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Restorative Practices Training Manual

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Restorative Practices

Training Manual

for the

San Bernardino City Unified School District

in partnership with

California State University San Bernardino

College of Education

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Introduction

This manual is designed to support the process of training school personnel in the San Bernardino City Unified School District to implement Restorative Practices into the schools in their district. What is outlined below are the following:

- The need that the introduction of restorative practices is designed to respond to
- The key ideas and assumptions that underlie restorative practices
- The training and consultation process that aims to implement these ideas in the school district
- An explanation of the specific practices that training will be offered in
- A summary of what current research data says about the value of these approaches
- A bibliography of readings that interested and key personnel can follow up and read more about.

Chapter 1

The Need

It is not an exaggeration to say that there is an urgent need for change in how concerns about student behavior are responded to in schools, both in California in general and in San Bernardino City in particular. Implementing alternative disciplinary measures are needed, if for no other reason than because of the unacceptably high suspension rates among public schools in the state of California.

Out of school suspension and expulsion have become standard methods of correcting a students' behavior and making schools safer. They are resorted to quickly and sometimes automatically and appear to often to be ineffective in promoting behavioral learning. When many students receive multiple suspensions, it suggests that they have not learned from previous experiences of the same response. Let us examine some of the data that is the basis for these comments.

Suspension Rates

According to data released by the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS), during the 2011-2012 school year a total of 366,629 students were suspended and 9,553 students expelled among the more than six million public school students in California, a suspension rate of 5.7 percent, and an expulsion rate of 0.1 percent (California Department of Education, 2013). Combine these figures together and we get one suspension or expulsion for every 17 students in the State.

In the 2010-11 school year, California schools issued **more suspensions (420,000) than diplomas (408,861)** (California Department of Education, 2012).

On April 19, 2013, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson announced about one California student in 20 was suspended from school and one in 1,000 was expelled in the 2011-12 school year (California Department of Education, 2013).

In San Bernardino County the situation is even more concerning. In 2011-12, **there was one suspension or expulsion (combined) for every 5 students** in the County.

Reasons for Suspension

42% of California suspensions were for “**willful defiance**”. **Willful defiance is a broad category**, including “chewing gum in class”, “talking back”, “wearing the wrong clothes”(School discipline resolution, 2013).

Section 48900(k) of the California Education Code stated that a student can be

suspended or expelled if he or she “disrupted school activities or otherwise willfully defied the valid authority of supervisors, teachers, administrators, school officials, or other school personnel engaged in the performance of their duties.”

Offenses committed in California statewide

Offense Description	Offenses Involved in Expulsions	Offenses Involved in Suspensions
Physical Violence	23%	25%
Weapons Offences	15%	2%
Drug Offences	29%	8%
Property Damage or Theft	3%	4%
Bullying	1%	2%
Sexual or other Harassment	5%	4%

(California Department of Education Data Reporting: Suspension, Expulsion, and Truancy Report for 2012-2013)

Offenses committed in San Bernardino County

Offense Description	Offenses Involved in Expulsions	Offenses Involved in Suspensions
Physical Violence	23%	29%
Weapons Offences	21%	3%
Drug Offences	30%	8%
Property Damage or Theft	4%	4%
Bullying	1%	2%
Sexual or other Harassment	5%	4%

(California Department of Education Data Reporting: Suspension, Expulsion, and Truancy Report for 2012-2013)

Disproportionality

Students of color (especially African American students), students with disabilities, and males are most likely to be suspended. Children subjected to violence or who have entered the foster care system are also highly likely to be removed from school.

In California, in the 10 school districts with highest rates of suspension, nearly 1 in every 4 students is suspended. An estimation of the racial distribution of these suspensions shows:

- 41% of African American students were suspended;
- 25% of Native American students were suspended;
- 21% of White students were suspended;

- 21% of Latino students were suspended;
- 14% of Asian students were suspended.
- 28% of African American students with disabilities were suspended at least once in 2010-11
- 66% of those suspended and 74% of those expelled were male.
(Losen, Martinez, & Gillespie, 2012)

Who is Suspended?

What else do we know about students who are suspended? Often they are those students who are most in need of adult supervision and professional help because they have witnessed violence or been subjected to other major home life stressors. These students need more assistance than suspension offers them.

Texas data also shows that students who are suspended have higher dropout rates than the general school population. Data suggests that students who are suspended or expelled are “*5 times more likely* to dropout and *6 times more likely* to repeat a grade” than the general school population. In addition, students who are suspended are more likely to become involved in the juvenile justice system.

California Law has Changed

Another reason for schools to consider restorative practices is that the law has changed in California. On September 21, 2012, Governor Brown signed AB 1729 into law. Here are some of the changes that this legislation specified:

1. A clear concern in this legislation was to change the ways in which suspension has been used in California schools.
2. One change was a move away from automatic suspension. AB 1729 gives principals and superintendents more discretion to use alternatives to suspension or expulsion that address the student’s misbehavior and are age appropriate.
3. The bill also ended suspension for “willful defiance” and “disruption” which had been hitherto the most common reason for suspension. This change makes it necessary for schools to develop different approaches for such situations. Restorative practices are an example of just such a change.
4. This bill, in fact, specifically encourages schools and districts to develop other means of correction rather than relying on suspension. It authorizes school districts to document the other means of correction used and place that documentation in the pupil’s record.
5. AB 1729 also specifies what is meant by ‘other means of correction’. It should include, but not be limited to, among other things, a positive behavior support approach with tiered interventions that occur during the school day on campus, a conference between school personnel, the pupil’s parent or guardian, and the pupil,

- participation in a restorative justice program, and after-school programs that address specific behavioral issues or expose pupils to positive activities and behaviors. In other words, the legislation offers specific encouragement for the development of restorative practices in schools.
6. The Education Code now reads: "Suspension, including supervised suspension..., shall be imposed only when other means of correction fail to bring about proper conduct."

The Pipeline to Prison

Research has shown that students who are suspended are likely to end up in trouble with the law. The school-to-prison pipeline refers to policies and practices that make incarceration of children and youth more likely and the possibility of a high-quality education less likely. The school-to-prison pipeline is a pattern in which excluding students from school often ends with incarceration of these same persons as adults. This pattern is very disproportionately impacting students of color. Racial disparities are often found in minor offenses that are not justifiable and these disparities increase the likelihood that racial minorities are disproportionately imprisoned. Many of these students do not easily fit within social norms and the educational system. They are students who depend on the school system for support and advocacy.

