING MISBEHAVIOR IN CLASS THROUGH A RESTORATIVE LENS

The misbehaviors we see are only the tip of the iceberg. The iceberg below is a visualization of the idea that only when we look underneath the surface can we discover the root issues that need to be addressed in order to resolve the problem. For many of the youth we work with, what we find under the surface is trauma. For some it's trauma from a specific incident and for some it's chronic exposure to traumas that become normalized. The self-protective habits that youth develop in response to trauma can sometimes lead to conflict with adults and peers in many different ways. Punitive discipline only addresses the behavior at the surface of the issue. Through restorative practices, we have the opportunity to go deeper to see where the behavior is coming from. What we find underneath the surface will impact the course of action we take to prevent further harm in the future.

### Questions for Teacher Reflection:

- How can teachers in your school support each other to use restorative practices with students?
- What elements of restorative justice does your school already have in place?
- What could your school do to be more restorative?
- In what ways can you address student misbehavior restoratively in your classroom, even if the rest of your school isn't using restorative practices?

# ICEBERG

Getting to what is underneath classroom misbehavior.



Figure 1.4

## EXAMPLE FROM THE CLASSROOM:

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### MICHAEL'S STORY

Michael, a freshman, was sent to the police room for loudly playing music on his phone and rough-housing in a computer lab, which resulted in a broken keyboard. There, a police officer said that Michael was being uncooperative and disrespectful after he kept repeating, "I don't talk to police without my mama." Michael was handcuffed and pushed backwards into a chair and told to shut up. The officer repeatedly threatened to incarcerate Michael while taunting him with a Taser.

Finally the principal and dean consented for Michael to be removed from the police room to have a Circle instead. On three occasions after leaving the police room, Michael had tried to explain to an adult what had just happened to him. On each occasion, he was told to 'be quiet', 'not get mad at them', 'just do what he was supposed to', and 'everything would be fine'. Michael agreed to participate in a talking Circle with a teacher and four freshman girls who were with the teacher in in-school suspension. The Circle began with a check-in where Michael shared why he was so upset. The teacher and four other freshmen listened intently. When the students and the teacher got the talking piece, they shared that they thought he was a respectful young man and pointed out how he held the door open for everyone as they entered the room. The discussion shifted to what makes us hopeful or lights us up. Michael showed pictures of his nephew, who is a toddler, and shared stories of how he taught his nephew to say "I love you." As the Circle wrapped up, the group decided that one of the problems contributing to Michael's experience was that assumptions were made about who he was without getting to know him. When the Circle finished, Michael felt assured that some people knew him as a respectful, loving person and he committed to keep showing that side of himself instead of disrupting.

## Activity: Ripple Effect

CPS FRAMEWORK ALIGNMENT:	SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL ALIGNMENT	SKILL DEVELOPMENT:
2a. Creating an environment of Respect and Rapport	G3. Demonstrate Decision-Making Skills and Responsible Behaviors in Personal, School, and Community Contexts	Reflecting, Collaborating, Communicating, Perspective-Taking, and Analyzing
2b. Establishing a Culture for Learning		
2d. Managing Student Behavior		

### DIRECTIONS:

1. Ask the students what happens when you drop a stone into water. ("It ripples.") Ask them to describe a common conflict or discipline issue that happens at school, with no names or identifying information.
2. Ask students "Who in the previous example has been harmed, and who causes the harm?" (There are not always clear distinctions.) Then ask them to show who is affected by this conflict by drawing concentric circles (starting small and getting bigger) and naming everyone affected as they draw the circles. How is the community as a whole affected by this issue?
3. Role plays: Break the class into small groups of 4-5 and give each group one of the scenarios below. Give them 5 minutes to come up with a 1-minute scene to act out the scenario.
4. After 5 minutes have passed, ask each group to come to the front of the class to act out their scene one at a time.
5. After each role-play the audience should assess the scenario using the Restorative Justice Triangle worksheet and discuss the debriefing questions.

Pulling it all together: Discuss the meaning of restorative justice and help the class draw connections using the role-plays as examples. You can end by having each individual student commit to one possible action they will take that day or week to have a positive ripple effect on others. Ask them to write their action in the center of a piece of paper. They should draw their ripple effects around their actions and for each layer of ripple write

in the people who will be affected and how they might be affected by the positive actions.

**Scenario 1:** Only one student, Briana, is a junior. Her teacher referred her because she was listening to her mp3 player in class. The teacher told her several times to put it away, but she didn't. Then she walked out of class without permission. Only Briana is in the restorative conversation with the facilitator.

**Backstory:** Briana doesn't get along with this teacher. She feels like the teacher is disrespectful toward her and doesn't give her help when she has questions. When Briana wants to concentrate on her work, she needs her music so that's what she was trying to do when the teacher yelled at her. She doesn't understand what the big deal is. She's trying to do the right thing but the teacher just gets mad, so that's why she left class. Originally she didn't want to come to the restorative conversation—why should she be the one to take the blame when the teacher is unhelpful and talks to her with an attitude? But then she thought that she's made it this far in school, and she's trying to go to college. So she figured she should try to work it out. But she wants the teacher to make some changes too.

**Scenario 2:** Student/Student Ayanna and Kelli are referred to because they were yelling at each other in the cafeteria. Both are in the restorative conversation.

**Backstory:** Ayanna is sitting at lunch when her friend approaches her with a warning that Kelli is looking to start a fight with her. Until recently, Ayanna and Kelli were friends, but for the past week Kelli has been hearing

*Activity: Ripple Effect*

rumors that Ayanna is trying to flirt with her boyfriend. Because of this, Kelli has been giving Ayanna dirty looks in the hall, starting rumors about Ayanna on Facebook, and ignoring Ayanna. Ayanna feels trapped in this situation; she doesn't think she has given her friend any reason to think she is trying to steal her boyfriend, and therefore she does not want to fight with her friend. But, she also does not want to be seen as weak and be the one to back down, so she tries to approach Kelli before the bell rings to confront her about this situation. As soon as she attempts to approach Kelli, Kelli starts yelling and egging her on to fight, but things get broken up before they get too serious.

**Scenario 3:** Teacher/Student, Chris, is a sophomore who is often late to his English class after lunch. His teacher wrote him up after he was late and yelled at her to "shut up". Chris and the teacher are in the restorative conversation with another teacher facilitating.

**Backstory:** Chris hasn't always been late but during the past month, he has been getting to class later and later. The teacher tried to talk with him, which seemed to work for a week or so. But now he is consistently late. The teacher is worried that he is going to fail and has tried to give him many opportunities to make up work. He has been starting to clown around in class more too. Now that he has said 'shut up', the teacher feels like things are escalating. Chris's mom has been difficult to reach, and the teacher doesn't know if there is something going on at home. Chris has been involved on the basketball team but now his grades could impact his ability to play. The teacher wants to see him succeed.

Chris has been hanging out with some new friends this year. He thinks they are fun even if they get in trouble at school sometimes. But who follows all the rules anyway? And what does it matter? Everyone gets in trouble sometimes, right? He doesn't know what his future holds. His older brother is incarcerated and his mom isn't always around. He loves basketball but the coach hasn't let him play since his grades started slipping. He feels bad about telling the teacher to shut up, but it's hard for him to admit it.

**Debrief with students:**

- Who caused the harm?
- Who was harmed?
- How was the community affected?
- What could be done to make things right?
- What could have been done to prevent the situation in the first place?

**Questions for Teacher Reflection:**

- How can this activity be expanded?
- How does this activity reinforce the idea that a sense of community in the classroom is an essential aspect of a strong learning environment?

## Activity: Conflict Continuum

CPS FRAMEWORK ALIGNMENT:	SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL ALIGNMENT:	SKILL DEVELOPMENT:
2a. Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport  2d. Managing Student Behavior	G1. Develop Self-Awareness and Self-Management Skills to Achieve School and Life Success  G3. Demonstrate Decision-Making Skills and Responsible Behaviors in Personal, School and Community Contexts	Self-Awareness and Self-Managing, Perspective-Taking, Decision-Making, Analyzing, and Evaluating

### DIRECTIONS:

- Place a strip of masking tape down the center of the room (optional).
- Explain to the group that one side of the masking tape/room is the "Strongly Agree" side. The other is the "Strongly Disagree" side.
- If group members "strongly agree" or "strongly disagree" they should go to that side of the room. If their opinion is somewhere in between, they should place themselves somewhere in the middle.
- Read the first statement and ask participants to choose their location on the continuum.
- Ask participants to share why they chose the spot they did. This could turn into a great dialogue.

Make sure everyone has gotten a chance to speak if they wanted to before moving onto the next statement. Depending on the needs of your class and time permitting, select some of the questions below. Debriefing is a very valuable element of this activity. You may not get to all questions at one time, but feel free to revisit the questions at different times throughout the year.

#### Sample Statements:

- All conflicts are solvable.
- Put-downs and fighting words can be as violent and hurtful as physical fighting.
- People should see each other only as individuals. We should basically ignore people's ethnic, religious, or racial identity.
- Suspensions are an effective way of dealing with disrespectful or disruptive students.
- "Real men" should fight out their problems.
- If someone disrespects you, you should disrespect them back. It's only fair.
- If you see a peer being bullied, you should confront the bully.
- Some kids are just bad.
- Avoiding a fight is a sign of weakness.
- I feel/have felt that I am/have been treated unfairly in school.
- I (or a family member) have had a negative encounter with a school safety agent.
- Illinois should spend more money on schools than on prisons.
- Metal detectors keep students safe.
- Conflicts usually lead to violence.
- People should never fight.
- If someone insults you, it's best to pretend you didn't hear what he or she said.

*Activity: Conflict Continuum*

**Debrief with Students:**

- Do you think current discipline policies are effective? Why?
- Do suspensions contribute to the school to prison pipeline? Why?
- Describe the best way for schools to keep students safe.
- How does police presence in schools affect student learning?
- What did you learn?
- Why might you have been influenced to change your position?
- Why is recognizing individual opinions important?
- How did you feel about taking a position?

**Questions for Teacher Reflection:**

- How can my students and I utilize the information gathered from the activity to have ongoing class discussions about interpersonal conflict and school discipline?





## SECTION

# 02

## Community Building in the Classroom

### **CPS FRAMEWORK ALIGNMENT:**

- 2a. Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport
- 2d. Managing Student Behavior
- 4a. Reflecting on Teaching and Learning
- 4d. Growing and Developing Professionally

### **SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL ALIGNMENT:**

- G3: Demonstrate Decision-Making Skills and Responsible Behaviors in Personal, School and Community Contexts

### **SKILL DEVELOPMENT:**

Reflecting, Analyzing, and Synthesizing



All human beings have an instinctive desire to grow and synchronize with the world around them. People want to provide love, kindness, and respect to others, but also expect these values to be given in return. This holds especially true for youth, even when their behavior might indicate otherwise. Withdrawn and defiant behavior can be students' way of reacting when they feel that those values have not been shown to them. Restorative practices help students develop the habits and values of the person they hope to be. Building habits of living from our best self is a means of restoring connection to the innate values of being human. Through practices like communication and mindfulness, we learn to be in balance with these values and build healthier relationships with individuals and the community. Building positive and healthy relationships is central to the work of teachers and administrators.

## TURNING TO ONE ANOTHER

There is no power greater than a community discovering what it cares about.

Ask: "What's possible?" not "What's wrong?" Keep asking.

Notice what you care about. Assume that many others share your dreams.

Be brave enough to start a conversation that matters. Talk to people you know. Talk to people you don't know. Talk to people you never talk to.

Be intrigued by the differences you hear. Expect to be surprised. Treasure curiosity more than certainty.

Invite in everybody who cares to work on what's possible. Acknowledge that everyone is an expert about something. Know that creative solutions come from new connections.

Remember, you don't fear people whose story you know. Real listening always brings people closer together.

Trust that meaningful conversations can change your world.

Rely on human goodness. Stay together.

-Margeret Wheatly



## RELATIONSHIPS OF AUTHORITY VS. RELATIONSHIPS OF RAPPORT

The restorative justice framework is predicated on the idea that relationships are built on trust, mutual understanding, and regard. Positive relationships foster growth, curiosity, and learning, while damaged relationships impede and stunt development. The neglectful approach to classroom discipline, the NOT element, fails to hold students accountable by ignoring ongoing behavioral issues and not supporting students to meet expectations. The result is a chaotic classroom with inconsistent responses. An essential element in teaching is doing WITH one another rather than TO or FOR one another. A restorative approach to classroom management fosters positive regard for others by maintaining a safe space. Students learn to trust, share, and support others. Learning is most productive when there is equity of voice, shared responsibility, and inclusive decision-making.

It is important to offer students specific choices in the classroom. This allows students to build self-efficacy and directs them toward positive outcomes. This is especially true when re-directing students to make more productive behavior choices. Ultimatums and demands should be avoided, as they only reinforce a controlling and punitive dynamic that results in teacher-student power struggles.

Accompany high expectations with structures of support. Creating a structure of support begins with a classroom discussion about expectations and positive behavior. Clearly discussing assignments and expectations in a specific and supportive way before any issues arise can provide a baseline from which positive behavior is built. If a student struggles to meet these expectations, the next step is to have a one on one conversation with the student to determine what is preventing the student from succeeding in the classroom.

