

# RESTORATIVE DISCIPLINE



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# What is “Restorative Discipline”?



- A paradigm shift in how we think about student discipline.
- An offshoot of “Restorative Justice” in the criminal justice system.
- An alternative to “exclusionary” discipline.
- Not a quick or easy fix. It is a shift in culture and climate of the school.

# Paradigm Shift: From This.....



- In the traditional system of student discipline we ask:
  - What rule was broken?
  - Who did it?
  - What is the punishment?

# Paradigm Shift: To This...



- ❖ **Restorative Discipline asks:**
  - What happened?
  - Who has been affected?
  - What are we going to do to make things right?

# Paradigm Shift: What Does Accountability Mean?



- Traditional: Accountability means the student who broke the rule is punished.
- ❖ **Restorative**: Accountability means the student who caused harm comes to understand the harm caused and has the duty to repair the damage to the relationship.

# Paradigm Shift: Who Are We Focusing Our Attention On?



- Traditional: We focus on the student who broke the rule, and often ignore those who have been harmed.
- ❖ **Restorative**: We focus on all parties, and give voice to all parties—the student who caused harm, the person harmed, and the school.

# Paradigm Shift: What Are We Focused On?



- Traditional: We focus on equal enforcement of our rules. Consistency in how we respond to student misconduct.
- ❖ **Restorative**: We focus on the desired outcome for all parties—the person harmed is heard from; the student who caused harm understands the harm done and takes responsibility for repairing the damage. The relationship is restored.

# Paradigm Shift: Opportunities



- **Traditional:** The student who broke the rule has little opportunity to express remorse or make amends.
- ❖ **Restorative:** The student who caused harm has the opportunity to directly express remorse and directly make amends.

# Paradigm Shift: How We Learn



- Traditional: The student will learn better behavior from the punishment itself.
- **Restorative**: The student will learn a better way to behave if we teach it directly, and will not learn from punishment alone. Punishment does not generally change behavior.

# It Comes from the Criminal Justice System



- ❖ Restorative Justice is a set of principles and practices that are increasingly being used in the criminal justice system.
- Our traditional model of student discipline is based on the criminal justice system. The code of conduct is like the Penal Code. ISS or suspension is like a jail. We “sentence” kids for periods of time. So it makes sense that we would also model “restorative” practices.

# An Alternative



- ❖ Restorative Discipline practices do not replace the use of traditional forms of student discipline. Suspension and ISS are both still available.
- ❖ Restorative Discipline offers an alternative way of dealing with misconduct when people are willing.
- ❖ And it offers hope that school climate will improve to the point that misconduct decreases.

# Teach rather than punish



*If a child can't **read**, we teach him to **read**.*

*If a child can't do **math problems**, we teach him how to do **math problems**.*

*If a child doesn't know how to **behave**, we **punish** him.*

# Continuum of Restorative Practices



**Restorative Conferences**

**Victim-Offender  
Dialogue**

**Circle Processes**

**Class Meetings**

**Small, Impromptu  
Conferences**

**Restorative Inquiry /  
Restorative Reflection**

*Seriousness of harm*

**Foundation  
of Respect**



# **Restorative Inquiry:**

## Responding to challenging behavior



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

# **Restorative Inquiry:**

## Listening to those who have been harmed



- What did you think when you realized what had happened?
- What impact has this incident had on you and others?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?
- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

