

## Basic Restorative Practices

International Institute for Restorative Practices

<https://www.iirp.edu/professional-development/basic-restorative-practices>

July 15-18, 2019

This was a four day conference in two parts. The first two days were the basics of restorative practices and using circles. The last two days were a deep dive into restorative conferences.

Basic restorative practices and circles provided the philosophy of restorative practices. At the core is building relationships and using circles to create positive community in the classroom. There are two types of circles in restorative practices – proactive and responsive. Proactive circles should make up 80% of the circles that we use in our classrooms. These build relationships and community. Responsive circles can be used to address a problem that arises, one arising out of student interactions or due to a need of the adult. Using circles is similar in purpose and in practice to the class meetings that Sterling Elementary implemented with the Caring School Community curriculum, so introducing and implementing the practice will be relatable to the staff.

When thinking of how I might use circles school wide, I have a couple of ideas. It will be the format of staff meetings. In order to encourage circles/class meetings to continue in the classrooms, I will need to model it with staff. We will use circles for our early release school wide assemblies as well. Classes will come to the gym and sit in a circle and participate in proactive circles. During the course of the assembly, students or the teacher will switch circles so that we intermix our larger school community.

In addition to circles, the first part of the conference taught of the use of affective statements and questions. These questions were introduced when Mr. O'Brien invited administrators to a one day training with Kerri Berkowitz. I have used these questions and the process of restoring relationships when problems occur since that one day training. With this two day basic restorative practices training, I learned a lot more about times when the questions might be used and the purpose behind the questions. Restorative practices does not take the place of consequences, it is used in addition in order to bridge the relationship that may have been harmed. I believe in the process and will continue to use and fine tune it for Sterling Elementary.

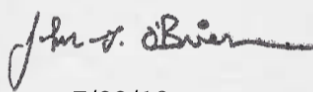
A restorative conference is a highly structured process that aims to restore community after a severe harm has been done. The second part of the conference aimed to teach participants how to facilitate these conferences. There is a lot of work that is done with conference participants before the conference is held with all of the players who will participate in the circle. The conference is facilitated in a manner that allows each participant voice and focuses on the affective questions which allows participants to speak in affective statements. While I am not certain that there will be many opportunities or needs for this formal process within our elementary school

setting, if there were to be, I would feel comfortable facilitating the conference and/or knowing that I need to request another trained person to facilitate the conference for me. Restorative conferences provide a great opportunity to form a mutual understanding of a situation and make an attempt to repair harm that has been done.

This four day conference was well worth the time! I appreciated that this process fits my philosophy of working with people, particularly students. Allowing students to understand the harm that they may have done and to then give them and all others involved a voice in the situation is by far a more productive way to work with children than to simply dole out consequences and hope that behavior changes. Restorative practices helps children see the need to change their behavior and become a part of the solution. Thank you for the opportunity to attend this conference and share my learning with Sterling Elementary and KPBSD.

--Denise Kelly

Principal, Sterling Elementary



7/22/19