
Student Leadership Groups: Building Campus Culture with Restorative Practices

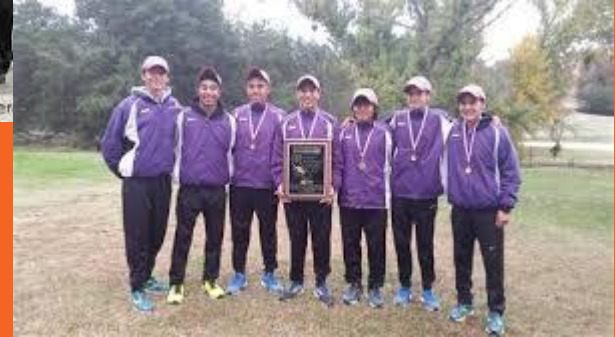
“We have two ears and one mouth so that we can listen twice
as much as we speak”
-Epictetus, Greek philosopher

What is the purpose of Restorative Justice?

Building community and restoring relationships in a manner that is healthy and productive to all parties.

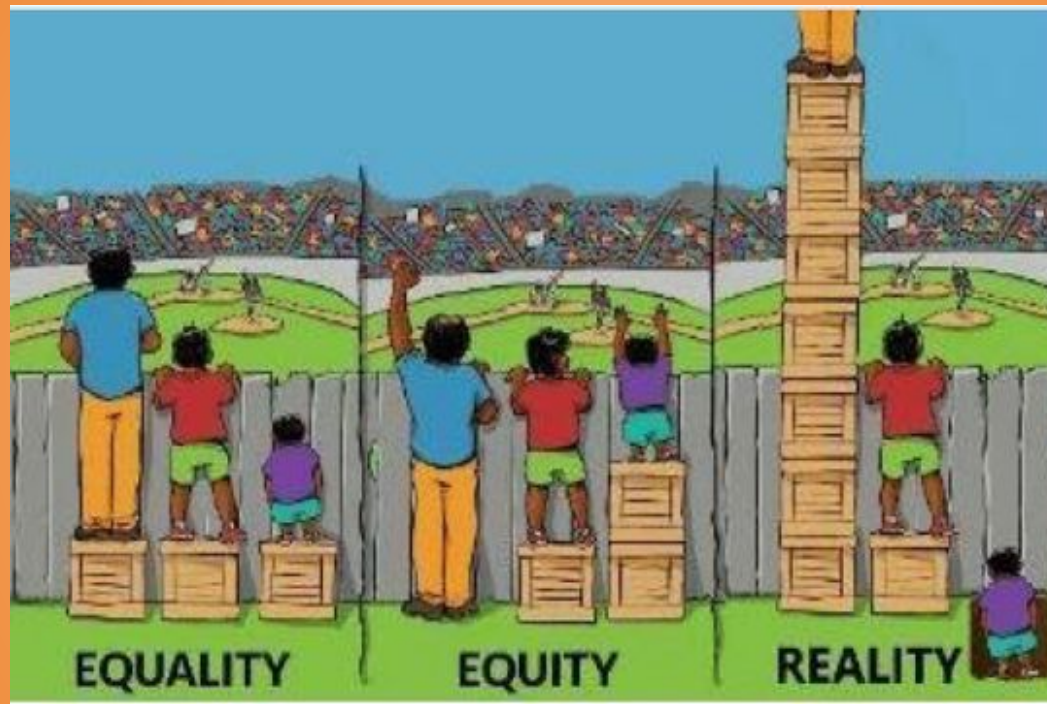


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Creating Community in our Schools

- Provide a school climate that is safe, inviting and engaging
 - School is a place for students to be connected
 - Clubs, athletics, service organizations, band and choir all have ingrained community, their members belong
 - RJ is a method to create communities for students that are not yet connected
-



Building Community In Action

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tUQ48jDN9pc>



Hurt people,
hurt people.
Healed people,
heal people.



Groups to involve as facilitators or to assist facilitators.

Link Crew- Facilitate groups of freshmen prior to the start of school. Assist in classrooms where teachers are implementing Restorative Justice. Run circles with students in our SRC (Student Responsibility Center)

Peer Tutors-Working in classes they are assigned to tutor to assist teachers with mediation of discipline or motivation issues.

Support Staff (Counselors, Safety Officers, Student Advocates, Family Liaisons, SRC Teacher)- Run their own groups with select students within their areas of expertise.