In that conversation, listen for areas that might be lacking and where the student might benefit from additional supports. Once you and the student have identified and isolated why the student isn't meeting expectations, work with the student to make a plan that

outlines specific steps that need to be in place for them to succeed next time. This plan should include small steps or changes in the classroom, such as changing the student's seat or developing a strategy to remind and re-direct the student when the student starts to veer off-course. Also have the student identify adults in the school that the student trusts, and encourage the student to go to those adults when he/she/they are having a bad day. Take note of the adults that student identified and make time to have a brief check in with that staff member about how they feel the student is doing. The identified staff members might have some valuable insight about the student. The plan might also involve bigger steps such as connecting the student to counseling, tutoring or mentoring services. Remember the iceberg discussed in the previous chapter; a student's continual behavioral issues in the classroom are often a manifestation of a deeper issue beneath the surface that has not been expressed. Show personal investment in the students as individuals through small, individualized acknowledgments, attending extracurricular activities, and remembering important events in their lives. When educators share information about their own lives outside of school, it helps the students see them as individual people and not just authority figures.

“I got to know my classmates in a different way and got to learn a lot about them that I didn't know before. We are a lot closer now.”

– CPS Elementary Student

It is just as important for students to build positive relationships with each other as a group as it is for teachers to build positive relationships with their students. Check-in questions are a simple, yet effective way of building this dynamic.

Check-ins can be quick activities or questions asked to the group at the beginning of class before instruction. This gives everyone in the class time to briefly “check-in” about some aspect of their lives. The question posed can be as simple as “How are you feeling today?” The important element is that the check-in process be consistent and genuine. Check-ins allow for students to get to know their teacher and peers in new and unexpected ways. They give each student the opportunity to share how she or he is feeling and to listen to others share as well. For teachers, this process can be particularly helpful to gauge students’ attitudes before beginning instruction and to identify students who are coming into class with issues that might lead to behavior issues later in the day or affect their ability to learn. (See Community Building Activities on page 28 for examples of check-in questions)

Creating a consistent routine and setting aside specific time to check in with your students will build a sense of community within your classroom and provide positive context for more effective classroom management.

**Questions for Teacher Reflection:**

- What else can I do to make students feel welcome and valued?
- What impact can check-in questions have on preventing future misbehavior?
- How can implementing check-ins help me address and redirect negative behaviors that may arise later in the day?
- How have I aided my students in helping to create a healthy community in the classroom? How might I further this using restorative justice?
- How can I build a structure of support in my classroom? In my school?

## EXAMPLE FROM THE CLASSROOM:

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### MR. O'BRIEN

On an otherwise typical day, Mr. O'Brien's sophomore class arrived for 7th period. Many of their classmates from the beginning of the year were no longer with them because they had either transferred or dropped out due to pregnancy, expulsion, etc. The remaining students had been disengaged from the class and Mr. O'Brien thought that a Circle would help them come together.

Mr. O'Brien put the chairs in a circle and put a centerpiece down. When the students took their seats in the Circle, Mr. O'Brien introduced the talking piece, the center piece, and Circle process. He then asked the students to share how they felt the class has been going so far that year. When he passed the talking piece around the Circle, students shared about feeling judged, unwanted, and lonely because of obesity or painful loss of family members. A sophomore boy even shared about the loss of an unborn child due to miscarriage. In subsequent rounds, students switched gears and offered comforting words, expressed surprise at all that everyone was going through, and conveyed hope that they would stick together.

Reflecting back on it, Mr. O'Brien was surprised by how deep the students went beneath the surface and how the simple ritual of Circle created a safe space for students to share openly and connect with each other.

## SETTING UP YOUR CLASSROOM RESTORATIVELY

### Wall space:

When setting up your classroom, be sure to designate generous space on your walls to display student work. When students walk into a classroom that is covered wall-to-wall with the teacher's aesthetic, it can signal to them that the space belongs to the teacher and that the students are merely temporary guests. Not only can this message promote an "us" and "them" mentality, but it can also suggest that this is a passive learning environment in which students are only responsible for receiving information from the teacher. However, showing students that their contributions to the physical environment are valued can transform the classroom into a place where they feel that they belong, where true collaboration is encouraged.

During the first week of school, have the class complete a collective assignment (like the creating classroom values activity) that will be displayed on the walls. Follow with an individual assignment (like the Shields of Strength activity) and display so that all students are visually represented in the classroom as a collective and as individuals.

### Classroom Displays:

When selecting classroom decorations, make sure the aesthetic is relevant to the students. While "inspirational" posters can help create a positive environment, make sure students will actually connect with the message. Try putting up textured fabric with quotes or music lyrics from artists and musicians that students know and like. Make sure to change visual displays and student work throughout the year. New and interesting displays in the classroom will model to students that learning is a continual process and that a life-long learner is never done.

Bring plants into the space and encourage students to do the same. Having living plants in the class makes

the environment welcoming and nurturing. Assign different students to take care of the plants so that they are actively contributing to the life of the classroom. Asking a student who seems disconnected from class to be responsible for the care of a plant can show trust and encourage responsibility.

### Seating:

To the extent possible, classroom seating should allow for flexible transition from group discussion, to circle, to the board. The best way to facilitate this type of interaction is to have desks arranged in a circle or horseshoe. This allows students to see each other and encourages participation and open discussion. If you have a particularly large class, putting desks in two horseshoes is a way to promote an open classroom while accommodating more students. As a teacher this is also a great arrangement to easily see who is engaged and who is losing focus. If a circle or half circle isn't feasible, arranging desks or tables in small groups is another way to encourage collective learning and promote classroom community.

Regardless of what desk formation you use, in order to promote a smooth transition into Circle, have students practice moving their desks.

Make sure each student knows where his or her desk should go, and assign students to help move other desks or tables out of the way. Run this "drill" a few times and this will make forming a Circle significantly faster.

### Create a Peace Place:

Create an area in your classroom where students can direct themselves if they are dealing with some outside issues and need some time to calm down and reflect. Encouraging students to take self-directed reflection time when they are having trouble concentrating encourages autonomy, empowers students to self-regulate, and fosters increased emotional awareness. The "peace place" can be simple: a comfortable chair, a rug with pillows, a soft light, some tactile objects, books, journaling supplies,

reflection sheets, art supplies, etc. The important thing is that it's away from the action in the classroom and that it feels like a reflective space. Students should be invited to excuse themselves to the "peace place" when they need it and then to return to their seat when they feel more calm and focused.

The following sample activities can be utilized as classroom management tools. They inspire participants to gain mutual respect for their peers by learning about their commonalities, strengths, and potential.

Safe spaces lift barriers between people and bring people together in a way that creates trust, respect, belonging, kindness, and empathy. They open fresh possibilities for connection, collaboration, mutual understanding, and growth.

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## Activity: Community Building Check in/out Questions

### CPS FRAMEWORK ALIGNMENT:

- 2a. Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport
- 2b. Establishing a Culture of Learning
- 2d. Managing Student Behavior

### SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL ALIGNMENT:

- G1. Develop Self-Awareness and Self-Management Skills to Achieve School and Life Success
- G2. Use Social-Awareness and Interpersonal Skills to Establish and Maintain Positive Relationships
- G3. Demonstrate Decision-Making Skills and Responsible Behaviors in Personal, School and Community Contexts

### SKILL DEVELOPMENT:

Active Listening, Perspective-Taking, Communicating, Analyzing, and Reflecting

### DIRECTIONS:

Use these guiding questions to establish community and a culture of respect in your classroom. These questions may be used as a check-in, in place of a bell ringer, and/or as a checkout at the end of the class. Start with the "Get Acquainted" and build to the deeper questions as the students become more comfortable sharing. Remember, the key is consistency.

#### 1. GET ACQUAINTED:

Fun nonthreatening questions that allow participants to share from personal experiences and offer the opportunity to be heard.

##### Sample Questions:

- If you could be a superhero, what super powers would you choose and why?
- If you could be an animal, what animal would you choose and why?
- Name the film you could watch over and over.
- Name an animal, regardless of size or circumstances, you would like to own as a pet.
- If your house were burning down and you only had time to rescue three things, what would they be and why?

#### 2. BUILD RELATIONSHIPS:

Thoughtful questions intended to engage participants in self-reflection and open communication.

##### Sample Questions:

- Share a happy childhood memory.
- What would you not change about your life?
- Name one male or female who is good a role model for young people and explain why.
- Who in your life motivates you to be a better person?
- Name one person you would like to make the world a safer place for.
- Complete the following sentence: "If you knew me, you'd know..."

#### 3. DEVELOP VALUES AND GUIDELINES:

Deeper questions that encourage participants to share personal values in order to develop agreements about how to maintain a respectful community.

##### Sample Questions:

- Think about someone you trust. What are some characteristics of that person that make you trust them?
- What do you need from this group in order for the space to feel comfortable/safe?
- What do you value above all?

*Activity: Community Building Check in/out Questions Cont'd*

**Questions for Teacher Reflection:**

- What types of questions prompt meaningful information from students?
- What activities or anecdotes can I pair with these questions to encourage deeper listening and sharing?
- How can I use the students' answers to these questions to strengthen my relationships with individual students and the classroom community?

## Activity: Warm Ups and Check-ins

### CPS FRAMEWORK ALIGNMENT:

- 2a. Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport
- 2b. Establishing a Culture of Learning
- 2d. Managing Student Behavior

### SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL ALIGNMENT:

- G1. Develop Self-Awareness and Self-Management Skills to Achieve School and Life Success
- G2. Use Social-Awareness and Interpersonal Skills to Establish and Maintain Positive Relationships
- G3. Demonstrate Decision-Making Skills and Responsible Behaviors in Personal, School and Community Contexts

### SKILL DEVELOPMENT:

Active Listening, Perspective-Taking, Communicating, Analyzing, and Reflecting

### MINGLE, MINGLE, MINGLE:

*Highlight use of Circles as a restorative practice.* One person is the leader/facilitator and will explain the game to everyone:

1. Everyone stands in a large Circle
2. When the facilitator shouts "Mingle!" everyone must take small steps toward the center of the Circle, mingling and mixing and greeting each person that they pass with "hello" or "good morning" or "hi there," etc.
3. The facilitator will shout out a number (any number under 5)
4. The minglers must form a group that corresponds with the number the facilitator shouts out (if the facilitator calls out four, then participants must get into groups of four).
5. Once all the minglers have created a group, they will get in a mini Circle with their group.
6. The facilitator will ask a question.
7. Each member of each small group will answer the question.
8. After each person has answered, the facilitator will shout MINGLE again, and then shout another number for groups to reform, followed by another question, and so on.

### Sample Questions:

- What is your favorite candy bar?
- What song would you like to remove from all playlists in the world?
- Would you rather have a pet penguin or a pet giraffe?
- What country would you like to visit?
- What is your dream job?
- If you had a superpower, would you rather be invisible or be able to fly?

### Questions for Teacher Reflection:

- How do these activities help to build a sense of community in the classroom?
- How do these activities help students monitor or reflect on each other's interactions?
- How can I use this information and these activities in the designing of instruction for my students?
- How do these activities help to encourage student resiliency and hard work?

*Activity: Warm Ups and Check-ins Cont'd***ELECTRICITY:**

Have participants stand in a Circle holding hands. One person starts the impulse by squeezing the hand of the person standing their left. As soon as that person feels the squeeze on their right hand they immediately passes the impulse on to the next person by squeezing their left hand and so on. Try to go faster and faster around the circle each time. For an added challenge have all participants close their eyes.

For students who may be uncomfortable with touching, a variation of this game is called Pass the Clap. Tell students that they will be passing a clap around the circle, but that it will go around the circle two students at a time. Choose a starting point and have one person turn to the next person and have them both clap at the same time. The second student then turns to the next person and they clap at the same time. Key to success is eye contact, and watching each other's hands in the beginning. If the game gets sloppy, ask students to slow down. Once the game is going smoothly, tell students that they may reverse the clap by remaining focused on the player who passed the clap, and clapping again. Another clap may also be introduced at another point in the circle so that there are two claps traveling around the circle.

**RAINSTORM:**

Simulate a rainstorm with your group. Have them sit in a Circle. You will start a motion, which will be repeated by the person next to you and continue to travel around the Circle like a wave. The students must be completely silent. When the wave comes back to you, change the motion. Start by rubbing your two index fingers together, then rub both hands together, then snap fingers, clap hands, slap thighs, slap thighs and stomp feet, back to slap thighs, back to clap hands, snap fingers, rub hands, rub fingers, stop.

*Learning point:* When we work together, listen to each other, and feed off of each other's positive energy, we can create wonderful things.

**RUTABAGA! RUTABAGA!:**

Each player is given the name of a vegetable. The main rule of the game is that you are not allowed to show your teeth at all. You must say the name of your vegetable and the name of another person's vegetable. That person must then say the name of his or her vegetable and someone else's and so on. If you make a mistake or show your teeth, you are out for that round.

*Learning point:* Laughing and playing together is an important component of getting to know each other and building community.

**YOUR PEOPLE:**

Have a group of small objects with some characteristics in common (some are the same color, some are the same shape, some are smooth, etc.) If your class is large you can also print out pictures of different objects as an alternative. Give an object to each student and tell students not to show their objects to anyone else. The goal is for them to "Find their People," meaning that they are to group themselves with people who have objects with similar characteristics, but they must do so only by describing the most predominant characteristics of their object (for example, if holding an eraser, the student would say, "My object is square, pink, smooth, and rubbery"). Give them about 10 minutes to walk around and find their group. Once the students have grouped themselves accordingly, have the students show their objects with their group and discuss how and why the objects fit together. If time, have each group come up with a group name and present their grouping to the class.