The misapplication of zero-tolerance in school discipline has directly sent children and youth into the juvenile and criminal system. Each year, a dramatic increase in disciplinary practices has resulted in hundreds of thousands of arrests and referrals. The majority of these school-based arrests are for misdemeanor offenses that do not pose a serious, ongoing threat to school safety. Indirectly, schools push students into the School-to-Prison Pipeline through policies and practices that limit their opportunities to learn and make them more likely to drop out of school. A number of students have been placed in this way on a path to academic failure that often has devastating long-term consequences. Punitive discipline effectively reduces the chance that a student will graduate high school and increases the chance that more crimes will be committed later on in life.

Zero Tolerance Does Not Work

There has been a nationwide trend towards zero tolerance policies with regard to violence in schools. While this idea sounds good in its slogan form, it has turned out to be more questionable in its implementation detail.

The usual interpretation of zero tolerance has in practice meant a shift to automatic decision-making that has removed the use of contextual information and has thus created distortions in practice and unjust decisions. Any threat of violence requires "...the application of predetermined consequences... regardless of the seriousness of behavior, mitigating circumstances, or situational context" (Winslade & Williams, 2012, p. 5). The

common punishment for a series of disciplinary offenses is for the offender to be isolated and often suspended or expelled from the school. Such policies remove the importance of thinking and lead sometimes to poor decisions. They are also exclusively punishment-oriented and cannot be said to lead to learning about responsibility.

The American Psychological Association commissioned a taskforce to gather together evidence in a meta-study of many research projects about zero tolerance. In their (2006) report they concluded, "Zero tolerance has not been shown to improve school climate or school safety" (APA Taskforce, 2008). Zero tolerance, the APA taskforce argued, does not teach young people to resolve conflict or to eschew violence. On the other hand, zero tolerance effectively increased disruptive behavior and led to higher rates of misbehavior among those who were suspended. Schools with higher rates of suspension also did not demonstrate higher rates of academic performance (Winslade & Williams, 2012).

The Cost of Punishment

Punishment that is based on suspension is also costly for schools. Each student day absent costs the school \$35. So how much does this cost add up to over a year?

The total number of students suspended in SBCUSD in 2011-12 was 9,667 (California Department of Education). If each suspension meant 2 days ADA lost, then the cost to SBCUSD would be \$676,690. If each suspension meant 4 days ADA lost then the cost to SBCUSD would be \$1,353,380. This is money that might be better spent providing services to address student needs.

Another cost of suspension lies in the administrative time required to process each suspension. Each suspension takes approximately 1.5 hours to process. This would include time for a student interview, an investigation process, and a parent conference). At this rate, then the administration hours lost in SBCUSD can be estimated to amount to 14,501 hours annually. This is a lot of administrator time that could be spent on more useful purposes.

Suspension also removes students from the classroom and therefore from learning time. Lost learning time produces gaps in student learning. It might be estimated that students miss 45 minutes of instruction for every office referral (waiting to speak to administrator, re-entering the classroom). If we *assume* there were at least twice as many office referrals as suspensions, then in SBCUSD the number of *instructional hours lost* because students were out of class in SBCUSD amounted annually to 14,501 hours.

Adopting a research-supported alternative approach, such as restorative justice thus has the potential to increase school funding and result in higher student attendance through lowering suspension rates.

To show that this claim is not fanciful, a comparison with the Positive Behavior Support program is useful. After one year implementing SWPBIS (School-Wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Support Implementation), Pioneer High School in Woodland received increased funding of \$97, 200; their average daily attendance increased; their API score improved; and their suspension rate declined.

The Purpose of Education

The value of restorative practices, however, lies in much more than their instrumental value. In the end they aim to produce better citizens. It is easy to forget, in an age where so much has focused on raising test scores, certain academic subjects that a narrow view of academic performance is not the only reason schools exist.

Society also needs schools to prepare students to live in a social world in a responsible way. Everyone stands to benefit when students learn to correct problem behavior rather than repeat it. Schools which take up an inclusive agenda, rather than dividing the world into winners and losers and consigning those designated as losers into the pipeline to prison, produce a more healthy community.

We would therefore argue that restorative practices are about:

- building a stronger school climate
- fostering more caring relationships in the school
- addressing problems effectively
- intentionally producing responsible citizens.

Chapter 2

Restorative Practices

What is the Shift in Focus that Restorative Practices are About?

Restorative Practices are not just techniques for controlling students better. Many believe that they embody a shift in thinking about education. They add up to an alternative approach to what schools should be fostering in students. From this perspective, schools are not just about learning English and math. They are about producing responsible citizens who are capable of participating in a democratic society.

They are also about more than individual learning. They are about socially just ways of fostering a school community that attends to the relational dimension of learning. They assume that students learn best when they are happy and cared for and when they are part of a community that gives them a sense of belonging and actively helps them to mend situations where they make mistakes and to learn from the experience of doing so.

The traditional idea is that most students will make good use of the opportunities schools provide for them to learn. A small minority will not and the majority should be protected from this minority by punishment systems. Those who are punished, if they are smart, should learn from the experience and correct their own behavior. If not, they should be isolated from community and treated as less deserving of participation in what society has to offer than the rest of us.

Punishment

In traditional discipline, punishment focuses on the individual, not on the relationship. The usual assumption is that punishment will change behavior and achieve compliance. But there are problems with this logic. One problem is that it is patently obvious to many people that punishment regularly fails to teach students much. Ineffective disciplinary measures result in a repeated cycle of behavioral offenses. Otherwise we would not see the same students punished for the same offenses over and over again. Nor would we see adults who are incarcerated become recidivists and repeat criminal behavior many times.

Another problem with punishment is that it routinely produces resentment as a by-product. Calls for heavier and heavier punishment increase such levels of resentment as those who are punished feel that they have to bear the weight of a community's frustration for wrongdoing in general, rather than anything specific one individual has done. Resentment all too easily turns to alienation and the rejection of authority as irrelevant.
The punished student tends to:

- Feel anger

- Question & blame
- Resent authority
- Take out frustrations on peers
- Passively resist assigned work.

The whole cycle of punishment produces young people who have little to lose and decreasing investment in staying in community with others. This cycle is not just something that happens to adults. In schools, children are being produced into alienated positions at an age where they are still developing a sense of ethics and should be learning from encounters with others in order to do so.

Rather than addressing the relational dimension, punishment systems often focus on isolating the offender in order to punish offending behavior. Suspension and expulsion from the school separate the offender from community participation. A student who does something wrong is removed from relationship with others and placed in a room alone. This makes sense as a method of interrupting a problem situation but it makes less sense when, after time out of relationship with others, the offender is re-admitted to community with other students and teachers and no attention is paid to addressing and repairing the relationship rupture that has taken place.

When an offense has been committed, a punishment orientation assumes that the most important questions to ask are:

- “What rules were broken?”
- “Who broke them?”
- “What does this person deserve?”