Opening Ceremony

Welcome and purpose for gathering

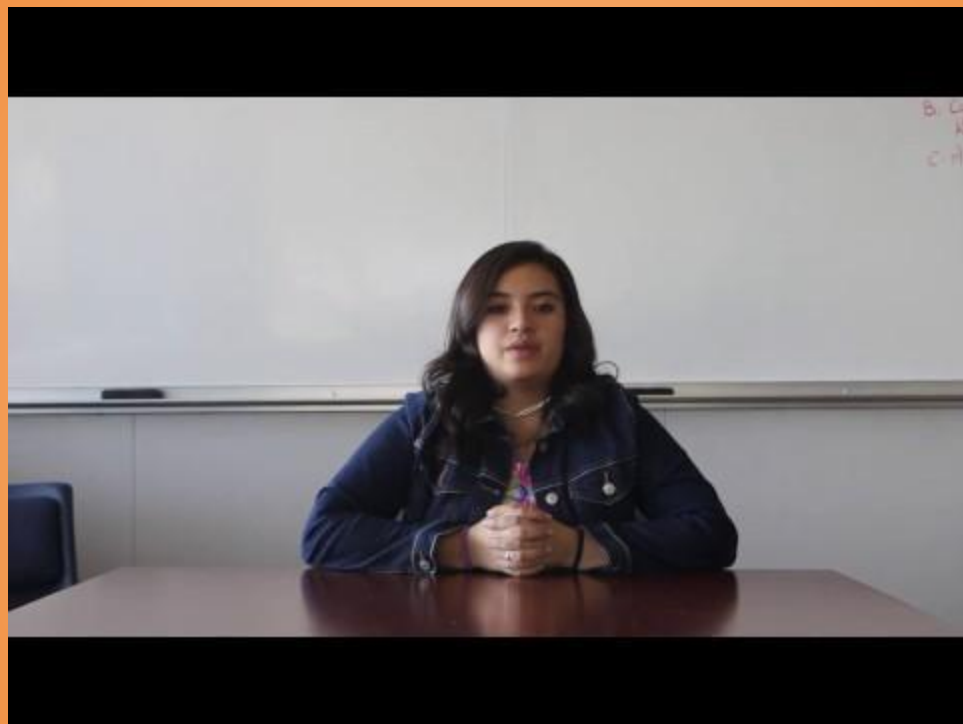
You can share a poem, a quote, a song, a dance...
whatever you want to do to bring people into the
shared space and prepare the room.

- A. Reminders that there are many ways to do this process successfully
 - B. Do not be afraid to fail, the attempts will greatly outweigh the failure- do for one what you wish you could do for all
-

Talking Piece and the Shared Space

1. Create an environment that is open for the group you are working with.
2. Explain the role and rules of the talking piece
 - a. The right to pass
 - b. The return of the pass
3. Use terminology consistently
 - a. Shared Space
 - b. Circle Keeper





Introduction of the Community Agreement

Setting Norms

1. Phone Care
 2. Stay in the circle but take care of yourself
 3. Respect the talking piece
 4. To the point (land the plane)
 5. Forgive for the moment
 6. The right to pass
 7. Ouch-Oops
 8. Don't Ick my Wow!
-



Checking In and Relationship Building

1. To begin with your circle it's good to start with
 - a. Introductions (as needed)
 - b. A question that is fun or non-controversial
 2. Take the “weather” of the room
 - a. How do you feel right now/ what's your weather?
 - b. What's your favorite food
 - c. If you knew me you would know.... (deeper)
 3. This allows you as a facilitator to read the room and to address what is needed as you
-
- dive in.

Discussion Round(s)

1. What needs to be addressed in the circle
 2. What questions will you ask?
 3. How many rounds?
 4. Is a follow-up needed?
-

Check Out/Closing the Circle/Reflection

1. How are people feeling right now?
(temperature)
 2. How will you choose to close the circle
 - a. A quote, poem, song, activity, breathing techniques
 3. Do you need to schedule follow up?
 4. What are your expectations of the participants?
-

Questions???

If you have questions, need materials or ideas or would be interested in training at your school please contact me:

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Helpful hints for planning a community-building circle

General Circle Format

When preparing to facilitate a Circle, use of the following checklist or format is recommended:

1. Circle Purpose and Opening
2. Talking Piece and Shared Space
3. Check-in and Relationship-Building rounds
4. Guidelines / Values rounds
5. Discussion Rounds (including action plan if appropriate)
6. Check-Out and Closing round

These instructions are to be used with a fillable Circle Prep Form.

The above format may be amended depending on the topic or time limitations. It may be tempting to skip the guidelines and values round. However, it is important to go through it unless the group has already been meeting and has generated shared values and guidelines in previous circles. Even with a regularly meeting group, it is a good idea to revisit values and guidelines, even if only briefly. It is also helpful to have written reminders of group values visible to all participants during the circle.

What is the Circle's Purpose and Opening Ceremony

Welcome and thank everyone for coming. Explain the purpose of the Circle, why you have gathered. For an Opening Ceremony, you may share a poem, quote, song, or facilitate a guided meditation or breathing exercise- whatever seems appropriate for the group that you have. The purpose of the Opening Ceremony is to mark the Circle as a special space and as a time when everyone gets to share and connect in ways we ordinarily don't have the opportunity to do. The Opening also grounds everyone, inviting them to bring their "best selves" to the Circle.