*Learning point:* There isn't a right or wrong way to group the objects; the point is that we often characterize and people based on external characteristics and make assumptions about who "belongs" without knowing the full picture.

*Activity: Warm Ups and Check-ins Cont'd***Debrief with Students:**

- What does each person in the group take away from this?
- How did they determine which were “their” people? How does this apply to everyday life?
- What are different ways we group ourselves in school, at home, and in the community?
- In what ways do we make assumptions based on external appearance? How do these assumptions affect our interactions?
- How do these assumptions and groupings contribute to racism, homophobia, and other prejudices based on external characteristics?

**CHAOS CIRCLE:**

Have the group stand in a Circle and then instruct everyone to turn to their right so that they are facing the back of the person in front of them. Each member of the group gets one piece of paper with a word or two written on it. When all the pieces of paper are put together they make up one set of directions (for example, “Students must walk in a single file line around the classroom and then take their seats”). The students must not show their papers to anyone else. While in a Circle, have everyone turn to the person to their right and start repeating their portion of the directions over and over. The goal is for the group to work together to figure out what they need to do. Learning point: in order for something productive to get done, it is important to hear what everyone has to say.

**“SOCIAL JUSTICE SUPERHERO”**

1. Have participants think about the main problems in society that concern them right now.
2. Ask participants, “Who was your favorite superhero was as a child, and why?”
3. Ask participants, “If you had a superpower, what would it be? How would you use your superpower to address a social justice issue?”
4. Explore the topic of “personal power” or “personal potential” and how each individual has an innate “super power” or potential that can be used toward making a difference in her or his environment (healthy decisions that impact the greater good).
5. You may also include a drawing component as a visual learning complement to this activity.

**YOU'RE MY PEOPLE IF...**

Arrange chairs in a circle with one fewer chair than the number of participants. One person stands in the middle of the circle and says, “You’re my people if...” and describes something that is true for them (e.g., I have a dog). Everyone who also has a dog stands up and runs to an open seat and the person in the middle also runs to

*Activity: Warm Ups and Check-ins Cont'd*

get a seat. Because there is one fewer chair than people, there should be one person remaining. The last person standing is the new person in the middle. The rules are that you cannot switch to a seat next to you. Encourage participants to think beyond surface level characteristics. For example: You're my people if... you want to be a doctor when you grow up; you have been to another state; you know how to cook; you know where you want to go to college; you sometimes lose your temper; you have told a little lie today.

**Debrief with Students:**

- What did you like most about this activity?
- What did you learn about your peers?
- How can learning about commonalities help us in our classroom?

*Activity: Warm Ups and Check-ins Cont'd*

**"I AM" POEM:**

Directions: Ask your students to fill in the blanks as truthfully as possible. Have students share with a partner or the class. You (the share with your students!

**I am** \_\_\_\_\_ **and** \_\_\_\_\_. (2 special characteristics)

**I wonder** \_\_\_\_\_. (Something you are curious about)

**I hear** \_\_\_\_\_. (An imaginary sound)

**I see** \_\_\_\_\_. (An imaginary object)

**I want** \_\_\_\_\_. (A genuine desire)

**I am** \_\_\_\_\_ **and** \_\_\_\_\_. (Repeat the first line of the poem)

**I pretend** \_\_\_\_\_. (Something you actually pretend to do)

**I feel** \_\_\_\_\_. (An emotion you often feel)

**I touch** \_\_\_\_\_. (Something you often touch)

**I worry** \_\_\_\_\_. (Something that really bothers you)

**I cry** \_\_\_\_\_. (Something that makes you sad)

**I am** \_\_\_\_\_ **and** \_\_\_\_\_. (Repeat the first line of the poem)

**I understand** \_\_\_\_\_. (Something you understand)

**I say** \_\_\_\_\_. (Something you believe is true)

**I dream** \_\_\_\_\_. (Something you actually dream about)

**I try** \_\_\_\_\_. (Something you really make an effort to do)

**I hope** \_\_\_\_\_. (Something you actually hope for)

**I am** \_\_\_\_\_ **and** \_\_\_\_\_. (Repeat the first line of the poem)

## Activity: Developing Classroom Agreements

CPS FRAMEWORK ALIGNMENT:	SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL ALIGNMENT:	SKILL DEVELOPMENT:
2a. Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport 2b. Establish a Culture of Learning 2c. Managing Classroom Procedures 2d. Managing Student Behavior	G3. Demonstrate decision-making skills and responsible behaviors in personal, school and community contexts	Reflecting, Collaborating, and Communicating

### DIRECTIONS:

Draw a T-chart on the board. On one side write "Respect" and on the other write "Disrespect."

Ask students to help you make a list of what someone can do or say to DISRESPECT others. Write their answers in the first column of the T-chart. Then ask students to make a list of what someone can do or say to RESPECT others.

Explain that the goal of this activity is to make a list of agreements that will help everyone in the classroom work and live together as a community. Ask the class to define what is meant by "agreement" if necessary.

Brainstorming: Tell the class that next, they will brainstorm a list of agreements for a respectful classroom community that they will all work together to uphold for the rest of the school year. Before they begin brainstorming, create some guidelines for the brainstorm:

- All ideas are equally helpful and accepted. Every idea will be written down.
- Say anything that comes to your mind.
- Do not make negative comments about other people's ideas.
- Build on other students' thoughts to generate more ideas.

Whole group or small group discussion: You can break the group into smaller groups for the following conversation or continue as a whole class. Together, students should brainstorm responses to the following questions:

- What can the class do to make sure that everyone is comfortable sharing their ideas?
- What agreements will help the class work together and communicate efficiently?
- What will help the class create a positive, respectful environment?

Compile a list of agreements from each small group or from the class brainstorm on the board. Discuss each agreement. Ask if they would like to object to or revise any of the agreements.

If there is time, you may want to discuss what the process will be if someone does not uphold the agreements. How will the class support that person to begin upholding the agreements?

Signing the contract: Once students come to consensus about the agreements and process of what they will do if someone breaks an agreement, explain that this list is their "Classroom Contract" for how they will treat each other. Ask them to sign the contract. Make sure to emphasize that they are creating the environment of their class and by initializing the agreement, they are taking ownership.

Taking ownership: Provide art materials and ask the class to decorate the agreement in a way that symbolizes the ideas in the contract. When the sheet is decorated, ask the class to find a place in the classroom where they would like to hang the contract.

**Questions for Teacher Reflection:**

- What other strategies can I use with my students so that they will hold each other accountable for their behavior in class?
- How does this activity aid me in cultivating a shared belief in the importance of learning?
- How does this activity assist me in my performance of instructional and non-instructional tasks?
- What are the benefits of modifying classroom agreements throughout the year? When might be a good time to revisit classroom agreements?

## Activity: Shield of Strength

CPS FRAMEWORK ALIGNMENT:	SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL ALIGNMENT:	SKILL DEVELOPMENT:
2a. Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport	G1. Develop Self-Awareness and Self-Management Skills to Achieve School and Life Success	Active Listening, Perspective-Taking, Communicating, Analyzing, and Reflecting.
2b. Establishing a Culture of Learning	G2. Use Social-Awareness and Interpersonal Skills to Establish and Maintain Positive Relationships	
2d. Managing Student Behavior	G3. Demonstrate Decision-making Skills and Responsible Behaviors in Personal, School and Community Contexts	

### DIRECTIONS

1. Explain that the Shield of Strength represents life as a cycle: it includes the four seasons, the four directions, and four aspects of well-being (physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual). The center of the shield represents your strength and wholeness as a person. This activity will help you reflect on the aspects of your life that make you who you are and that help you lead a purposeful life.
2. Give each student a piece of paper and a couple of markers. Ask them to draw a shield on the front and divide it into four segments by drawing a large "x" in the center. Students should think of images, words, shapes, symbols, etc. that they can write into each section according to the guidelines below. Allow at least 10-15 minutes for this part of the activity.

In the EAST section: Your birth date, family members, friends, guides, and groups you belong to. Who matters most?

In the SOUTH section: Your passions, things you enjoy doing, and your talents. What are you really good at? What skills do you have?

In the WEST section: Your physical strengths, personal qualities, responsibilities, and limitations. How do you care for yourself? What keeps you from doing what you want to do?

In the NORTH section: What are your spiritual beliefs? What is something that keeps you centered and grounded? This can be a spiritual figure, a quiet place, or life goals or dreams.

If time allows, have students share their shields with a partner. Bring the class back together to debrief.

#### Debrief with Students:

- Share each segment of your shield. Which images/values are most important to you?
- Which aspects of your shield do others know about, and which do you often keep to yourself?
- Which part of your shield helps you get through difficult situations?

## SECTION

# 03

## Restorative Communication in the Classroom

### CPS FRAMEWORK ALIGNMENT

- 2a. Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport
- 2d. Managing Student Behavior

### SOCIAL EMOTIONAL ALIGNMENT

- G1. Develop Self-Awareness and Self-Management Skills to Achieve School and Life Success
- G2. Use Social-Awareness and Interpersonal Skills to Establish and Maintain Positive Relationships
- G3. Demonstrate Decision-Making Skills and Responsible Behaviors in Personal, School and Community Contexts

### SKILL DEVELOPMENT:

Active Listening, Collaborating, Critical Thinking, and Perspective-Taking



Conflict is not necessarily a bad thing. Even in the strongest relationship, conflict is inevitable. Conflict occurs whenever people have differing viewpoints or needs. Viewing conflict as a teachable moment opens up an opportunity for growth. The question, then becomes, how can conflict be handled productively? How can conflict be used to reach a deeper understanding of each other and strengthen our relationships? Addressing conflict restoratively requires a shift in two areas of communication: listening and speaking.

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## INITIATING CONVERSATIONS

When approaching a conversation with a student, it is important to realize the weight of how you initiate the interaction. Factors such as body language, previous interactions and individual reputation all play a role in the way we interact with and relate to one another. The conversations we have with youth can often be marked with communication roadblocks that derail the interaction if not addressed.

### THE FOUR D'S, ADAPTED FROM MICHAEL ROSENBERG'S NONVIOLENT COMMUNICATION

Alienating language can often be identified by looking for the four D's: diagnosis, denial of personal responsibility, demands, and deserve thinking.

#### 1. Diagnosis

Implying you know what is right, judging, blaming, comparing

"What is wrong with you is that you are ..."

"The problem is..."

"I know what's wrong with you."

#### 2. Denial of Personal Responsibility

Absolving yourself from your personal role and power in the situation

"That's not my responsibility."

"I had no choice, school rules"

#### 3. Demands

Giving ultimatums and commands that require another's compliance with your statement

"You have to..."

"Come here or else!"

"If you don't obey, I am going to..."

#### 4. "Deserve" Thinking

Putting an emotional value on behavior, believing that certain behaviors deserve punishment or reward

"You deserve that."

"You owe it to me."

### EMPATHETIC LISTENING AND BOARS

Empathetic listening is a way to connect with a speaker in an authentic way. It creates space for non-judgmental communication, which allows speakers to share their thoughts and feelings honestly and helps uncover any underlying issues. The following are essential elements of empathetic listening:

**Body Language** shows speakers that listeners are paying attention to what's being said and that it is important.

*Examples:* Eye contact, body turned toward the speaker, nodding the head, stopping other tasks when listening

**Open-Ended** Restorative Questions: Engage the speakers in a reflective process, prompting them to share about incidents or feelings in detail and empowering them to solve problems. Require the speaker to share more details about what happened in their own words

*Examples:* "What happened?" "How did that make you feel?" "Who was affected?"

**Affirming** gives speakers positive feedback and encourages them to keep talking.

*Examples:* "It took a lot for you to share that." "I really appreciate your honesty."

**Reflective Statements** focus on the emotions behind the words. These statements help create meaning by connecting words to feelings, possibly including those previously unspoken.

*Example:* "It sounds like you feel frustrated when..."

**Summarizing** involves restating the major feelings and ideas expressed by the speaker. This helps the listener check for understanding of what was said and demonstrates to the speaker that he or she is being heard.

*Example:* "Your main concern seems to be...and you feel..."

### ROADBLOCKS TO EFFECTIVE VERBAL COMMUNICATION: ALIENATING LANGUAGE

Non-empathic communication alienates us from our ability to connect with others. When we communicate using alienating language is used, we are telling others what is wrong with them. When others use alienating language with us, we hear criticism, judgment, and blame. Consequently, we invest our energy in condemning others and defending ourselves through a counter attack. The result can be escalation in aggressive behavior or mental and emotional shutdown.

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### ROADBLOCKS TO REAL LISTENING

The following are listening roadblocks because they block, stop, or change the direction of conversation.

- Telling the speaker what they should do
  - Telling the speaker what you would do
  - Arguing or lecturing
  - Changing the subject
-

## RESTORATIVE CONVERSATIONS

In contrast to alienating language, restorative conversations are semi-structured dialogs designed to empower students by creating space for participants to reflect on their actions, understand the impact their actions have on others, and develop a plan to make things right. The results are improved relationships, increased communication, and fewer discipline referrals.

Restorative conversations are grounded in empathetic listening. When engaging in a restorative conversation, your role mirrors that of a Circle Keeper in that you are providing a non-judgmental space, asking guiding questions to prompt students to think critically in order to generate his or her own solutions, and doing more listening than talking. When speaking, model the level of reflection you would like to see from the student. This includes using “I statements,” taking personal responsibility for your role in the situation, and offering to be part of the solution.

“Having restorative conversations as a form of conflict management and resolution helped my students resolve issues and avoid major disciplinary steps.”