As a result, punishment thinking is usually oriented primarily towards identifying the person who broke the rules. The problem is that there are important gaps in this sequence of thinking. Under this regime of thought there is scant consideration given to those who have been affected by the wrongdoing who may feel afraid of the wrongdoer, or have a legitimate claim for redress, or at the very least deserve a heartfelt apology. Here are some questions that are omitted from a purely punishment-oriented approach:

- “Who was affected by the offense?”
- “How were they affected?”
- “What do these effects suggest needs addressing?”
- “Whose responsibility is it to address these needs?”
- “How might the offender be invited to address these needs?”
- “Who else might be responsible for helping address the situation?”
- “What is the school’s responsibility to those affected by the offense?”
- “What might we all learn from this situation?”

A Restorative Orientation

Restorative practices offer an alternative approach when responding to behavioral problems in schools. They favor a relational approach that assumes that problematic actions are more than challenges to the rules or to the authority of those in charge. They are also disruptive to relationships among members of a community. Helping students learn to become relationally responsible, therefore, involves helping those who make mistakes to understand the consequences to others of what they have done, not just to become more compliant in relation to authority. To do so they need to be given the chance to learn responsibility and to learn how to repair harm.

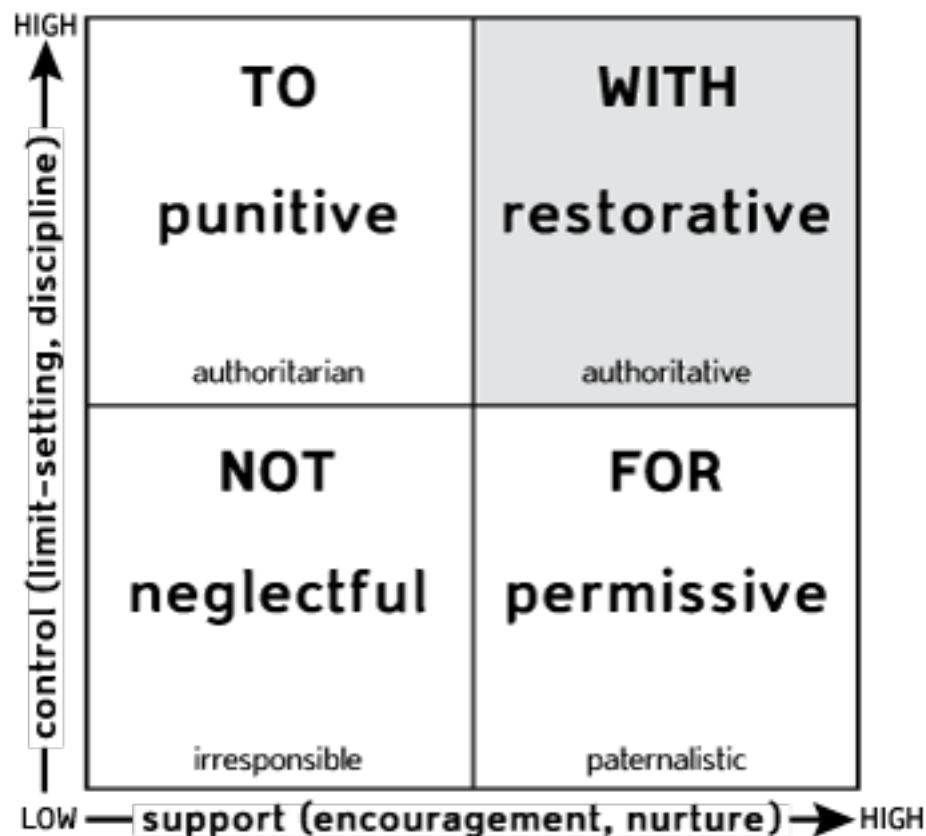
Addressing problems more effectively includes a combination of restoring order and restoring relationships, rather than restoring authority, and approaching wrongdoing in a way that is not punitive, neglectful, or permissive (Winslade & Williams, 2012). Less emphasis on punishment shifts the focus toward conversations focused on addressing relationship harm and putting things right. Punishment, by contrast often neglects those who are affected by wrongdoing and concentrates righteous attention solely on the wrongdoer. It makes little effort to repair the harm done to others.

By contrast with the isolation of offenders, the restorative process concentrates on inclusion rather than exclusion. Rather than isolating offenders, it is an inclusive process that brings together a community. Rather isolating the offender, he or she is wrapped in a network of those who matter to him/her and can support him/her to be accountable in a restorative practice (Winslade & Williams, 2012). Relational accountability among members of this network works to address the harm done by the offense.

Neither are restorative practices about fostering pity for offenders for their sad circumstances in life. Teachers may feel such pity and express genuine concern for students who go off the rails. They can make a real difference to students' lives by doing so. But in the teachable moment of correcting wrongdoing this concern should not be expressed in a way that reduces a requirement for accountability.

Restorative practices, at their best, are about a more thoroughgoing accountability than is usually achieved in punishment systems, but it is accountability focused on responsibility toward actual people, including peers and teachers, rather than narrowly focused on responsibility toward abstract authority, or the rules.

The Social Discipline Window



(Retrieved from *International Institute for Restorative Practices*)

The *social discipline window* describes four basic approaches to maintaining social norms and behavioral boundaries. It also defines restorative practices as a leadership model for parents, teachers, and administrators. The four domains are represented by a combination of high or low control and high or low support. Punishment-oriented approaches combine high control and low support. In comparison, the restorative domain combines both high control and high support. This outcome is characterized by *doing things with them, rather than to them or for them*. Sometimes offenders need support and encouragement to carry on their obligations. Family members, teachers, counselors, or other young people can provide this support.

Addressing the Needs of Victims

In a punishment orientation, it is common for victims of an offense to be excluded from the process of addressing a problem behavior, and for the school authority to speak for them. Often, victims do not receive anything that might redress the emotional and/or physical harm done to them. Instead, victims are left with a “bitter taste” when offenders

returned back to class to face their victims. They may also be left with an ongoing fear of being targeted for further offending and humiliation.

By contrast, a restorative orientation aims to include victims in the process. Offences that bring about harm, create an obligation in the offender toward the victim to set things right. In punishment-oriented approaches, the offender has no need to care about the victim. His or her focus is directed toward relationship with authorities. By contrast, in a restorative response, the offender is engaged with an obligation to comprehend the consequences of his or her own actions and to take action to set things right.

A restorative orientation is interested in how a victim has been affected by a problem behavior. It believes that victims need to be heard and have their stories acknowledged, because telling their stories may often be more important for victims than any tangible outcome. It considers who else might have been affected. It wonders what might be needed to set things right again for the victim. It asks the offender to respond to the victim. It asks what the offender might need to do to make amends. It facilitates negotiation between the victim and the offender. It then builds support around the taking of responsibility.