Talking Piece and Shared Space

Rooted in indigenous traditions, the talking piece is a sacred or special object that is significant to the facilitator, to the Circle participants, and/or is relevant to the topic to be addressed. You might mention that whoever is holding the talking piece is talking with respect and from the heart, and those not holding it are invited to listen with respect and from the heart. The talking piece moves from one participant to the next, clockwise or counterclockwise, always tracing the path of the Circle. Very different from our western style of communication in which we frequently interrupt and engage in cross-talk, use of the talking piece is meant to encourage both deep talking and listening. A Circle participant may pass if they do not care to talk- coercion has no place in RJ. However, the facilitator might do another pass of the talking piece in case the previous participant is ready to speak. There are times when it is more useful to suspend the talking piece to encourage spontaneous sharing or brainstorming. However, remember to return to the talking piece before the Circle is finished.

The shared space reminds us there are no sides. There is only a center. The shared space often has fire, air, water, earth, rock. It reminds us of our interrelatedness with one another and with nature. Any other items of special significance to participants may also be placed in the shared space.

Check-in and Relationship-Building Rounds

If the Circle is convening for the first time with participants who are strangers, an engaging or interactive introduction round is important. If participants already know one another, a check-in round in which they reply how they are feeling on a physical, mental or emotional level is suggested. Suggestions: Describe in one or two words how you are feeling today? Or, if you were a weather pattern, what would that be (sunny, partly cloudy, stormy, etc.)? Or, do a physical gesture that describes how you are feeling today and everyone else could repeat it.

Restorative Justice is profoundly relational. At least half of all Circle time should be spent in interactive relationship-building or trust-building exercises where possible. A favorite exercise is to ask everyone to bring an object of special significance with them that symbolizes their passion of life, their life purpose or is special to who they are. Each person will engage in brief storytelling about the object and then place the object in the center of the Circle. Having a repertoire of fun interactive exercises and icebreakers to draw from throughout the Circle time as needed is also recommended.

Guidelines and Values

Guidelines. You may suggest the following core guidelines and ask participants if they have questions, additions, and if they agree to adopt them. Ask for a thumbs-up. Suggested core Circle guidelines are:

1. Silence cell phone
2. Stay in the Circle but take care of yourself
3. Respect the talking piece
4. Honor confidentiality

Values. Restorative Justice is a values-driven process. This activity allows Circle participants to identify and agree upon personal and shared group values which everyone will honor during the Circle. Circles assume that in everyone of us there is a deep desire to connect to one another in a good way. Identifying such values as respect, honesty, empathy, humor, love, etc. allow us to bring our “best selves” forward. At the foundation of Circles are all values that nurture good relationships with others. These values and other elements can create a container strong enough to hold anger, frustration, joy, pain, conflict, diverse worldviews, intense feelings, silence and paradox. You might hand out paper plates or colorful construction paper and markers to participants and ask them to write down three values that are important to them. Then ask them to circle one of the three that is most important. One by one, using the talking piece, invite them to share their values and why they chose them, and then place their values in the center of the Circle. Someone will chart all the values mentioned. You will ask for questions, additional values, and then invite the group to reach consensus on the list of values to be observed during the Circle.

Discussion Round

Choose a topic that is appropriate for the group to discuss. If this is a new group and you are just getting to know each other, you may ask people to share what is important to them about being in a community. Whatever the topic may be, encourage and model sharing from the heart. If the discussion calls for an action plan and follow-up, this should be addressed.

Check-out Round and Closing Ceremony

Suggested Check-out Round Prompt. Share one word about how you are feeling now at the end of the Circle or about what they appreciate about it.

Closing Ceremony Suggestions. You may suggest that everyone stand shoulder to shoulder and take three deep breaths together. Another option is to read a short poem or quote with an expression of gratitude to all present for their good work and participation. You may also ask participants to perform a simple physical gesture that expresses how they are feeling or the energy they bring to Restorative Justice work.

Restorative Justice Circle Prep Form

Circle Purpose and Opening Ceremony

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 - a. Reminders that there are many ways to do this process successfully
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Talking Piece and the Shared Space

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1. Explain the role and rules of the talking piece
 - a. The right to pass
 - b. The return of the pass
2. Use terminology consistently
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Checking in and Relationship Building

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2. Take the "weather" of the room
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Guidelines and Values

1. What are three values that you carry with you each and every day?
 - a. Write them/draw them on a paper plate or other creative medium
 - b. Go around circle and ask participants for their top value
 - c. Place their values in the Shared Space and chart as you go

Discussion Rounds

1. What needs to be addressed in the circle
2. What questions will you ask?
3. How many rounds?
4. Is a follow-up needed?

Check Out Round and Closing Ceremony

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