– CPS High School Teacher

## PHASES IN A RESTORATIVE CONVERSATION

The following questions are designed to guide students through four phases of reflection:

### 1. Understand different perspectives

- What happened?
- What were you feeling at the time?
- What were you thinking about at the time?

### 2. Discover what is underneath the surface (root issue/back story)

- What was going on that led up to this situation?
- What was your relationship like before the incident?
- Has this happened in the past? If so, what causes it to continue?

### 3. Acknowledge the impact

- Who was affected and in what ways?
- If you were in the other person’s shoes, how would you feel?
- How do you feel about the situation now?

### 4. Make a plan to repair and prevent harm

- How could you have approached the situation differently?
- What steps can you take to make things right?
- What could you do to help avoid this situation in the future?
- What supports do you need?

When sharing your perspective, always focus your critique on the troublesome behavior or action, not the student personally. This helps reduce defensiveness and encourages students to reflect on the emotional impact of their behavior. Expressing your own feelings about how the situation affected you will model the reflection you want to see from the student. Sharing feelings is an important part of building relationships and is critical to help each person understand the impact of and take responsibility for his or her actions.

Remember to be flexible when faced with resistance. If a student is reluctant to talk or resists engaging in meaningful discussion, do not try to fight or challenge his or her resistance, as this will only escalate the situation. A student's new participation can be an indication of feeling unsafe or not ready to share. Instead, stay calm and use reflective statements to further your understanding of the student's view and get to the root of the issue.

It is also important to check in and reflect on your own emotions. If you are not in a restorative place and are still feeling upset, don't try to force a restorative solution with a student. Give yourself time and revisit the discussion when you're less heated and more reflective.



**Figure 3.1**

As Figure 4.1 illustrates, the foundation of a restorative conversation is your relationship with the student. The other elements are skill building and accountability. The purpose of addressing skill-building in the conversation is to help students identify areas of needed support and growth so that they do not continue to repeat problematic behaviors. Through the conversation itself, students learn to identify and connect the underlying emotions and assumptions driving their behavior, as well as the impact of their actions on themselves and others. Accountability in a restorative framework is not about assigning blame or guilt, but about recognizing one's role in a situation and how each person can take action to make things right. Together, all three elements work to establish real healing and safety for those involved as well as for the larger classroom community.

Using restorative conversations in your classroom can strengthen both your relationships with individual students and your relationship with the classroom learning community as a whole. Addressing misbehavior in this way will model the social emotional skills that you want to impart to your students.

“We can learn to see each other and see ourselves in each other and recognize that human beings are more alike than we are unlike.”

– *Maya Angelou*

#### Questions for Teacher Reflection:

- How does this technique help students learn to treat each other with respect?
- Does this strategy help me gain insight into my students' backgrounds: culture, gender, cognition, etc.? How can I effectively utilize this information?
- Think of a one-on-one conversation that you have had with a student about his or her misbehavior: What was your body language like? Who did most of the talking? What questions did you ask? Do you know what the student got out of the conversation? What were the results, both for the student's behavior and for your relationship with him or her? What can you try next time that can make the conversation more restorative?

## EXAMPLE FROM THE CLASSROOM:

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### MS. COLE & BRIANA

Ms. Cole had been struggling with Briana all year in her class. Briana came in at least 15 minutes late every day and was disrespectful and disruptive when she entered the classroom. Ms. Cole was very frustrated with Briana and would often respond with a sarcastic comment, and the rest of the class would laugh. Ms. Cole regularly sent Briana to the dean's office for her behavior.

By November, things had gotten so bad that Ms. Cole was ready to request that Briana be removed from her class. Around that same time, Ms. Cole attended training on restorative conversations. After much reflection, Ms. Cole realized that she had been letting her own feelings of frustration and anger take over whenever she interacted with Briana, and so they never got to the root of the issue.

The next day when Briana came in late and disrupted the class, she didn't make any sarcastic comments, but instead asked Briana to step into the hall to talk. Ms. Cole made a big effort to keep her own emotions in check, and instead of assuming why Briana was late, she asked the restorative questions. Through that conversation, Briana told Ms. Cole that she was late partly because she was coming from gym, but mostly because she avoided coming to class because Briana felt that Ms. Cole's sarcasm disrespected her. Ms. Cole shared that she had been responding out of frustration because Briana's behavior felt disrespectful to her and impacted the class. Briana acknowledged the impact of her actions on the class.

They came to an agreement that Briana would try to come to class on time, but no more than 5 minutes late. If she was late, Ms. Cole agreed not to say anything in front of the class, but to talk to Briana after class if necessary. Briana was not on time every day, but when she came late, she took her seat quietly and stayed after to talk with Ms. Cole. Through these interactions after class their relationship became strong, and after a few months, Briana was consistently coming to class on time. In fact, by the end of the school year, Briana chose Ms. Cole as the subject of her college essay on a person whom she respected and admired.

## Activity: Alienating Language Skit

Mike, a sophomore, stomps out of class and slams the door behind him. He slouches against the wall. Mr. Phelps, a teacher, approaches him in the hall.

**Mr. Phelps:** What are you doing out here again, Mike?! Didn't I tell you to keep your mouth shut in class? You aren't too smart, are you?

\*\*\*\*FREEZE\*\*\*\* (Diagnosis, judgment)

**Mike:** Man, I didn't do anything. She's just doing too much. I was just trying to defend myself and then Ms. Brown got up in my face.

\*\*\*\*FREEZE\*\*\*\*(Denial of personal responsibility, diagnosis)

**Mr. Phelps:** Trying to defend yourself? Yeah, right—I've heard that before, plenty times before. (in a forceful tone) Come over here!

\*\*\*\*FREEZE\*\*\*\*(Diagnosis, demand)

**Mike:** F-you, man! I'm not coming over there!

\*\*\*\*FREEZE\*\*\*\*(Diagnosis, insult)

**Mr. Phelps:** Use that word again and you're going to force me to take serious action. I said, come over here! If you don't, I'll have to call security.

\*\*\*\*FREEZE\*\*\*\*(Deserve, demand, denial of personal responsibility)

**Mike:** I don't care what you do! Do whatever you want. All of you all are just crazy anyway. I'm over this... (cursing under his breath)

\*\*\*\*FREEZE\*\*\*\*(Diagnosis)

**Mr. Phelps:** WHAT did you say?! I have no choice now but to send you to the dean. Come on, let's go, Mike! (Calls down the hall to the security guard) Ms.

Donavan, we got ourselves another situation with Mike....yeah, another frequent flyer.... yeah, yeah, all in a day's work...

(Denial of personal responsibility, demand, diagnosis)

**Mike:** Man, I'm outta here. I don't need this. (Mike hits a locker and walks away)

### Skit Debrief Questions:

- What did you notice about this interaction? How did alienating language escalate this scenario?
- What was Mr. Phelps intent? Did he succeed?
- How much information did Mr. Phelps gain from Mike about the situation? In what ways did this interaction prevent Mike from being accountable?
- What effect did this interaction have on the relationship between Mike and Mr. Phelps? What effect is it likely to have on future interactions between the two?

## Activity: Restorative Conversation Skit

The same situation is represented, but this time a restorative conversation takes place.

**Mr. Phelps:** Hey, Mike. You look angry. What happened?

**Mike:** Nothing. Ms. Brown got up in my face because I was just trying to defend myself.

**Mr. Phelps:** You were trying to defend yourself and then Ms. Brown was in your face...?

**Mike:** Yeah, it's because she doesn't like me. I tried to tell her that Darrion was flaming me and she's all, like, Shut up Mike, I don't want to hear it. Then Darrion said something else and I couldn't let him get away with it. She never sees it when others do things. It always has to be me. Man, I hate that class!

**Mr. Phelps:** Yeah, that's pretty frustrating. Sounds like you want to participate in class but you get distracted. Could you tell me more about it?

**Mike:** Yeah, I mean I'm not trying to interrupt the class—it's just that whenever I have a problem with someone she blows it off.

**Mr. Phelps:** How were you feeling today before this class?

**Mike:** I don't know.... Today is just a bad day. I've been in a bad mood because I was late to school today because I had to take my sister to school and I missed a quiz in history and the teacher won't let me re-take it. Then when Ms. Brown got into me about talking, it really pissed me off.

**Mr. Phelps:** How did you respond when she asked you to stop talking?

**Mike:** I told her to get outta of my face!!

**Mr. Phelps:** How do you think she felt when you told her that?

**Mike:** She was probably mad...and disrespected.

**Mr. Phelps:** Yeah. How did she respond?

**Mike:** She said if I said anything else she would send me out. Then Darrion flamed my mom. I told him to F-off. I swear I wasn't saying it to Ms. Brown! That's when she just told me to get out.

**Mr. Phelps:** Who do you think was affected when you cursed and walked out?

**Mike:** Well, Ms. Brown ... I guess the rest of the class, because they were watching and not working.

**Mr. Phelps:** Ok. Well, what are some things that you can do to make the situation better?

**Mike:** Umm ... I guess I can apologize to Ms. Brown because I didn't mean to disrespect her... And, I've got to sit away from Darrion. He's getting on my nerves.

Mike and Mr. Phelps talk for another 10 minutes. When the class lets out, Mr. Phelps and Mike enter the room to speak with Ms. Brown about what happened. Mr. Phelps helps facilitate the conversation between the two. Later Mr. Phelps and Ms. Brown also speak with Darrion.

### Skit Debrief Questions:

- What was Mr. Phelps's intent? Did he succeed?
- How did the use of B.O.A.R.S and restorative questions affect how much information Mike shared?
- In what ways did this restorative conversation hold Mike accountable?
- What impact will this interaction likely have on their relationship?

## Activity: Restorative Communication Feelings and Needs

### CPS FRAMEWORK ALIGNMENT:

- 2a. Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport
- 2d. Managing Student Behavior

### SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL ALIGNMENT:

- G1. Develop Self-Awareness and Self-Management Skills to Achieve School and Life Success
- G2. Use Social-Awareness and Interpersonal Skills to Establish and Maintain Positive Relationships

### SKILL DEVELOPMENT:

Reflecting, Perspective-Taking, Managing Emotions and Behaviors, and Active Listening

### DIRECTIONS:

1. Divide a blank sheet of paper into two columns. Write Feelings at the top of one side and Needs on the other.
2. Have participants pair up and designate who will speak first. Speakers will tell their partners about a time someone harmed them or made them sad. Then, the speakers will share what their feelings were after these incidents and what they needed in order to feel better. The facilitator should give an example.
3. After a few minutes, ask the group to tell you what their feelings were and write them down under the "feelings" column. Then ask them what their needs were and write them under "needs." NOTE: Participants may say things like "I felt like I needed to hit something." If this happens, ask them to clarify the feeling or need behind that action.
4. Cover this paper and create another chart with the same headings on it.
5. Next, give the second speaker in each pair a few minutes to share a time when they hurt someone physically or emotionally. This should be something that they genuinely feel bad about doing. Then, ask them to share what their feelings were after it happened and what was needed to make it better. The facilitator should give an example.
6. Ask the group to share both feelings and needs, and record these on the second sheet. When they are finished, uncover the first list and compare them.

### Debrief:

Ask the group to tell you what is similar about the lists. As they call out the similarities, circle them on both lists.

Point out that both the person harmed and the person who did the harming have a lot in common and need each other in order to make a situation better.

### Questions for Teacher Reflection:

- To what extent are my interactions with students a function of my perceptions of their cultural backgrounds? Gender? Cognitive abilities?
- What is positive framing, and how can I use it to reinforce good behavior and redirect inappropriate behavior?
- Which teachers in my school are exceptionally strong at using positive framing to model positive behavior? How can I use them as resources to help me model positive behavior in the classroom?



## SECTION

# 04

## Classroom Talking Circles

### **CPS FRAMEWORK ALIGNMENT**

- 2a. Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport
- 2d. Managing Student Behavior Social

### **EMOTIONAL ALIGNMENT**

- G1. Develop Self-Awareness and Self-Management Skills to Achieve School and Life Success
- G2. Use Social-Awareness and Interpersonal Skills to Establish and Maintain Positive Relationships
- G3. Demonstrate Decision-Making Skills and Responsible Behaviors in Personal, School and Community Contexts

### **SKILL DEVELOPMENT:**

Active Listening, Collaborating, Critical Thinking, and Perspective-Taking



## WHAT ARE CIRCLES?

Restorative justice Circles bring people together for open and honest communication about significant issues or conflicts in a format that values and draws from participants' varying life experiences. Participants sit in a Circle and a trained Circle Keeper facilitates discussion by posing questions to the group.

Going around the Circle one at a time, each participant has the opportunity to share his or her perspective and personal reflection without interruption. The deliberate structure of the Circle creates a space that fosters personal reflection, authentic dialogue, and positive solutions.

Circles embody social-emotional principles that help nurture relationships in any setting (classroom, family, community, etc.). Communication skills are developed so that those initially reluctant to speak find their voices, discovering a deeper, more authentic place to speak from. One begins to learn how to listen without judgment. One becomes vulnerable in the process of recognizing oneself in another's story, which can encourage our own healing. It can be deeply relaxing to speak one's truth and to feel truly heard, knowing that we are not alone in crisis or personal growth.