The Philosophy of Restorative Practices in Schools

Restorative practices are built on a coherent set of ideas. These ideas have been developed out of the contributions of many people and they have been applied in many different settings. Understanding these ideas goes a long way to implementing them. Let us here make some of these ideas explicit.

The International Institute for Restorative Practices highlights this statement on its website:

*"Human beings are happier, more cooperative and productive, and **more likely to make positive changes** in their behavior when those in positions of authority do things **with them**, rather than **to them or for them**."* (Wachtel & McCold, 2004, p. 1.)

- All students want to become somebody. Restorative practices focus on the kind of person a student is becoming and intentionally sets out to shape this.
- Restorative practices are not just about making schools function better. It is less concerned with organizational efficiency than with relationships in the school. It focuses on growth in positive relationships between students and adults, enhancing pro-social behaviors, and building self-esteem. It also aims to resolve problems between groups of students and/or staff.
- Creating valuable citizens (the moral purpose): Restorative practices are intended to invite students to think about what it means to be a member of a

school community. This is an educational step toward being a contributing citizen in the wider community.

- Leadership and school climate. School leadership is an important part of making a difference for student's experience of belonging to a school. Restorative practices aims for growth in positive school climate by increasing students' understanding of expectations and how violations of these expectations impact others. As a result, fewer student suspensions and improved ratings on positive school climate; bullying and gang conflicts are addressed, and likelihood of repeat offending are reduced.
- Global movement and connection with school connectedness (CDC). Restorative practices improve the connectedness of staff and students and develops a sense of community and belonging. The process involves students to improve their school and develop systems of peer support. Students develop greater empathy for peers in crisis by participating in a restorative practice.
- Schools produce people: Negative identity produces negative behavior.
- Helping kids lives become more possible: Restorative practices create an obligation to make things right and empower change and growth.

Avoiding Locating the Problem as a Deficit Condition Inside the Offender

When there is trouble, it is common to explain it in terms of a character deficit inside the offender. Deficit thinking is a political discourse that has grown in relation to teachers and schools. Such deficits can be associated with a moral, medical, educational, or social condition. Deficit discourse of these kinds is pathologizing and it concentrates our thinking in the direction of making the offending behavior seem inevitable by explaining an action with reference to the category of person who commits the act. This is philosophically unsound thinking because it transgresses against logic. Examples of deficit discourse can be found in expressions such as, "He is an at-risk student," "She is a behavior problem," "She is ADHD," "He is conduct-disordered," and so on. Some of these descriptions derive from a social discourse and an increasing number derive from medical discourse.

A deficit description is also usually a totalizing description. Totalizing language is the kind of language that serves the purpose of organizing people's thinking about a person. It takes one aspect of a person experience or behavior and organizes an understanding of the person around that aspect, pretending that contradictory information does not exist. It sums a person up and locks them in a box.

"He is a liar", for example, allows no room for any occasion on which he might speak the truth. Instead it makes the moments of untruth stand in for the person all the time, and fails to allow for nuances of difference. Descriptions assigned in school discourse often use

such totalizing language as shortcuts to describe a student, often constructing our understanding of the student in terms of personal deficits.

The habit of “blame-shifting” is also common in educational discourse. A deficit can be shifted to the parents or to the dynamics of the family. For instance, sole parents or divorced families are assumed to be deficient in the care for children’s upbringing. “What do you expect when this child come from a dysfunctional family?” (Winslade & Williams, 2012, p. 17).

So what is the problem with totalizing or using deficit discourse? The problem is that it narrows down what we can see. It gets us to notice things that align with the deficit and to overlook other indicators of competence and health. Totalizing language locates the problem as something wrong within the person and makes it harder to reach alternatives.

The deficit or the pathology often sounds like it has the weight of scientific or professional knowledge behind it and it therefore sounds very persuasive. So it is not easy to contradict, either for students or for teachers.

And yet no one is a liar all the time. No one’s behavior is all always aligned with descriptions of ADHD. Nobody’s conduct is 100% disordered. Even someone who has earned the description of criminal is doing law-abiding things 95% of the time. Deficit discourse is totalizing when it blinds us to these contradictions.

Deficit language has side effects, just as surely as drugs do:

- They convince people that nothing can be done
- They make it harder for contradictions to be noticed
- They increase reliance on professionals to fix problems
- They blind us to a possible desire to address a problem.

The problem is that failing to see the nuances and contradictions blinds both professionals and family members to other possibilities. It tends to rule them out of court. In the process it makes problem behavior seem inevitable and so easily explained that it can’t possibly not be accurate. What gets ruled out along with these contradictions is the possibility of change. Someone can make an effort to do better and they still get seen in terms of the deficit and so, not surprisingly, they give up. The totalizing language thus becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Totalizing language used by people with authority, such as teachers, counselors, or administrators, can be very powerful in its effects. Students often internalize these effects and come to know themselves in diminished ways since those with power and influence have characterized them in such ways. Students internalize the description and become the person described. Examples include the totalizing of individuals as “bullies” or “victims”, “good students” or “bad students”, “behavior problems”, “learning disabled”, “at risk”, “lacking social skills”.

No one is a bully or victim or a behavior problem by nature (Winslade & Williams, 2012, p. 18). These descriptions have the potential to internally damage the student. They can convince people that nothing can be done and invite the student to give up. In a nutshell, totalizing language:

- Traps the person in a single description
- Invites the person to act out that description
- Blinds the speaker to other possible descriptions of the person.

So how do restorative practices handle such discourse issues? First we do not favor getting into any kind of argument against a deficit discourse or a totalizing description. That leads nowhere useful.

What is important though is to actively avoid falling into the trap of thinking only in terms of a deficit. In order to keep open the possibility of change it is necessary to keep conscious of the multiple possibilities for becoming that everyone has.

If we do not expect offenders to take responsibility for causing harm to others, it is unlikely that they will do so. That does not mean seeing a student through rose-tinted spectacles and ignoring the harm they have done either. That would be another form of totalizing.

The secret is to hold open all possibilities and give a student the chance to make his or her own choice about making a more responsible or less responsible choice. If they turn down the opportunity, the punishment option still remains.

People are Multi-storied

An alternative to totalizing language is to start from the assumption that we are all made up of multiple stories. One story may become dominant at a particular moment in time but never tells the whole truth about a person. We are all much too complex to be summed up in a single description.

Holding to a single storied assumption makes it hard for a person to make changes since they are unlikely to be recognized. Holding to the notion of a multi-storied, rather than a single-storied, life welcomes complexity and contradiction and sees opportunity within it. It also allows people to change across to an alternative storyline. The new storyline can be retrieved and strengthened, and its own future can be created. The new storyline can also be anchored in its own history, which can be mapped out.