# Not a Quick or Easy Fix



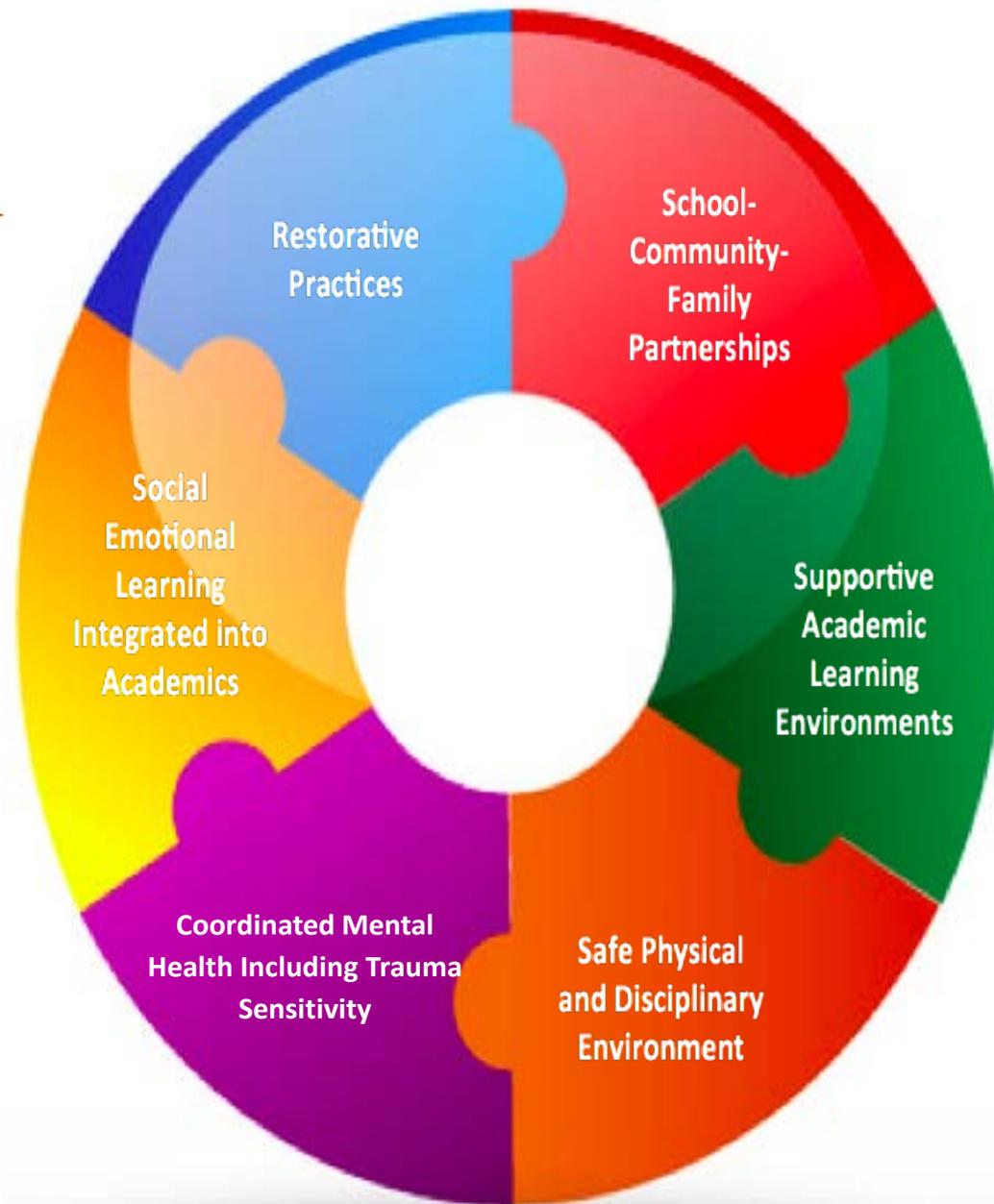
- Restorative Discipline is a radically different way of dealing with student discipline issues.
- It requires buy-in from administration and teachers.
- It is time consuming.
- It requires teachers to relinquish some elements of control.
- Or the illusion of control???? When we suspend do we really still have control?

# Why You Should Learn About It



- Law and policy continue to pressure schools to rely less on the traditional tools of discipline.
- Traditional tools: Corporal punishment. Restraint. Expulsion. Ticketing. Suspension.
- The latest: the Office of Civil Rights view on “exclusionary discipline.” OCR specifically encourages “restorative practices” as an alternative.

# School Climate Matters



# Data - examples



- **West Philadelphia High School reduced violent acts and serious incidents by 52% in 2007-08 and an additional 40% the next year.**
- **An alternative high school in Oakland, California had zero suspensions in 2012-13 and graduated all students.**

# What's Going On in Texas?



- **Ed White Middle School in San Antonio (North East ISD) is in the middle of a three-year pilot project incorporating Restorative Discipline.**
- **It's making a positive difference in a big way—84% reduction in out-of-school suspension.**

# What's Going on in Lyndonville?



- One letter of apology written (without being asked by school personnel) to a teacher from a student.
- One letter of apology written by a student to an administrator.
- Two peer mediations ending in handshakes (spontaneous) on the part of the students.
- Two additional peer mediations between elementary students
- Two re-entry meetings where behavior and restoration were discussed with student and parents.

# And Think About This...



- What employers want most in employees is the ability to work with a diverse group of co-workers and customers in a high stress atmosphere.
- That's what school is.
- Restorative Discipline teaches kids the ultimate “career-ready” skillset.

# Websites



- Just google it and see what happens.
- [www.disciplinethatrestores.org](http://www.disciplinethatrestores.org).
- [www.fixschooldiscipline.org](http://www.fixschooldiscipline.org).
- The Little Book of Restorative Discipline for Schools.
- <http://www.utexas.edu/research/cswr/rji/rdischools.html>

# Contact - Questions



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