## WHY USE CIRCLES IN THE CLASS?

The structure of a Circle is designed to elicit the lived experiences and perspectives of each participant, draw connections between diverse stories, and foster collective decision-making through consensus. Unlike a traditional classroom structure, in which the teacher directs the discussion and only a few students are called on to respond to any given prompt, a Circle ensures that all participants have the opportunity to share and all opinions are valued equally. A benefit of using Circles in your classroom is that it will allow each individual student a moment to shine while simultaneously building group cohesion. This can shift classroom culture toward mutual respect, shared responsibility for climate, and collective accountability between teachers and students.

## TYPES OF CIRCLES

Circles may be used for different purposes (see below), and the types of questions posed by the Circle Keeper may vary, but the process is essentially the same. The focus of this chapter is on Talking Circles to build classroom community. For additional resources on Peace Circles to address specific incidents of harm and conflict, please see the appendix.

## CIRCLES ARE USEFUL FOR:

- Checking-in or reflection
- Building relationships
- Discussing topics with multiple opinions
- Making decisions by consensus
- Celebrating
- Eliciting responses to academic material
- Showcasing student work
- Collective healing after an incident or tragedy
- Establishing classroom values

## VALUES OF CIRCLES:

**Respect:** Everyone in the group is treated respectfully.

**Equality:** No one in the Circle is more important than anyone else, even the Circle Keeper.

**Equity of participation:** Everyone gets a chance to speak and be listened to without interruption.

**Consensus:** All choices are made through collective decision-making.

**Choice:** Each participant chooses to participate. No one is required to speak in Circle.

**CIRCLES ARE NOT APPROPRIATE WHEN:**

- Participants do not believe the Circle is important or do not want to participate.
- No one (including the Circle Keeper) cares about the topic.
- The Circle Keeper is trying to convince others of a particular point of view.
- Participants are not open to hearing and respecting different perspectives.
- The Circle is being used to reprimand or punish an individual or a group for a specific behavior.

**ORIGINS OF TALKING CIRCLES**

In many cultures around the world, a Circle is utilized when the community wants to discuss an issue as a group. First Nations from the northern and southern continents of America call them “talking” or “wisdom” Circles or “leaving nothing unsaid” while in Southern African rituals they are known as “cleansing the chest of all grudges.” It can even be said that King Arthur’s Knights of the Round Table established their code of honor through Circle. The Circle process nurtures our basic need as human beings to communicate and co-exist in balance and harmony with each other and our surroundings. Circles teach us to learn from misunderstanding, and that by sharing in each other’s experiences we are able to develop compassion and empathy and connect on a human level.

**6 ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF A CIRCLE****1. Circle Keeper**

The Circle Keeper is responsible for keeping the structure and cohesion of the Circle through ensuring proper use of the talking piece (see below), setting a tone through the use of ritual and story, and guiding the group through the process of establishing shared values and asking guiding questions. In many cultures, the people deemed as elders or “truth keepers” would be the Circle Keepers and would call the participants together.

The Circle Keeper does not control the group or move the participants toward a particular outcome or opinion, but rather monitors the tone to ensure that the Circle remains respectful and inclusive. The Circle Keeper is also a participant and must share his or her authentic self to build community. The Circle Keeper must answer any question that is posed to the group.

Remember that modeling appropriate behavior is critical to the success of the Circle. A good Circle Keeper remains silent as the talking piece is passed around, but encourages participation through body language (nodding the head, turning toward the speaker, and keeping feet flat on the floor) and only interrupts the process if the Circle space breaks down and becomes unsafe and chaotic. Do not judge students’ comments or non-participation unless it’s disruptive to the flow of conversation and, even then, gently remind participants of the Circle guidelines and bring the focus back to the person with the talking piece. Remain patient and thoughtful when modeling the role of the Circle Keeper and your students will approach the position with the same consideration.

**2. Talking Piece**

A talking piece allows for the individual who is holding it to be the only one to speak without being interrupted by others in the Circle. Traditionally, it is a feather, stick, beads, shell, or an object of historical or purposeful significance to the Circle Keeper. It is used to maintain an environment of respect. Circle Keepers usually bring their own “talking piece” and share its significance or

story with the group so that it has shared meaning. This is a great way for teachers to share a story about who they are as people with their students. Sometimes groups make their own pieces together. The talking piece is passed around the Circle in one direction, giving each person a chance to speak. Using a talking piece teaches an appreciation for what each being brings to the larger whole.

### 3. Ceremony/Ritual

The ceremony and ritual components of the Circle process help differentiate Circle from other parts of the school day. Circles use opening and closing ceremonies to mark the beginning and end of this unique time. Openings help participants become centered, become fully present without distractions, and remind them of their interconnectedness and the values of the group. Closings acknowledge the efforts of the group, re-affirm interconnectedness, inspire hope for the future, and mark the end of Circle and prepare students to return to the regular school day. The openings and closings should be designed to fit the nature of the group and its purpose, and could even be planned or facilitated with input from the students.

Poems and quoted words of wisdom are an easy way to open or close a Circle. Other practices can be making a sound or beat, listening to or singing a song, playing a simple game, or dancing. Circle Keepers can create their own rituals that are culturally specific, inclusive, and mark the occasion. A good ritual focuses the group around a metaphor, value, or lesson.

Another ritual that helps to set Circle time apart is the use of a centerpiece. This is a set of objects placed in the Circle center. Traditionally, indigenous communities conducted Circle processes around a fire or hearth. The centerpiece acts as a focal point and gives participants a place to look when discussing difficult issues. The Circle Keeper should share the symbolism behind the centerpiece with the group so that the centerpiece can serve as a visual reminder of the meaning or values of the Circle. Possible Circle centerpieces can include a plant, candle, small rug, statue, culturally relevant symbol, etc.

### 4. Shared Values

Shared values are the values to which we hold ourselves and each other when we are in Circle. Participants collectively develop their shared values (ex. honesty, kindness, empathy, etc.) for how they will conduct themselves in Circle so that it is a safe space for everyone to share. These are reached through consensus rather than voting or directive of the Circle Keeper. Providing the opportunity to develop shared values is part of creating a safe space and allows participants to take ownership of the Circle. When people feel that the values are theirs, they are more likely to follow them. In order to make that happen, participants need an opportunity to explicitly talk about the values that they think they should adopt as a group. In this way the Circle Keeper emphasizes “power with” instead of “power over” the Circle participants.

### 5. Circle Guidelines

The Circle guidelines refer to specific behaviors or protocols that help create a shared sense of responsibility for the outcome of the Circle. The following guidelines are essential for maintaining a peaceful tone:

- Participation and sharing are by choice. Everyone has the opportunity to share as well as the right to pass and listen respectfully.
- Speak only when you have the talking piece. Speak from the heart and listen with respect.
- Pass the talking piece in one direction around the Circle, not across, so that everyone gets a chance to speak.

While the above guidelines are essential to every Circle, Circle participants might add to these depending on the environment and needs of the group. For example, the group might decide that it is OK for participants to snap their fingers to indicate approval of or agreement with something that was shared. Or they might decide that it is or is not OK to leave the Circle before the designated break.

## 6. Guiding Questions

The guiding questions are prompts designed to get beyond surface discussion by encouraging sharing from each person's own stories. In a Circle participants are asked to speak their truth, therefore guiding questions should be framed in a way that allows for everyone in the Circle to have her or his own valid answer. Participants need to feel safe in the space and believe that their words will be honored. The guiding questions of the Circle must progress in a manner that allows participants to become comfortable with each other and the Circle process. This is especially true in school settings, as youth can be particularly wary of opening up in front of their peers.

Good guiding questions build in intensity in a natural progression. Circles should always start with a lighter "check in" question that doesn't require a high degree of personal sharing. This allows participation in the Circle while the group becomes acclimated to the process and each other. Subsequent questions should deepen their level of intensity to facilitate more personal reflection and story sharing. The checkout question is as important as the check in question. If a Circle includes portions of participants deeply sharing and discussing meaningful or painful stories, ending abruptly can leave participants feeling solemn and incomplete. A check out question should be forward-looking and affirming to help participants ease out of deep sharing and put the discussion into a larger context.

In addition to community building, Circles can be included in lesson plans whenever there is a desire to elicit the opinions or perspectives of all students. Circles can help connect students' personal experiences to the subject matter, gauge students' understanding of the material, and encourage critical thinking about a subject by having students voice a position and explain their reasoning. This format allows them to learn from each other and develop a collective wisdom on a subject.

Circles are strong enough to hold anger, frustration, joy, pain, truth, conflict, diverse world views, intense feelings, silence, and paradox.

*-(Little Book of Circle Process)*

## EXAMPLES OF CIRCLES IN THE ACADEMIC REALM

- Offer students the opportunity to share a personal assessment of where they are with a unit, demands as a student, class participation, homework, etc.
- Share a piece of art, writing, or music and receive constructive feedback from each other.
- Share stories that connect to a theme or lesson.
- Find out about students' existing knowledge or feelings about a historical event or time period.
- Listen to a speech or poem and ask students guiding questions that promote personal reflection.
- Ask how a scientific or mathematical principle plays out in everyday life.

## BRINGING THE CLASS INTO CIRCLE:

- Be mindful of where students sit in Circle. Have a highly participatory student sit next to you to help the Circle start off strong. If certain students need to be separated so that they can focus, try to do that before the Circle starts.
- If two or more Circle Keepers or adults are participating, both need to know the plan for that day's Circle and what role each will play. Adults should sit across from each other so that, halfway through a round when they have the talking piece, they can reflect on how the Circle is going by acknowledging students, summarizing what has been said, and refocusing on the topic, reminding the group of values and guidelines and shifting the tone through their own storytelling when needed.
- In order to keep track of time, the Circle Keeper should sit facing a clock or use a watch.

## MODEL THE PARTICIPATION YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE:

- When the Circle Keeper authentically shares, it makes it safer for others to do the same. The Circle Keeper sets the tone for the whole group. If the Circle Keeper shows reverence for the process, other participants will follow suit.
- Don't judge students' comments or non-participation unless it's disruptive to the flow of conversation. Take note of students who are not focused or following directions, but resist redirecting them when you don't have the talking piece. Even then, restate expectations to all students and praise positive behavior as opposed to shaming or singling out students who are struggling to meet expectations; model the ability to reserve judgment as this helps build a safe space for all.
- Resolve to interrupt the Circle ONLY to facilitate the continued passing of the talking piece.

## VALIDATE LISTENING AS MUCH AS SPEAKING:

Participants are always given the choice to share or not. It is vital to understand that one doesn't have to speak in order to be an active participant. By being an active listener, respecting guidelines, and respecting others in the Circle, the silent student is still actively participating.

- Students will share when they feel ready and safe. A student might be handed the talking piece and hold it for a few moments, silently contemplating what they might share, and then pass it without saying anything. That is still a successful round and given time, participants will feel more comfortable and will share when they are ready.

### BE PREPARED FOR THE STUFF THAT COMES UP:

- It's important to have links with other community resources so that if serious issues come up in the group, you can help to connect them with therapy, counseling, or other resources. See the Self Care section for tips on how to make sure you adequately prepare yourself for this aspect of keeping Circles.

### IF CONFLICT ARISES IN YOUR CIRCLE:

- Remind participants to speak from their own experiences and feelings rather than being concerned with what others are doing or thinking.
- Disagreement is okay and it is bound to happen—you don't have to agree with or like what people are saying or doing, but you must respect their right to have their thoughts and feelings.
- If the Circle is not feeling safe, then the keeper can decide to break the Circle, have the group take a break, do a reflective activity such as journaling, and then come back to the Circle.

### MONITOR THE TIME CLOSELY THROUGHOUT THE CIRCLE:

- Pay attention to how long it takes for the talking piece to get around the Circle so that you can introduce the final round question with enough time for everyone to answer.
- If the previous rounds have taken longer than anticipated, you can shorten the next round by asking for one-word answers. If you run out of time in the middle of a round, explain that you'll plan to continue the discussion at the next Circle. At the next Circle make sure you start where you left off.

### AFTER CIRCLE:

- After the Circle is closed, continue in a calm, positive tone, providing clear directions for students' dismissal from Circle and expectations for moving desks and chairs back where they belong.
- Just after the closing can be a good time to check in briefly (one to two minutes) with individual students about how they experienced the Circle. This is especially true if there was deep or highly personal sharing.
- Connect students to any additional supports or resources if needed.

### CLASSROOM BENEFITS OF CIRCLES

#### Going Deeper with Circles

Circles can be a powerful tool for healing in your classroom. The structure and philosophy of Circle are inherently trauma-sensitive, so long as they are practiced with fidelity. Opening up and sharing difficult experiences in an environment that supports non-judgmental listening can be cathartic and have a healing effect. The structure of Circles reflects an approach that places belonging and meaning-making at the starting point for having difficult conversations and understanding conflict and healing.

The Circle structure offers participants the opportunity to go beyond surface conversations and creates a space to share deeper issues that they might be experiencing. Traumatic events or stressors from home or neighborhood might be shared in Circle. This is helpful because traumatic events are often stored in the brain out of sequence and in parts of the brain that are not verbally accessible. This makes it very challenging to talk about these events with any semblance of a narrative. A day-to-day conversation usually doesn't offer the time or emotional safety for disclosing a traumatic experience. Cumulative effects of these stressors include the erosion of feelings of safety, meaning, belonging, and empowerment.

### Empower Students to Become Circle Keepers

In any classroom where Circles are an integral feature, the students should be given the opportunity to become Circle Keepers. Students urged to take on a leadership role will demonstrate a greater sense of ownership and pride in the process than if they remain only participants. When students are given legitimate opportunities and ongoing support to lead this process, they will take full responsibility and contribute willingly to promote its success. As students develop their Circle Keeping skills, they will also improve their ability to manage their behavior in school and at home. This skill building allows for the benefit of better classroom management and peer accountability. Becoming a Circle Keeper can be especially powerful for the most disengaged or challenging students, as they often have an enormous amount of untapped leadership potential. The role of Circle Keeper allows them to demonstrate that leadership and capture the attention of their peers in a positive and productive manner.