"The Person is Not the Problem"

Avoiding deficit thinking is actively embodied in the practice of using externalizing language. Derived from narrative therapy, the practice of externalizing creates a linguistic form in which a situation is personified and talked about as the problem, rather than a

person. Thus the “fight”, or the “harassment”, or the “rumor spreading”, or the “teasing” might be the problem and we might inquire into its effects on everyone, rather than speaking of the person of the offender as a problem person with a deficit condition.

An alternative to totalizing is to use externalizing language.

Example:

Rather than, “She’s a liar”

“What effects does lying have in your life?”

“How can we work together against lying?”

Externalizing language has some useful spinoffs:

- It is less blaming and shaming, but still allows very real problems to be talked about.
- It gives offenders a chance to save face and paradoxically makes it easier for them to take up responsibility for addressing the harm that their actions have brought about.
- It allows us to inquire into the effects of “it”, the problem, more fully than is possible otherwise (including the effects on the perpetrator).
- It allows room for both the offender and the victim not to be defined by or totalized by the problem. Both are invited to separate from the problem, rather than to identify with it or own it.
- It leaves room for acknowledging and building upon an alternative story and initiates the movement towards change that a restorative process seeks. Locating the problem in externalizing language can help everyone view the problem in a new light.

The logic that all of the above is built upon is captured in the aphorism:

“The person is not the problem; the problem is the problem.”

(Winslade & Williams, 2012, p. 86).

One implication of this way of thinking is the understanding that students and teachers are often caught up in a problem story organized around conflict, rather than that they are problem persons by “nature”. Individual students are sometimes talked about and responded to as “troublemakers” (another totalization), and the student’s identity is shaped by that reputation.

In restorative conferences, this aphorism, “The person is not the problem; the problem is the problem,” can be written on a board and referred to as a motto to guide the

conference process. “The message is that offenders will be treated respectfully, and their actions will be separated from any assumption about their nature as “bad” or “sick”. Instead, they will be assumed to be moral agents who can think and take responsibility for their own behavior” (Winslade & Williams, 2012, p. 86).

Key Questions Asked by a Restorative Practice of a Situation

Restorative practices are processes that involve those who have a stake in a particular offence in identifying the harms done and needs created by the offense in order to put things as right as possible.

Howard Zehr

Let us reiterate that restorative practices emanate from asking a different set of questions about a particular situation. Restorative practices avoid asking of a specific situation the usual punishment-oriented questions:

What rule was broken?

Who did it?

What do they deserve?

Instead, a different set of questions replaces these. Restorative questions are open-ended questions that are neutral and non-judgmental. The focus is on the impact of the behavior on others, instead of on the rule violations. These are the questions that are asked:

Who was affected by the offense?

How were they affected?

What do these effects suggest needs addressing?

Whose responsibility is it to address these needs?

How might the offender be invited to address these needs?

Who else might be responsible for helping address the situation?

What is the school's responsibility to those affected by the offense?

What might we all learn from this situation?

What Restorative Practices are Not

It is important to stress that nothing is the perfect solution to every problem. There is a danger here that is best avoided. It lies in people expecting a quick fix that might be tried once and rejected as worthless the first time it does not produce the desired result. To avoid over-claiming the value of restorative practices and to avoid misconception, it is

useful to specify the limits of these approaches and to encourage schools to seek out other options as well. Here are some things that restorative practices are not:

- Restorative practices do not offer a panacea for all disciplinary issues. Other approaches are still needed (including punishment).
- Restorative practices are not a soft option. They are not about letting offenders off the hook. This stance is usually more demanding of students to front up and take responsibility than punishment is. Facing person(s) you have harmed is harder than facing authority figures.
- Restorative practices are not a quick fix. It takes time and effort to implement these ideas but the payoff comes when problems are effectively addressed and changes happen, which reduces time required later for addressing the same problems again and again.
- Restorative practices are not just a new set of techniques to control kids better. They are about a different way of thinking that requires people to think through how to focus on relationships not just on individuals. Without the thinking, these approaches will quickly fail. With the thinking, teachers will continue to invent new ways to address problems.
- Restorative practices are not a way of encouraging irresponsibility. This approach is more socially responsible than those who simply exclude offenders and effectively pass problems on to other institutions, expecting them to hold an offender accountable. Restorative practices focus on accountability and seek to address harm done in ways that will make ongoing differences

How Do Restorative Practices Fit with Response to Intervention?

The Response to Intervention model is widely used to discriminate between different kinds of behaviors and student needs. It is built on the distinction between three "Tiers" of both student responses and school responses and recognizes that in some circumstances an early intervention model is appropriate and in other circumstances a more sustained response from the school is needed to address student needs.

It is important to stress that restorative practices are not intended to compete with programs that support student behavior development through positive behavior support systems. Restorative practices in fact support the principles behind strategies that support teaching and learning. Restorative practices are intended to complement positive behavior support and to fill in some gaps where needed.

Tier 1

Tier one is the primary base of the response to intervention pyramid. At this level,

positive behavioral expectations and procedures are taught to the entire school. School-wide practices consist of rules intended to prevent initial incidence of problematic behaviors by students. Rules and expectations are determined and implemented for behaviors the school would like to see established within the school community.

The focus of positive behavior support is often on individuals learning behaviors that are reinforced throughout the school. Restorative practices, on the other hand, supports tier one by focusing less on the individual and more on a relationship dimension. It addresses the development of social-emotional understanding and skills through promoting and strengthening a sense of belonging and ownership.

Examples of restorative practices in tier one interventions include:

- Proactive Prevention
- Building Community
- Relationship Building
- Restorative Conversations
- Classroom Circles
- Social-Emotional Understanding & Skills

Tier 2

Tier two approaches are designed to offer more support to students who are not responding to tier one interventions. Interventions and strategies within tier two are more targeted toward individual students who require particular support. Typically, this means developing an individualized behavioral intervention plan. The school's intervention team establishes behavioral goals, which are implemented through behavioral contracts and weekly report cards. In order for students to obtain their behavior goals, they must rely on a network of support.

A restorative approach in tier two represents different thinking. Restorative practices work with teachable moments on behavior issues and treat them as relational events, rather than as individual expressions. Here is a list of particular restorative practices that might be used in Tier two situations.

- Reparative Interventions
- Restorative Discipline
- Undercover Anti-bullying Teams
- Circle conversations
- Restorative Conversations
- Welcome circles
- Peer Mediation

Tier 3

The third tier is focused on intensive interventions geared towards students who did not respond to tier two interventions. Interventions within tier three are designed with instructions and expectations to meet the needs of the student in order for the student to build strategies that exhibit positive behaviors. Typically, interventions include individual counseling sessions, daily behavior report cards, and teaching self-monitoring skills.

