Restorative Practices:
Transforming School Climates
From the Inside-Out

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Community Matters Mission
“To wake up the courage of students and adults to create schools that are safe, welcoming and inclusive.”

The Pillars of School Safety
Security
Outside-In Approach
The “Outside-In” Approach

• Security-Focused
• Adult-Driven
• Punitive Policies
• Control-Oriented

The Impact of Zero Tolerance

• 40% increase in secondary students suspended per year (1972-73 to 2009-10)
• No evidence that suspensions & expulsions reduced classroom disruptions
• Out of school suspensions:
  – Can severely disrupt a student’s academic progress with lasting negative consequences
  – Are associated with subsequent involvement in juvenile justice system


Living in a Disconnected World

"We are living in an unprecedented social experiment. We have systematically changed the patterns and connections that have characterized human life as long as there has been human life."

Wachtel, Dreaming of a New Reality
The Pillars of School Safety

Security

Outside-In Approach

Climate

Inside-Out Approach

The “Inside-Out” Approach

Relationship-Focused

Student-Centered

Formative / Restorative

Focused on Changing Social Norms

Guiding Principles, Laws, Regulations, and Funding

• Dear Colleague Letter (US DOE)
• Guiding Principles (US DOE)
• Bullying Laws
• Cyber-bullying Laws
• Climate/Safety Initiatives
• NITT (President’s Initiative)
What is “Climate”?

• It’s our inner-barometer of safety & belonging
• It’s based on our ‘gut’ feeling
• Everyone can feel it
• It influences how we behave and whether or not we choose to engage

And we can consciously influence it…

Positive School Climate Characteristics

• Strong relationships among and between students and staff
• Discipline using formative / restorative consequences
• Engagement, recognition and leadership opportunities for students in a wide variety of activities

Positive School Climate Impact

• Increases student retention & academic achievement
  • Renews focus on teaching & learning
  • Decreases bullying & other antisocial behaviors
  • Engenders trust & sense of safety
They don’t care what we know, until they know we care.

“Restorative Practices is a social science that studies how to build social capital and achieve social discipline through participatory learning and decision-making.”

The Restorative Practices Approach

1. Proactive
   - Strengthen Relationships
   - Build Trust
   - Develop Community

2. Responsive
   - Manage Conflict and Misbehavior
   - Meet Needs, Repair Harm
   - Restore Relationships

Paradigm Shift

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>From Punitive</th>
<th>To Restorative</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rule Broken</td>
<td>Who has been harmed and how?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Establish guilt or innocence</td>
<td>What needs and obligations have been created?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suppress misbehavior and conflict</td>
<td>Recognize misbehavior and conflict as a natural learning opportunity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Authority driven disciplinary actions</td>
<td>Those impacted determine resolution collectively in Circle</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accountability = Punishment</td>
<td>Deeper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using fear of punishment and exclusion to motivate positive behavior</td>
<td>Accountability = Understand the impacts Take responsibility Make amends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive behavior results from the opportunity to make amends and honorably reintegrate</td>
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Social Discipline Window

TO (Authoritarian) WITH (Restorative) NOT (Negligent) FOR (Permissive)
Restorative Practices Continuum

Moving From Punitive to Relational: The Challenge

- “staff...may share different views on the role of an educator and the purpose of discipline.”
- “Without understanding the enormity of the task a few good people in each school will be working very hard to make a difference, with limited impact.”

(Source: Overcoming Resistance to Whole School Uptake of Restorative Practices, Blood and Thorsborne, 2006)

Why Change Initiatives Fail

Research indicates, “that 70% of change initiatives fail because of 3 critical reasons:
1. People leading the change process announce the change and consider that is sufficient for having implemented
2. Peoples concerns are not surfaced or heard
3. Those expected to change are not actively involved in the change process.”

(Source: Zigarmi et al: Blanchard, 2006) and (Blood and Thorsborne, 2006)
Fundamental Hypothesis

"Human beings are happiest, healthiest, and most likely to make positive changes in their behavior when those in authority do things with them, rather than to them or for them." — Ted Wachtel

5 Key Strategies for Successful Implementation of Restorative Practices:

Identify 5 key strategies for successful implementation of Restorative Practices:

1. Restorative Leadership
2. Creating a Learning Organization
3. Staff Engagement/Overcoming Resistance
4. Using Systems Thinking
5. Strategic, Incremental Implementation

1. Restorative Leadership
The restorative leader models restorative principles and practices.

Organizational Change Window

TO (Top-down) WITH (Restorative) NOT (Avoiding/resisting change) FOR (Management consultants)

Costello, Wachteland Wachtel, 2009

Fair Process

“...individuals are most likely to trust and cooperate freely with systems—whether they themselves win or lose by those systems—when fair process is observed.”

- **Engagement**—involve individuals in decisions that affect them. Listen to their views and genuinely take their opinions into account.
- **Explanation**—explain the reasoning behind a decision to everyone who is affected by it
- **Expectation Clarity**—make sure that everyone clearly understands a decision and what is expected of them

(Source: Kim & Mauborgne, 1997)
2. Creating a Learning Organization

Learning Organizations
A learning organization is a group of people working together collectively to enhance their capacities to create results they really care about. (Peter Senge, 1990)

- Recognize the importance of team learning
- Focus on continuous self-improvement
- Reflect a shared vision
- Understand the impact of belief systems on the organization
- Use a systems approach

3. Staff Engagement/Overcoming Resistance
Staff Engagement and Buy-In

- Take the long view
- Prioritize Relationships and Community Building
- Use Fair Process
- Know Your People

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Know Your People

- People adapt to change at different rates and in different ways
- Different kinds of resistance:
  - emotional
  - need information and proof
  - fundamental disagreement
- Remember 10-20% buy-in is tipping point!
4. Using Systems Thinking

Questions For Consideration
1. What is the current need and how can Restorative Practices address it?
2. How receptive is the culture to a relational approach?
3. How can RP inform programs already in place? What are the interrelationships?
4. How can these programs support the implementation of RP?
5. Is a realignment of policies and procedures necessary?

5. Strategic, Incremental Implementation
Start-Up Planning

1. Identify advocates and resisters
2. Identify and engage leadership
3. Establish baseline data
4. Create 3 year roll-out plan including strategies for:
   - Gaining buy-in
   - Training
   - Experimentation
   - Ongoing learning
   - Monitoring progress and gathering feedback
   - Updating policies and procedures
   - Reporting out progress

Possible Roll-out Strategy

1. Provide initial introduction to staff, families and community partners and elicit feedback
2. Provide groups with feedback results & suggestions for next steps
3. Begin staff circles
4. Provide strategic professional development
5. Whole school presentation of RP to students
6. Begin experimentation with community building circles, affective statements and restorative dialogue
7. Begin formal conferencing
8. Create or adapt PLCs/PLG’s for ongoing learning
9. Maintain ongoing leadership meetings
10. Maintain ongoing monitoring of progress and feedback loop
11. Revisit and update discipline policies
12. Report progress to stakeholders and celebrate success!

There is no “blueprint”, every school is different