### Ways to Start Involving Students from the First Circle:

As the process becomes more routine, embolden them to take the lead on each component of the Circle: the opening; establishing values; reviewing the guidelines; asking the questions; and closing the Circle, so that the students are eventually facilitating the entire process.

- Assign each student a role in creating the Circle (putting down the cloth, gathering the talking piece, arranging the center piece, moving tables out of the way, arranging chairs); this not only helps assist in a smooth transition in and out of Circle, but also reinforces that from day one, this process belongs to the entire class.
- Ask the students to bring in their own talking pieces and share each one's story and significance in their lives, or make talking pieces as a class project and put them on display in the classroom.
- Partner students and ask each pair to select an opening and closing poem or activity for Circle, and then have pairs rotate responsibility for opening and closing the Circle.
- Once students are familiar with the Circle structure, ask them what questions or topics they'd like to talk about in Circle and have them write down their suggestions. Or place a box in the classroom where students can submit suggestions for you to review and select from before Circle.

#### Questions for Teacher Reflection:

- How could Circles help my students treat each other with respect?
- How could Circles help me show respect for my students?
- How could Circles help prevent misbehavior?
- How is my role as a Circle Keeper different from my other roles throughout the school day?

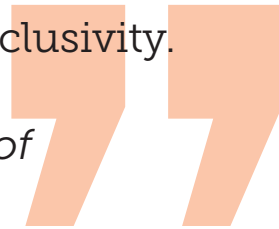
## TERMS WITH DEFINITIONS AND USE WITHIN RESTORATIVE PRACTICES\*

<b>CIRCLE KEEPER</b>	The person who facilitates the circle process and establishes and maintains the tone. He or she does not control the issues raised and does not steer the group to a particular outcome, but rather helps the group reflect by posing questions and creating inclusive conversation.
<b>TALKING PIECE</b>	An object with some significance to the Circle Keeper or to the group that is passed around the circle to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to speak.
<b>CENTER PIECE</b>	Artifacts placed in the circle center that creates a shared center and grounds the circle. It also acts as a focal point and gives participants a place to look when discussing difficult issues. Possible circle centerpieces include a plant, a candle, small rug, statue, etc.
<b>AGREEMENTS</b>	Created during a restorative practice, they are a series of mutually agreed upon action steps intended to repair the harm and rebuild the relationship after a conflict has occurred.



Our ancestors gathered around a fire in a Circle. Families gather around the kitchen table in a Circle. Now, we are learning to gather in a Circle as a community to solve problems, support one another, and connect to one another... [Circles] combine this ancient tradition with contemporary concepts of democracy and exclusivity.

– Kay Pranis, *"The Little Book of Circle Processes"*



## EXAMPLE FROM THE CLASSROOM:

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### MS. HARRIS

Ms. Harris, a freshman English teacher, was eager to keep her first Circle with her students. She had talked with her students about the Circle process and asked them to submit different topics that they were interested in discussing in Circle. She was encouraged by the students' positive response to the process. Many of the students had written that they had experienced or witnessed a lot of bullying behaviors going on between students in the class. She decided that this topic was particularly important to discuss because it was the beginning of the year and she wanted students to feel supported and respected in her class.

The day of the Circle, Ms. Harris had put the desks in a circle, created a beautiful centerpiece, and chosen as her talking piece a mask that a student had given her years ago. The students sat in Circle and she delivered her opening ritual. After she introduced the process, the guidelines, and the talking piece, she asked her first question: "Share a time that you've been bullied and how it felt." She passed the talking piece and watched as every student passed the talking piece without saying a word. Now and then a student would pause with the piece and think, but then pass it without speaking.

When debriefing the Circle, Ms. Harris expressed her confusion. Why did they all pass when so many had indicated that they wanted to talk about this very issue? In her excitement to "get to the meat of it," she had forgotten the importance of the check-in round and the need to build trust and a safe space before diving into deep issues. The class didn't feel safe sharing on such a personal issue and so no one said a word. Ms. Harris took this feedback and in her next few Circles she started with check-in questions. Then she asked follow-up questions that were more reflective, but still allowed space for students to choose how deeply they wanted to share. Finally in their fourth class Circle, after asking a check-in question and reviewing their values, Ms. Harris asked, "How have you been affected by bullying?" Every student responded with a meaningful story about how they or a friend had experienced it. They even started brainstorming what they could do to prevent and address bullying in class.

## Classroom Circle Activity: Sample Circle Prompts

### CPS FRAMEWORK ALIGNMENT:

- 2a. Creating an Environment of Respect and Rapport
- 2b. Establish a Culture of Learning
- 2d. Managing Student Behavior

### SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL ALIGNMENT:

- G1. Develop Self-Awareness and Self-Management Skills to Achieve School and Life Success
- G2. Use Social-Awareness and Interpersonal Skills to Establish and Maintain Positive Relationships
- G3. Demonstrate Decision-making Skills and Responsible Behaviors in Personal, School and Community Contexts

### SKILL DEVELOPMENT:

Active Listening, Perspective-Taking, Communicating, Analyzing, and Reflecting

### DIRECTIONS:

#### 1. Check In:

Break the Ice with a Light and Easy Question

- What has been the highlight of your week so far?
- What are you thankful for today?
- How have you been positive today?
- Describe your mood or feeling today.
- If you could have one super power, what would it be and why?
- What is your favorite T.V. show, color, book, movie, hobby, etc.?
- If you could be an animal, what animal would you be and why?
- Between 1 and 10 (with 1 being terrible and 10 being great), how are you feeling coming to the Circle today?
- What is a food that reminds you of home? (Home can be however you define it.)
- If you could travel anywhere, where would you go?
- If you could solve one of the world's problems, what would it be?
- What motivates you?
- What did you love to do/spend the most time doing as a child? Do you still do it?
- What is one thing that you love to do now?
- What is something that you've always wanted to do, but have never had the chance?
- What is your favorite time of day?
- What is one of your favorite memories from when you were little?
- Create a newspaper headline you would like to read about yourself.
- What is your earliest memory?
- If you could live in any time period, what would you choose? Why?

#### 2. Create Circle Values:

Establish Values That Will Make the Circle a Safe Space. Make Sure That You Address or Revisit the Values in Every Circle.

**Classroom Circle Activity: Sample Circle Prompts**

- What value is most important to you? Give all participants a piece of construction paper and ask them to write down the value on the paper. Go around the Circle and have each person share why they chose that value and then put the papers in center of Circle, face up. Use the papers as part of your center piece.
- Think of someone you trust. What are some characteristics of that person that make you trust them?
- What does "safe space" mean to you?
- Who in your life inspires you to be a better person?
- What are 3 traits you look for in a friend?
- What is one trait or skill that you can bring to the Circle to make it successful?
- What do you need from this group in order for the Circle space to feel comfortable and safe? The Circle Keeper records this on a post-it board as "Circle values." Does everyone agree to what the other people need? Pass talking piece for verbal YES. You just made the rules for the group.
- If you could go back and change one thing about your life, what would it be?
- How does peer pressure (negative and positive) affect you?
- What do you want to accomplish before you graduate high school?
- What is one of your proudest moments so far?
- If you could change one thing about yourself, what would it be?
- If you could change anything about the world, what would it be?
- What is your biggest fear?
- Complete this sentence: "One thing that scares me about my future is..."
- Completed this sentence: "One thing that excites me about my future is..."
- What is one quality of a good friend?
- How do you handle anger and frustration?
- What does community mean to you?
- What does respect look like?
- What is one goal that you want to achieve in your life?
- What is the impact of violence in your community?
- What are the obstacles that prevent you from success?
- Complete the following sentence: "If I were braver, I would ..."

**3. Circle Prompts:**

Explore Substantive Topics

- If you could change one thing about your parents, what would it be?
- If you could change your school, how would you change it?
- How would you describe yourself as a person?
- Name one person who inspires you to be a better person
- What is one goal that you want to achieve in your life?
- What is the impact of violence in your community?
- What are the obstacles that prevent you from success?
- Complete the following sentence: "If I were braver, I would ..."

*Classroom Circle Activity: Sample Circle Prompts*

- Complete the following sentence: "If you really knew me, you'd know..."
- How do other people see you? Are their perceptions accurate?
- What do you hesitate to admit about yourself?
- What areas of your life are you most/least satisfied with?
- What gives you energy?
- What is one of your most peaceful moments?
- What is something that has been on your mind lately?
- Who is/was the best teacher that you ever had and why?
- What takes energy away from you?
- When do you feel the most "natural"?
- Where are you meeting resistance in your life right now?
- What are you most passionate about?
- What do you value above all?
- From your perspective, what is the most important thing in life?
- If you could heal any one relationship, which would it be and why?
- What would you do if you only had 24 hours to live?
- What is your biggest obstacle now?

**4. Checkout:**

## Reflection and Transition Out of the Circle

- What are your reactions to the Circle?
- How do you feel about what we discussed?
- How will the Circle affect your communication?
- How can you apply what you learned in the Circle to help you and your friends make better choices?
- What is your greatest strength?
- What is one positive thing that you can do before the end of the day today?
- What is one word that describes how you're feeling right now?
- What is one thing that you are taking away from the Circle today?

SECTION

05

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Restore Yourself

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“The Art of Peace begins with you.

Work on yourself and your appointed task in the Art of Peace. Everyone has a spirit that can be refined, a body that can be trained in some manner, a suitable path to follow. You are here for no other purpose than to realize your inner divinity and manifest your innate enlightenment. Foster peace in your own life and then apply the Art of Peace to all you encounter.”

– *Morihei Ueshiba*

*Founder of Aikido Japanese Martial Arts*

Restorative justice is all about relationships, and the most important relationship to cultivate is the relationship that you have with yourself. In order to be effective and restorative in one’s role as an educator, one must be centered and self-aware. This requires staff to be intentional about identifying and reflecting on their own emotions, recognizing the impact their actions have on their students and co-workers, and taking steps to recharge and grow.

Working with youth who come from violent neighborhoods or have experienced other trauma in their lives can cause “compassion fatigue” as a result of constant exposure to difficult stories and witnessing behavioral reactions to past traumatic experiences. Compassion fatigue is normal for those working with youth who experience traumatic stress in their lives. Compassion fatigue manifests itself in many ways, including increased irritability, difficulty doing work, lack of concentration, and intense feelings or lack of feelings. It is important to recognize that educators as well as students need support and care when dealing with these issues. Seeking help from a professional when these signs last for more than 2-3 weeks can help things get back on track.

Effective care requires equal levels of support and accountability. This often means **creating a plan around self-care** and **establishing a community** that will support your restorative development.

## HERE ARE SOME IDEAS THAT YOU CAN WORK INTO YOUR OWN SELF-CARE PLAN:

### 1. Set healthy boundaries.

Recognize your limits and be clear about what you can and can't do at your school. Volunteer for what you can do realistically but don't do too much.

### 2. Take breaks often during the day.

Build breaks into your day. Take 5 minutes to grab a healthy snack. Take a walk outside of your classroom to the water fountain. Sit at your desk and meditate for a couple minutes.

### 3. Engage in fun activities outside of work.

Find other passions besides teaching! Engage in a hobby, play on a sports team, cook, watch movies that are comedies, plan outings with your friends and family, bike ride, go hiking, etc.

### 4. Create your own rituals to open and close your day.

Be intentional about how you start and end your day. Something as simple as taking a moment to savor a delicious cup of tea or coffee on your way to work can help you center yourself before a busy day. You can take your favorite quote and repeat it as a mantra, or write three things that you are grateful for from that day before going to bed. Think of something enjoyable and do it until it becomes a routine!

**Establishing a community** means finding like-minded colleagues with whom you can talk and share your classroom triumphs and struggles. Finding even one colleague you respect who shares your restorative values can help reduce your sense of isolation and promote personal growth. Share your plan with a colleague, check in with each other about progress, and talk through barriers when they arise. These steps will increase accountability and action.

Remember, building a restorative community requires that we are intentional about holding each other and ourselves accountable. It can prove beneficial to provide feedback for fellow staff when you observe both positive and negative interactions. This opens a path of continued support for your peers and the school community as whole.

#### Questions for Teacher Reflection:

- What are ways colleagues can support each other in using restorative practices?
- What is your plan for building your restorative skills?
- What is your self-care plan?

## EXAMPLE FROM THE CLASSROOM:

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### MR. MOORE

A student at Mr. Moore's school shot and killed a student who attended a nearby school. The entire community was affected, and the school brought in extra individual counseling resources for the students to help them process the loss. But Mr. Moore saw that teachers were also grieving and needed a space to deal with the impact of this tragedy. He was a trained Circle Keeper, so he decided to facilitate a healing Circle for teachers to allow them to share their feelings around this tragic event.

The teachers talked about how it felt to lose yet another young person to gun violence and how awful it felt knowing that their student took the life of another youth. They shared how hard it was not knowing when the next tragedy would occur. Many feared that the cycle of violence would continue with retaliation for this death. In the Circle, the teachers decided to show a sign of support to the neighboring school by sending the other school flowers.