Restorative practices also provide intensive intervention that can be used at tier three, but they focus more on rebuilding relationships and repairing harm than on the isolation of individual behavior. Restorative responses to discipline challenges at this level also intentionally involve people who were directly harmed or affected by a problematic behavior. Narrative dialogue is used with those affected to determine what the harm was, what needs need to be addressed, and who has responsibility to address those needs. And the person who committed the offending behavior is addressed as a member of a network of relationships, not just as an individual.

Examples of restorative practices in tier three interventions include:

- Restorative conferences
- Re-entry Interventions
- Circles of support & accountability
- Peer Juries

Restorative practices should, therefore, be seen as having something to offer at each level of the response to intervention model. They offer support to existing approaches in tier one and a complementary, but different, approach to thinking about issues. At tiers two and three, they offer specific intervention approaches. These approaches have been shown to produce positive effects and they offer schools more options for responding to problematic situations.

For What Specific Restorative Practices Will Training be Offered?

Once practitioners have grasped the principles of restorative practices, there are many ways in which they can be elaborated. We do not want to restrict teachers' creativity in this regard.

On the other hand, these principles are best learned in the process of using them. We therefore want to train people in certain applications of these principles in practice and encourage them to develop further applications that go beyond the specifics of the approaches taught. Restorative practices can be applied in more informal restorative conversations in a classroom or in a hallway; or they can be applied in a conversation with a whole class; or they can be used in a formal restorative conference when suspension or expulsion is an option.

Restorative Conferences

A restorative conference is a structured meeting that brings more people into the conversation in order to deal with the wrongdoing and decide how to best repair the harm. It grew out of the Family Group Conference idea in social welfare and youth justice contexts and it originated in New Zealand and has spread around the world to many countries.

Conferences address the harm done to relationships rather than to authority. The purpose of a restorative conference is to put things right, rather than to use punishment to isolate and target the offender. Instead, the offender and the victim of an offense are wrapped in a community of care, which encourages the offender to be accountable for wrongdoing but also supports him or her to do so.

Conferences provide victims and others a chance to express their feelings, ask questions, confront the offender, and have a say in the outcome. By contrast, punishment systems usually leave the victim out altogether. Restorative conferences also provide the opportunity for the offender to repair the harm by apologizing and making amends, rather than just demonstrating contrition toward those in authority who are the guardians of the rules.

Restorative conferences are used in schools as an alternative to traditional disciplinary measures, such as suspension or expulsion. They can be used as an alternative process where a suspension is being considered or they can be used as a way back into the school community after a student has been suspended. Restorative conferencing is an alternative way of addressing serious problems in school and should not be used for trivial offenses. It is an option at the tier two and tier three levels.

Restorative Conversations

A restorative conversation is a preventative action and early intervention that can be used more at the tier one level. It involves a discussion between a teacher and at least one student following an incident that has caused concern. The same series of facilitated inquiries take place as in a restorative conference but at a lower level. Conversation at each step is much more truncated.

The initial focus of conversation is on the effects of the problem. The approach explores these effects of an incident on all concerned (including a teacher and the offender himself or herself) and identifies what is needed to make amends (especially what the victim might need).

Restorative conversations can be used on a daily basis with students when conversations are difficult and a process is needed to help people see things differently. Rather than taking up the position of telling the offender what he or she has done wrong, a teacher takes the position of facilitator who invites students to learn from a situation and to

be accountable by taking responsibility. In this way, a facilitative teacher helps identify what needs to be done in order to put things right and move on. Spontaneous circle conversations can be used for this purpose too for responding to minor difficulties in the classroom or school.

Undercover Anti-bullying Teams

A traditional approach to bullying usually involves the identification of a perpetrator(s) and a victim, isolating the perpetrator and applying punishment. Punishment of bullies has limited effect, and may inhibit the problem without addressing it, especially if the bully retaliates against the victim for “getting him or her in trouble”.

Undercover anti-bullying teams, developed originally by Bill Hubbard (2004) and added to by Mike Williams and John Winslade (2012), offer a new approach to bullying. In an undercover anti-bullying team, bullying students are recruited onto a team, which works semi-secretly to improve the experience of school of the victim of the bullying. But the bullies are outnumbered on this team. There is a deliberate avoidance of naming or shaming (let alone punishing) those who have been doing the bullying in favor of transforming the effects of the bullying on the victim.

Meanwhile the bullies are offered: a new understanding of the impact of their actions; a new positive ‘identity’ and support to develop that identity; anonymity to gain confidence with that identity; a platform on which to oppose bullying storyline. The victim is never required to confront the bullies, but is placed in the position of power of deciding when the undercover team has successfully done its job and can be given its reward.

Circle Conversations

Circle processes are valuable practices that serve numerous purposes in school communities. They derive originally from Native American traditions of problem-solving – sitting in a circle around a campfire.

Students need practice in how to use circle conversations but they are especially useful for building strong relationships among students in a class. They help a class to constitute itself as a community of care. This approach intentionally creates a space that lifts barriers between people. Circles open the possibility for connection, collaboration, and mutual understanding. Circles are built on caring relationships, positive expectation messages, and opportunities for meaningful participation. Participants gain valuable skills that will not only positively contribute to improved interpersonal relationships and academic success, but will also prepare them for their future work and relationships.

Once such relationships are established, it is possible then to use circle conversations as sites for the addressing of problem issues.

Classroom Conferences

An extension of the idea of a circle conversation in a classroom is the classroom conference. This is a process that uses similar steps to those used in a restorative conference. The purpose of a classroom conference is to address both learning and behavior issues. It creates a facilitated problem-solving forum that teaches values such as honesty, accountability, responsibility, and compassion. A classroom conference can be used at any point when tensions or problems have arisen, or when decisions need to be made. It can be adapted for dealing with behavior issues such as class divisions, teasing, stealing, fights, threats, playground problems.

Class Lessons to Pre-empt Relational Problems

Class lessons can be used to address issues that habitually produce conflict in schools, for example: tension between groups as a result of the expression of racism, sexual harassment, or pervasive and prejudiced name-calling. Specific guidance lessons aimed at addressing these issues challenge the discourse that is supporting the problem (Winslade & Williams, 2012). In narrative practice, the principles of a guidance lesson consist of:

- “How we name the problem matters; externalize powerful themes of culture clash;
- racism or sexism or homophobia is founded on discourses rather than on individual beliefs or personalities;
- counter stories to racism always exist;
- double listening includes hearing different cultural meaning systems in the room.”

What Does Research Say?

International research into restorative practices has consistently reported positive outcomes. These practices have been shown to lead to:

- improvements in school attendance
- reductions in disciplinary concerns
- fewer classroom disruptions
- higher academic performance
- preferred relationships between adults and students
- and a more positive school climate.

Here are some specific research findings:

- According to the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, a study of 19 schools in the United Kingdom concluded that restorative practices improved the school environment and enhanced learning.

- Three schools in Pennsylvania saw reductions in disruptive behavior and in disciplinary actions (Ashley & Burke, n.d.).
- The Restorative Justice Colorado organization claimed that implementing restorative practices in schools decreases suspension rates anywhere from 40% to 80% and a 50% drop in absenteeism.
- At Cole Middle School, in Oakland, California, restorative practices were implemented in the 2005-2006 school year. Prior to implementing restorative practices, the school had been suspending almost one third (30.3%) of the student population. Students suspension dropped to 10.3% following implementation of restorative practices strategies. In addition to the school's decrease in suspension rates, the school dramatically reduced repeated suspensions. In the 2006-2007, the school lost \$9,775 in daily attendance funding; however, in the 2007-2008 school year, the school lost only \$262. Cole Middle School's California State Test (CST) scores went up by 74 points after two years of implementing restorative practices (Kidde & Alfred, 2011).
- Palisades Middle School learned of restorative practices in the fall of 2000. The school reported suspending 200 students a school year from disrespect to not making up their gym classes. After implementing restorative practices discipline referrals were cut almost in half (Kidde & Alfred, 2011).
- Restorative practices were implemented in 2003 through the school principal at Newton Middle School in New Jersey. After receiving training, the principal began using restorative questions. Then in 2006, personnel at the school were trained. Incidents of misbehavior were cut from 161 to 69 the year all the staff was trained. Physical altercations dropped from eight fights in 2004 to two in 2006 (Kidde & Alfred, 2011).

What Makes it Work?

Research also addresses the specific factors that contribute most to successful use of restorative practices. The approach does require staff to participate in a professional development series to become aware of the principles of restorative practices, develop the ability to apply these restorative approaches to build positive relationships, and resolve situations in classes and common locations. Here are some factors that make restorative practices work best.

- Avoid a punishment focus. Some people can try to use restorative practices to re-introduce a punishment regime. Punishment does not help the victim of a person's offending behavior. Instead, focus on an effort to invite those involved to address the harm done.

- Focus on the victim's needs. Give space for the voice(s) of the person(s) harmed to be heard. The victim's perspective is central to deciding how to repair the harm caused by the wrongdoing. A key difference in a restorative approach is that offenders are required to take up responsibility toward victims, rather than just work to change themselves.
- Don't have a pre-conceived plan when going into a restorative conference. It is almost impossible to predict the outcome of the meeting and students and parents can easily detect when they are being manipulated toward an outcome that an administrator has selected in advance.
- Let the meeting come up with ideas. Include and engage all stakeholders in a collaborative problem-solving response to the misconduct, including the victim if he or she wishes, the community, and the person(s) who caused the harm.
- Make the plan for setting things right specific and concrete. The plan needs to be specific about who will do what, when, and where. Vague recommendations about "staying out of trouble" or "avoiding misbehavior" are not helpful.
- Make the plan for setting things right time limited. It should specify dates for review so that the offender knows what they have to do by when. A plan for addressing the harm done by an offense should not continue indefinitely through a person's school career.
- Ask questions rather than reprimand. All human beings should be honored with dignity and worth. Avoid creating unnecessary blame and shame. There is shame enough in being involved in these processes and it does not need to be magnified. Instead shame that does exist needs to be directed toward making things right and reducing shame. Speaking respectfully can be effective in producing desirable outcomes. This includes avoiding using totalizing language.
- Invite everyone to share responsibility. Collaboratively plan for restoration, enhancing responsibility and accountability for the offender to accepting responsibility and act to repair the harm done. Invite others as well as the offender to take up responsibility.
- Publish the outcome to those who need to know – those who have attended a restorative conference; teachers who might be primed to look for changes someone is trying to make. "Problems are often better documented than solutions." Collect an "archive" of stories of successful processes that illustrate levels of success in a problem or challenge, inspire others struggling with the same problem, and build a new reputation for the school.

- Follow up and review. Follow-up conferences need to be included for accountability purposes. Collecting qualitative and quantitative data, and administering surveys and/or interviewing participants evaluate the use of restorative practices.

Chapter 3

How to Facilitate a Restorative Conference

Principles

Restorative conferences are used as a response to problem behavior. But the concentration is on the harm done by this behavior. The goal of conferencing is to help staff and the student's family work together to help create success for everyone. The purpose of these conferences is to address a concern and emerge with a plan that will restore relationships, which have been damaged, because of the problem. Conferencing allows students and their families and staff (teachers, administrators, support staff, etc.) to come together to address concerns of all participants and create understanding on how best to move forward.

The process focuses on:

- Meeting the needs of the victims and providing them with a voice
- Ensuring the community is heard in matters that affect them
- Emphasizing restoration rather than punishment.

Stages in the Process

Opening

A restorative conference should open in a way that creates an atmosphere of respect and makes it a sacred space. It is suggested to begin a restorative conference with a culturally appropriate welcome. The opening should establish a connection with the cultural and linguistic background of the young persons and their families. The facilitator should explain the purpose of the conference and introduce the conference protocols. The following should be discussed:

- Confidentiality and privacy of any personal material that is discussed
- The purpose of the conference is not to sentence anyone to a punishment
- The conference is not about blame, although it is about making things right
- It is a voluntary process
- Everyone has the right to speak. Please do not interrupt when someone else is speaking.
- The meeting could take up to two hours (any longer and people cannot sustain concentration).

The following statement could be written on the whiteboard, “The person is not the problem, the problem is the problem.” This helps to set the ground rules for the meeting process.

Introductions Round

To establish an atmosphere of trust, everyone should introduce themselves and say one thing that they hope will come from the conference. This is done as a round. Set up a chair for a significant person who can't attend. Some young people may need assistance to express their hope for the conference.

What Happened?

At this phase, the principal or delegate needs to tell the story of what happened, refer to relevant background history, and explain why the school was considering serious disciplinary action.

This account should be established and agreed upon in advance so that there is no chance of opening up a debate about facts or details. It should be restricted to a factual account of what happened and avoid judgment of individuals.

Nor should this account play down what happened and make it sound trivial or minor. The principal or delegate should also state briefly why the school considered the matter as serious enough to warrant consideration of suspension and/or to call this conference. The statement about the seriousness of the offense should not just refer to how the offense breached the law or the school rules but should speak to how it affected other people in the school.

Naming the Problem

The next task is to name the problem. In this part of the process, an effort is made to externalize the problem. It is a process of separating in everyone's thinking the person from the problem. The facilitator should draw a circle on the white board and ask everyone to name the problem in their own view.

The victim and his/her supporters or family members should be asked to speak first. Then there should be a round in which everyone has a chance to speak. The offender should also be asked to name the problem from his/her perspective.