After the Circle, the teachers came to Mr. Moore and said what a big difference it made for them to be able to come together to talk about this tragedy rather than trying to go about the school day as if nothing had happened. The Circle created the space for the teachers to voice their feelings and support each other as a group. Many teachers said that after the Circle they felt more present for their students and emotionally ready to support them during this difficult time. Others commented on how much more connected to their colleagues they felt after the Circle.

## ***Activities: Practice Makes the Peace Practitioner***

Here are a few ideas to help you practice being restorative as part of your daily life so that you continue to build your skills over time:

- Find a time and place to check in with yourself. What are you bringing into the present moment that could affect your response? Is your response influenced by past interactions? What assumptions or ideals might you need to let go of in order to really listen? Regularly taking a moment to be at peace with yourself can make a difference as you work for peace at your school.
- Practice having restorative conversations with people in your life (family, friends, co-workers). After each conversation, reflect on what you did that worked and didn't work.
- Look back on your life and write down stories that help you empathize with different feelings and situations students may be experiencing or that inspire people to be their best selves.
- Be on the lookout for more new stories in your daily life that might be useful in Circle. Collect or create talking pieces associated with your stories.
- Find a Circle to be a part of! The best way to get good at keeping Circles is to BE in lots of different Circles.
- Seek out professional development on Restorative justice practices. Chicago Public Schools makes these available and free for school staff, and the Chicago Teachers Union Quest Center also offers training on restorative justice. Alternatives, Inc. provides citywide and school specific trainings in restorative practices.
- Get other stakeholders in your school excited! Share your successes. Culture shift at your school requires that this idea spreads! Advocate for your administration to provide training for staff and adopt restorative discipline practices.

## Activity: 21 Circle Prompts for Teacher Self Reflection

### DIRECTIONS:

Take time to journal about some of the reflection questions, or better yet, bring your colleagues together for a Circle and use some of the following prompts to help guide you.

1. What is your favorite part of the school day? Why?
2. What do today's students want from their teachers?
3. Whom have you met during your teaching experience who touched you deeply? Why?
4. Describe a high point/low point of your teaching and explain why.
5. What is an unexpected social issue that you have encountered in your work? How have you dealt with it?
6. What are some accomplishments from this year that you are proud of?
7. What is something you tried in your classroom this year for the first time? How did it go?
8. What is something you have found particularly frustrating this year?
9. Which student in your class do you think has shown the most improvement? Why do you think this student has done so well?
10. What social or environmental problem touches you most right now and why?
11. What is something you would change about this year if you could?
12. What is one way that you have grown professionally this year?
13. When was a time this year when you felt joyful or inspired about the work that you do?
14. What do you hope your students will remember most about you as a teacher?
15. In what ways have you been helpful to your colleagues this year?
16. What is the most valuable thing you have learned this year?
17. Talk about a time when someone really supported you as a learner.
18. What is the biggest mistake you have made this year? How can you avoid making the same mistake in the future?
19. What is something you have done this year that went better than you thought it would?
20. In what ways have you positively impacted the lives of your students?
21. Describe one thing that your students have taught you this year.

## **Activity: What is your Life Vision?**

### **DIRECTIONS:**

This activity is designed to encourage reflection on your personal goals and values. Think about the following topics for each time period and write your vision below:

#### **People**

(Who are the important people in your life? )

#### **Community activities**

(How are you involved with your community? i.e. volunteering, religious, social)

#### **Education and employment**

(How are you furthering your learning? Making your living? Spending your days?)

#### **Housing**

(Where do you live? What does it look/feel/sound like?)

#### **Fun**

(What do you do for fun? i.e. entertainment, hobbies, sports, etc.)

### **QUESTIONS**

10 years from now, I want to...

5 years from now, I want to...

1 year from now, I want to ...

6 months from now, I want to...

Next month, I want to...

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Keep these reflection questions on hand and revisit them often. Meeting personal goals and creating a fulfilled life requires that we make choices that support and move us toward that outcome. As life progresses, priorities can shift, so revisit your goals often and take the time to reflect on them to see if they still hold true.

## CLOSING WORDS

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"Once upon a time, there was a wise man who used to go to the ocean to do his writing. He had a habit of walking on the beach before he began his work.

One day, as he was walking along the shore, he looked down the beach and saw a human figure moving like a dancer. He smiled to himself at the thought of someone who would dance to the day, and so, he walked faster to catch up.

As he got closer, he noticed that the figure was that of a young man, and that what he was doing was not dancing at all. The young man was reaching down to the shore, picking up small objects, and throwing them into the ocean.

He came closer still and called out, "Good morning! May I ask what it is that you are doing?"

The young man paused, looked up, and replied "Throwing starfish into the ocean."

"I must ask, then, why are you throwing starfish into the ocean?" asked the somewhat startled wise man.

To this, the young man replied, "The sun is up and the tide is going out. If I don't throw them in, they'll die."

Upon hearing this, the man commented, "But, young man, do you not realize that there are miles and miles of beach and there are starfish all along every mile? You can't possibly make a difference!"

At this, the young man bent down, picked up yet another starfish, and threw it into the ocean. As it met the water, he said,

"It made a difference for that one."

– Adapted from Loren Eiseley's *The Star Thrower*

“If I had to put restorative justice into one word, I would choose respect: respect for all, even those who are different from us, even those who seem to be our enemies. Respect reminds us of our interconnectedness but also of our differences. Respect insists that we balance our concern for all parties.”

- *Howard Zehr*

## IN CLOSING

Shifting away from a punitive paradigm and transforming the way we view our relationships with students requires an investment of energy and time. Unfortunately, a common narrative in many school cultures involves the lack of time. Teachers are pressed to squeeze more and more tasks into the existing school day. School administrations push for immediate results, and there is a desire to “solve” problems as quickly as possible.


However, it is this dynamic of speed over substance that has led to the disintegration of relationships in the classroom and school. If we do not spend the time necessary to get to know each other in the beginning of the year, we fail to establish the baseline connection for meaningful teacher-student and student-student interactions. When substantive relationships aren't created in the classroom, minor issues and miscommunication often compound into bigger power struggles and ongoing conflicts. These conflicts often continue to re-emerge because we have a limited point of reference from which to relate to students and therefore are constrained in our ability to step back and see issues from others' perspectives.

*Figure 5.1* is from Kay Pranis, and it speaks to the importance of how we interact. Before we can solve a problem or tackle an issue, we must spend time getting to know each other, and it is from that point that we then move into building meaningful relationships. Only after we've spent time doing these things may we move forward into addressing issues and developing action plans.


When talking about designating time to build classroom community, a current CPS teacher said, a strengths-based approach focuses on establishing community, building social emotional competency, and developing conflict resolution skills takes patience and intention in order to shift from the current punitive practices in schools (and greater society) to utilizing a holistic and restorative framework. For this reason, restorative justice is not a “quick fix” by any means. A restorative justice philosophy is grounded in indigenous teachings because it nurtures each individual to take one's own contributions into account and to develop oneself to correct and change behaviors unbecoming of a healthier and harmonious way of life.



**Figure 5.1**



“I used to jump right into the lesson plan each fall and then spend the rest of the year correcting behaviors and dealing with discipline issues. I finally decided to devote the entire first two weeks of school to building classroom community through activities, Circles, and team builders. Now, I rarely have discipline issues. I spend significantly less time redirecting behaviors and have been able to get much farther in my lesson plans than I ever used to. I’ve learned that when it comes to designating time for classroom community and discipline, you either pay for it now, or pay for it later.”



- CPS Teacher

## APPENDIX

### Sample Poems and Quotes for Opening and Closing a Circle

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### Autobiography in Five Short Chapters

I

I walk down the street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.  
I fall in.  
I am lost ... I am helpless.  
It isn't my fault.  
It takes me forever to find a way out.

II

I walk down the same street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.  
I pretend I don't see it.  
I fall in again.  
I can't believe I am in the same place  
but, it isn't my fault.  
It still takes a long time to get out.

III

I walk down the same street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.  
I see it is there.  
I still fall in ... it's a habit.  
my eyes are open  
I know where I am.  
It is my fault.  
I get out immediately.

IV

I walk down the same street.  
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.  
I walk around it.

V

I walk down another street.

- *Portia Nelson*

### **If I Knew You and You Knew Me**

If I knew you and you knew me,  
 If both of us could clearly see,  
 And with an inner sight divine,  
 The meaning of your heart and mine,  
 I'm sure that we would differ less,  
 And clasp our hands in friendliness;  
 Our thoughts would pleasantly agree,  
 If I knew you and you knew me.

- *Nixon Waterman*

### **The Peace of Wild Things**

When despair for the world grows in me  
 and I wake in the night at the least sound  
 in fear of what my life and my children's lives  
 may be,

I go and lie down where the wood drake  
 rests in his beauty on the water, and the great  
 heron feeds.

I come into the peace of wild things who do not tax  
 their lives with forethought of grief. I come into the  
 presence of still water. And I feel above me the day-  
 blind stars waiting with their light. For a time

I rest in the grace of the world, and I am free.

- *Wendell Berry*

### **Diamond Mind**

The promise of our dreams comes true  
 When patience minds our goal;  
 Remember that the diamond once  
 Was just a piece of coal.

- *Charles Ghigna*

### **A Purpose**

November 11, 2015

Everything on the earth has a purpose, every  
 disease an herb to cure it, and every person a  
 mission. This is the Indian theory of existence.

- *Mourning Dove*

And I say the sacred hoop of my people was one  
 of the many hoops that made one circle, wide as  
 daylight and as starlight, and in the center grew one  
 mighty flowering tree to shelter all the children of  
 one mother and one father.

- *Black Elk*

### **Six Blind Men and the Elephant: A Parable from India**

Once upon a time, there were six blind men living in the same town. One day, a woman brought her elephant to their town. The woman said, "Come and see my beautiful elephant!"

The six blind men gathered together and tried to decipher what an elephant would look like. One blind man said, "I wonder what an elephant looks like. I will touch him and see!"

Another blind man said, "Exactly! The only way to determine what an elephant looks like is by our sense of touch."

Therefore, each blind man decided they would take turns touching the elephant. Then they would share what they had discovered with the others.

The first blind man walked up to the elephant. As he reached out his hand, he found himself touching the side of the elephant. He announced, "Oh, I get it! The Elephant is like a wall!"

The second blind man walked up to the elephant. As he reached out his hand, he found himself touching the tusk of the elephant. He announced, "Oh, I get it! The Elephant is like a spear!"

The third blind man walked up to the elephant. As he reached out his hand, he found himself touching the tail of the elephant. He announced, "Oh, I get it! The Elephant is like a rope!"

The fourth blind man walked up to the elephant. As he reached out his hand, he found himself touching the leg of the elephant. He announced, "Oh, I get it! The Elephant is like a tree!"

The fifth blind man walked up to the elephant. As he reached out his hand, he found himself touching the ear of the elephant. He announced, "Oh, I get it! The Elephant is like a fan!"

The sixth blind man walked up to the elephant. As he reached out his hand, he found himself touching the trunk of the elephant. He announced, "Oh, I get it! The Elephant is like a snake!"

Each blind man was totally convinced that he had made the one true discovery. Each man argued his case valiantly. Each man felt that he was telling the truth and could not be convinced otherwise.

So who was telling the truth, and who was telling a lie?

#### **Debrief with Students:**

- How does this story relate to conflict situations?
- If each person perceives the conflict in a totally different way based on his or her background, experiences, training, and personality, can different interpretations of the same situation all be correct? Why? Why not? What does this tell us about how we experience conflict?
- Think of a time when you were in conflict with someone and you both saw the situation differently. How could you have combined your experiences of the situation to lead to a more satisfying resolution?

**“Moral excellence comes about as a result of habit. We become just by doing just acts, temperate by doing temperate acts, brave by doing brave acts.”**

**– Aristotle**

“The world is not dangerous because of those who do harm but because of those who look at it without doing anything.”

– Albert Einstein

“If you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy. Then he becomes your partner.”

– Nelson Mandela

**“In fact, once he is motivated no one can change more completely than the man who has been at the bottom. I call myself the best example of that.”**

**– Malcolm X**

“You must be the change you want to see in the world.”

– Mahatma Gandhi

“The future belongs to those who prepare for it today.”

– Malcolm X

**“Returning violence for violence multiplies violence; adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars...Hate cannot drive out hate: only love can do that.”**

**– MLK, Jr.**

“How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.”

– Anne Frank

“When the power of love overcomes the love of power the world will know peace.”

– Jimi Hendrix

**“Knowledge speaks, but wisdom listens.”**

**– Jimi Hendrix**

**RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PRACTICES FOSTER  
FIVE KEY YOUTH DEVELOPMENT CONCEPTS:**

<p><b>SELF-EFFICACY</b></p>	<p>Empowers students to take responsibility for their actions and assists students in discovering ways to repair harm.</p> <p><b>Restorative practices build self-efficacy by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empowering youth to advocate for themselves and be proactive members of their schools and communities</li> <li>• Providing students with an opportunity to reflect on their actions and develop positive responses to repair harm and resolve conflict.</li> </ul>
<p><b>SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING</b></p>	<p>Builds self-awareness and self-management skills in order for students to succeed in school and beyond.</p> <p><b>Restorative practices build social emotional learning by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengthening communication skills to help resolve conflict and maintain positive relationships with peers and adults</li> <li>• Building empathy through dialogue, using listening to uncover root causes of harm, and understanding external factors that cause conflict.</li> </ul>
<p><b>CRITICAL THINKING</b></p>	<p>Creates space to consider social context, ask questions, and think independently in order to effectively solve problems</p> <p><b>Restorative practices build critical thinking skills by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Engaging youth with multi-faceted, real-life problems. Youth cope with issues and rely on their own critical thinking skills to resolve conflicts.</li> <li>• Teaching youth to ask in-depth questions in order to create lasting solutions that are specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-bound.</li> </ul>
<p><b>YOUTH-ADULT PARTNERSHIPS</b></p>	<p>Foster healthy relationships between adults and youth that involve mutual respect and working together toward a common goal</p> <p><b>Restorative practices build youth-adult partnerships by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing supportive learning environments in which adults encourage youth to explore the issues and challenges of their schools and communities.</li> <li>• Creating opportunities for adults to help youth work toward goals, overcome obstacles, and celebrate achievements.</li> </ul>
<p><b>LEADERSHIP</b></p>	<p>Youth leadership recognizes youth voice and power, allowing youth to advocate for themselves in school, and to become proactive members of their communities.</p> <p><b>Peer Conference &amp; Circles build leadership qualities by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continuously expanding students' understanding of what it means to be a positive role-model by teaching them how their actions determine respect.</li> <li>• Encouraging students to tackle new situations head on, allowing them to gain a Sense of independence and to experience a sense of individual successes.</li> </ul>

## RESTORATIVE JUSTICE:

### A TOOL FOR PEACE AND RESPECT IN CHICAGO AND BEYOND\*

For more than 40 years, our criminal justice system has over-relied on punishment, policing, incarceration and detention. This has ushered in an age of mass incarceration marked by harsh and racially biased sentencing policies, internationally disproportionate incarceration rates, and a variety of collateral consequences that have harmed our communities and schools.

In light of this negative impact, many across the political spectrum have begun to call for the reform of these policies. Government officials, policymakers, judges, principals, and other leaders are all looking for alternatives to current punitive policies. This shift has been responsible for increasing interest in the concept of restorative justice among governmental institutions and nonprofit entities that previously supported harmful and oppressive criminal justice and school discipline policies.

We celebrate and are encouraged by the growth of interest in restorative justice. As this interest grows, questions as to what constitutes restorative justice and restorative practices will naturally emerge. Moreover, questions as to what restorative justice is from the outside have led us to take stock of its principles and values. In this process we found there were similar principles framing our motivation for practicing restorative justice.

### These are:

- A collective commitment to end our nation's over reliance on policing and punishment.
- An awareness that Black, Brown and First Nation communities are most impacted by the harm of mass incarceration.
- A conviction that the current criminal justice system creates instability and harms our communities.
- An awareness that the entrance of criminal justice into our schools has harmed youth, altered teaching and learning, and damaged opportunities for community in schools.
- An understanding and belief in the ability of people to change.
- A commitment to empower people most impacted by harmful systems as leaders and change agents.
- A belief that dignity and humanity should ground all our personal and institutional practices.

The appended document declares the values we find essential to the practice of restorative justice. These principles are not intended to be universal, exhaustive or fixed. Rather, they intend to document what people committed to ending the over reliance on punishment and policing across the city of Chicago identify as key principles in building restorative justice in their work, community, and educational sites.

We envision that the audience for this document will be diverse and will include restorative justice practitioners, those who are novices to the concept, stakeholders who are considering this approach, and the communities in which restorative justice is emerging.

When these principles are followed, restorative justice can be dynamic, reflecting communities' unique needs, cultures, and creativity.

**WE ENVISION RESTORATIVE JUSTICE...**

- As a relationship-building process that is responsive to needs
- Will create safe environments that foster dignity, humanity, respect, agency, empathy and mutual well-being
- As preventative when the values of restorative justice are embraced by a community; restorative justice is not always reactionary or contingent on the existence of conflict
- Recognizes the capability of those most impacted by conflict, especially youth, to lead the change
- As voluntary for all participants
- When addressing conflict, will acknowledge, learn from and repair harm and promote healing for all
- As inclusive, valuing that everyone has a story and a voice
- As grounded in "power with" not "power over"
- As a process focused on the community taking responsibility when harm occurs, rather than government and systematic responsibility
- Centered by an understanding of and a commitment to practices and contexts that are anti-oppressive, including struggles to end racism, sexism, ableism, adultism, ageism, transphobia, heterosexism, and other forms of privilege and domination
- With an understanding that interpersonal acts of violence are connected to structural violence and with the responsibility to boldly expose and address structural violence
- Supported by adequate institutional resources to enable creation and sustainability of positive, supportive, non-punitive environments
- Takes time and commitment from all community members in order to make long-standing, structural change
- As focused on carrying out and living the philosophy
- Results in a paradigm shift in the ways in which we treat one another, but also in how we think about conflict and punishment, from a retributive to a restorative mindset.

# ALTERNATIVES, INC.<sup>SM</sup>

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

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### TRAINING FOR STAFF/FACULTY

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#### INTRODUCTION TO RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

**Duration: 3 hours or 6 hours**

This training provides a general overview of restorative justice and allows participants to experience restorative practices. Participants will learn about the restorative justice philosophy and will be introduced to the practices that make a school culture truly restorative. Longer trainings will also touch on ways that school staff can help build meaningful relationships with students, strengthen classroom community and promote a culture of mutual respect in the school.

#### INTRODUCTION TO TALKING CIRCLES

**Duration: 12 hours**

Used as a way to build community amongst students and teachers. Can be used in morning meeting, to facilitate regular check-ins, incorporate SEL into classroom curriculum and discussion, increase classroom management skills, or for afterschool programs with all students or specific groups of students that need additional support – not used in response to a specific discipline issue but rather a means to build relationships. During the training, participants will increase their understanding of restorative justice philosophy and will learn how to be circle keepers and how to incorporate circles into their lesson plans.

#### INTRODUCTION TO PEACE CIRCLES

**Duration: 12 hours**

This training prepares staff to facilitate restorative peace circles after there has been a major incident or ongoing conflict. For those who are new to Peace Circles, we recommend two days of training.

#### RESTORATIVE CONVERSATIONS

**Duration: 6-10 hours. 1 to 2 days**

Restorative conversations address communication dynamics by utilizing de-escalation methods and by providing an alternative framework for handling aggressions, day-to-day conflicts, and creating deeper communication practices.

#### SUMMER RJ INSTITUTE

This four day training integrates a youth development approach through a Restorative Justice lens to give participants growth and understanding of sustainable Restorative Practice as a trans-formative long-term method to building community in the classroom, incorporating and encouraging SEL in the classroom, and bolstering academic learning for students.

#### COACHING UP COACHES

This is a training to enhance new/current RP Coaches' skills in utilizing a youth development approach to implementing Peer Conferencing, and Circles.

### TRAINING FOR STUDENTS

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#### PEACE AMBASSADOR MODEL

Our Peace Ambassador Model is the umbrella term for the students who are taking long-term leadership roles in restorative justice initiatives and are recognized by their respective schools and/or community group, as well as Alternatives, Inc. They are trained in various Restorative Practices to lead youth-based programs. There are three roles under this model: Peer Conference Leader, Circle Keeper, and Peer Mentor.

ALTERNATIVES, INC.<sup>SM</sup>  
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

### PEER CONFERENCE

Our interactive student trainings equip youth in grades 7-12 with the skills and knowledge they need to implement restorative peer conferencing. During the training, students increase their understanding of restorative justice philosophy, learn each step of the peer conferencing and apply their knowledge using role plays. Duration: One 6-hour training plus two 1-hour practice sessions.

### TALKING CIRCLES

**Duration: 12 hours.**

Used as a way to build community in the classroom, with specific groups of students, or after school—it is not used in response to a specific discipline issue but a means to build relationships. During the training, students increase their understanding of restorative justice philosophy and will learn how to be circle keepers and leaders of peace.

### PEER MENTORS (LEVEL II TRAINING)

Students that have been formerly trained in the previous skills can learn how to mentor new peer leaders and continue developing Peace Ambassadors at their schools by learning mentoring skills, team-building skills, peer de-escalation skills, etc.

### ONGOING CONSULTATION

Alternatives, Inc. supports community partners to develop capacity for utilizing restorative discipline by assessing and identifying areas of need, strengthening staff and youth skills, and helping to build effective systems for implementation. Technical assistance may include short follow-up trainings for youth or staff; observing or co-leading circles; facilitating planning meetings; and supporting community stakeholders with documentation and evaluation.

! If interested in the professional development by Alternatives, Inc., please call or email.

**Phone:** 773-506-7474

**Email:** [info@alternativesyouth.org](mailto:info@alternativesyouth.org)

## RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OFFERINGS

### CHICAGO TEACHERS UNION FOUNDATION (CTUF) QUEST CENTER

#### RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

This can be offered as a workshop or a learning series intensive. Attendees will engage in the practices of restoration: classroom community building, talking circles, restorative conversations, and peer conferencing. There will be an intentional focus on utilizing classroom and school structures that already exist, as a way to bring the philosophy of restorative justice into focus at the school level.

#### CULTURAL COMPETENCY

In this course teachers and paraprofessionals who work with students in all grades and subjects will learn what cultural competency and diversity means, and why it is important to develop cultural competencies and identify and value diversities in their classrooms.

#### FACILITATED DISCUSSIONS IN CRITICAL RACE THEORY (CRT)

In this offering there will be facilitator-led discussions about race, identity, and power in public education. Participants will learn what CRT is and the implications on teaching practice.

#### EFFECTIVE CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

This offering assists teachers in learning new ways to effectively manage a classroom through student engagement, motivation, collaboration and differentiation.

#### CREATING A TRAUMA SENSITIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

This course examines how teachers can support and nurture their students' emotional well-being before, during, and after traumatic events in order to mitigate the impact of complex childhood trauma.

#### SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE ELEMENTARY CLASSROOM - AN ACTION LAB

In this offering the participants will work and learn in an Action Lab Learning Community that focuses on developing student-driven, community-based social justice projects.

#### PRACTICED-BASED METHODS FOR INCREASING FAMILY AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

This course provides teachers with strategies to increase student learning by developing strong partnerships with their families and the school's community.

If interested in any of the professional development, please contact Walter Taylor, NBCT, Director of Professional Development at the CTUF Quest Center

**Email:** [WalterTaylor@ctuf.org](mailto:WalterTaylor@ctuf.org)  
**Phone:** 312-329-6273

## RESOURCES

### RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

**The Little Book of Circle Processes:**

A New/Old Approach to Peacemaking

by *Kay Pranis*

**Circle Forward:**

Building a Restorative School Community

by *Carolyn Watson and Kay Pranis*

Available from Institute on Restorative Initiatives:

[www.instituteforrestorativeinitiatives.org](http://www.instituteforrestorativeinitiatives.org)

**Engaging The Powers:**

Discerning Resistance In A World of Domination

by *Walter Wink*

**Heart of Hope Resource Guide:**

Using Peacemaking Circles to Develop Emotional Literacy, Promote Healing and Build Healthy Relationships

by *Carolyn Watson and Kay Pranis*

**Illinois Balanced and Restorative Justice**

[www.ibarj.org](http://www.ibarj.org)

**Just Schools:**

A Whole School Approach to Restorative Justice

by *Belinda Hopkins*

**Restorative Justice at the Alliance School in Milwaukee:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3-dDQunk9mE>

**Restorative Welcome and Reentry Circle:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HiLtFVHR8QQ>

**The Centre for Justice and Reconciliation, a project of the Prison Fellowship International:**

[www.restorativejustice.org](http://www.restorativejustice.org)

**Touching Spirit Bear**

by *Ben Mickelson*

### TRAUMA & HARM

**Arrested Justice:**

Black Women, Violence, and America's Prison Nation

by *Beth Richie*

**How Childhood Trauma Affects Health Across a Lifetime:**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=95ovIJ3dsNk>

**Locked Down, Locked Out Why Prison Doesn't Work and How We Can Do Better**

by *Maya Schenwar*

**Medicine Stories:**

History, Culture and the Politics of Integrity

by *Aurora Levins Morales*

**Project NIA Resources**

for more information about the juvenile justice system, as well restorative and transformative justice:

<http://www.project-nia.org/resources.php>

**Self-Care for Educators:**

The National Children Traumatic Stress Network, Child Trauma Toolkit for Educators, October 2008

[www.NCTSN.org](http://www.NCTSN.org)

**Self-Care for Teachers:**

Anne Brunette

[www.dollandassociates.com](http://www.dollandassociates.com)

**Trauma And Recovery:**

The Aftermath of Violence- From Domestic Abuse to Political Terror

by *Judith Herman*

**The Little Book of Trauma Healing**

by *Carolyn Yoder*

**Trauma And The Brain:**

A Brief Look At How Trauma Can Cause Physiological Changes in Brain Structure and Chemistry

by *J.S.W Campbell*

<http://www.kidspace.org/healing.aspx?id=2514>

## RESOURCES

### **Youth Trauma In Marginalized Neighborhoods:**

<http://news.yahoo.com/battling-america-s-other-ptsd-crisis-194336514.html>

## SYSTEM CHANGE ADVOCACY

### **VOYCE reports School To Prison Pipeline:**

<http://www.wsj.com/articles/for-more-teens-arrests-by-police-replace-school-discipline-1413858602>

### **The Advancement Project on Ending the Schoolhouse to Jailhouse Track:**

[www.safequalityschools.org](http://www.safequalityschools.org)

### **“The Dangers of Detention:**

The Impact of Incarcerating Youth in Detention and Other Secure Facilities”

*by Barry Holman and Jason Ziedenberg*