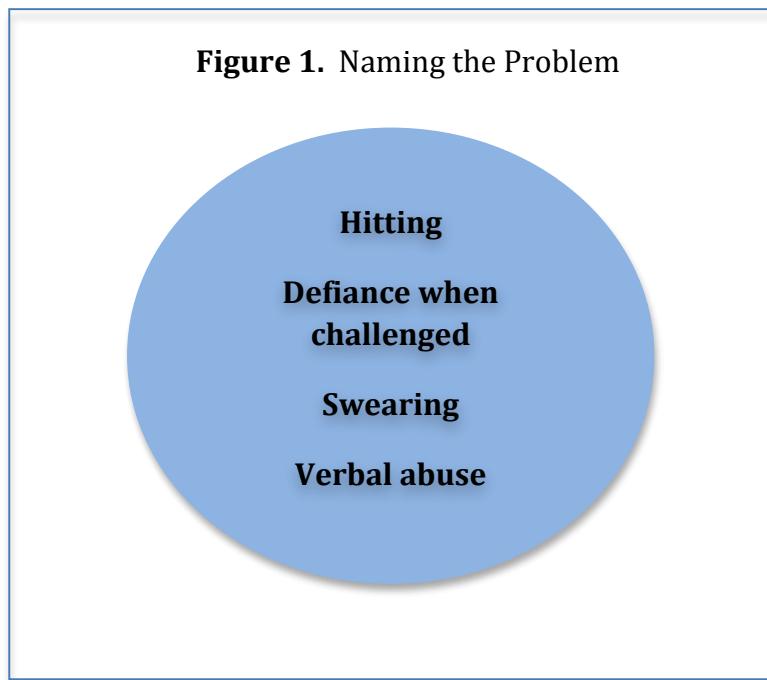
A word or brief phrase are chosen from each participant and then written in the circle. The name for the problem should be a thing not a person. For example, “hitting,” “defiance when challenged,” “swearing,” “verbal abuse,” may be described as the problem rather than “a violent nature” (See Figure 1).

The aim is to include all the perspectives in the room in the naming of the problem. No one name needs to be selected out as the correct name. Instead all names are accepted

as aspects of the problem. When this process is complete the facilitator can refer to the circle and all that is written within it as the problem. “All of this,” he or she might say, indicating the circle and its contents, “is the problem we are here to address”. It can be referred to hereafter as the problem story.

Sometimes, during the naming of the problem, a participant may start to speak about the effects of the problem rather than the problem itself. If this happens, the facilitator should ask, “What is it that causes that effect on you?” Whatever the answer is to that question can be written down in the circle in externalizing language as the problem.

If a participant starts to speak about a person as the problem, the facilitator should ask him or her, “What is that this person does or did that is the problem?” Again, whatever the participant says in answer to that question can be externalized and written down in the circle as the problem.



Mapping the Effects of the Problem

Mapping the effects of the problem is the next step of the process. The aim here is for everyone to express how he or she has been affected by the problem. The effects of the problem may be personal and emotional (fear, worry, outrage, etc.) and these emotional effects should be recognized and acknowledged. But they may also be physical (“It gave me a headache”), relational (“It destroyed a friendship”), social (“It split a peer group”), organizational (“It affected the atmosphere in the school”), educational (“It interfered with learning”), financial (“I had to pay for a doctor’s visit”), or employment-related (“I had to take time off work to be here”).

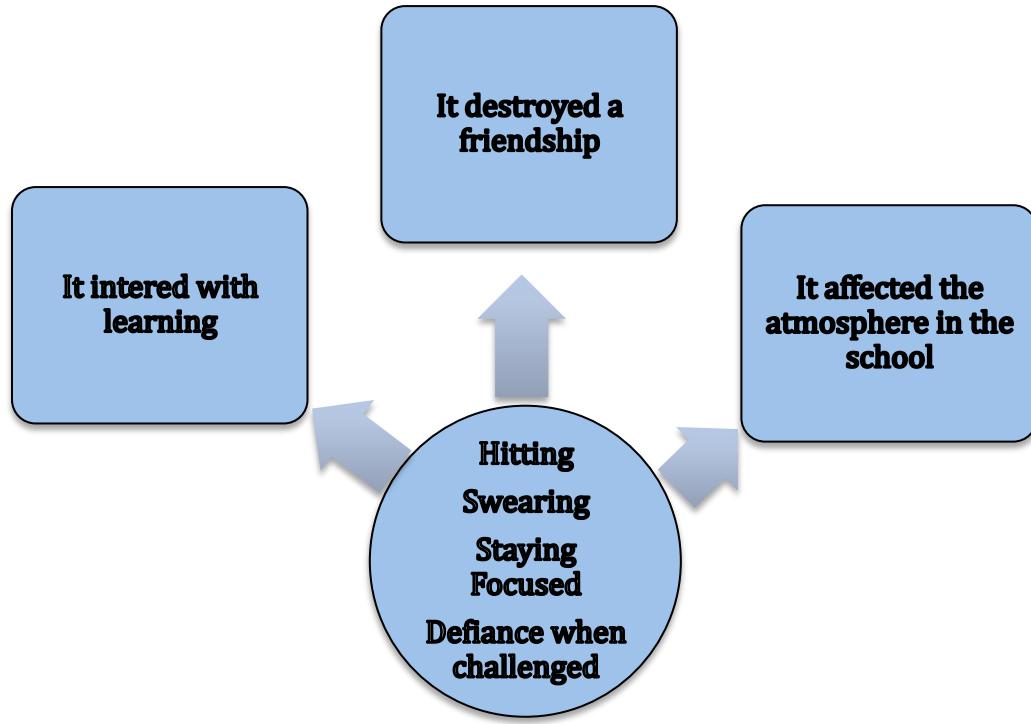
It is important to start this inquiry with the victim and his or her family members. The victim should be given plenty of opportunity to be heard repeatedly. Then again the process proceeds as a round in which all participants are asked about the effects of the problem on him or her. This includes the offender. He or she is also asked about the effects of the problem on him or her.

Everyone gets the chance to learn about how others have been affected. This is especially valuable for the offender but can also be eye-opening for the victim and for other participants to learn about. What emerges is a sense that the offending behavior is not just individual and neither are its effects felt just by one individual. A whole network of relations are implicated.

The facilitator may need to engage with participants in a couple of exchanges to help clarify the effects they are speaking about. Not everyone can state these effects clearly first up. Then the facilitator should write descriptions of the effects of the problem on the whiteboard. As each person speaks about the effects of the problem on them, the facilitator should draw spokes out from circle and write the effects of the problem on each person alongside each spoke (See Figure 2).

Language is important at this point. The facilitator must keep on referring to the problem as an “it”, or “thing” or to the referred name.

| Figure 2. Mapping the effects of the problem



In this phase we do the center first, then the spokes.

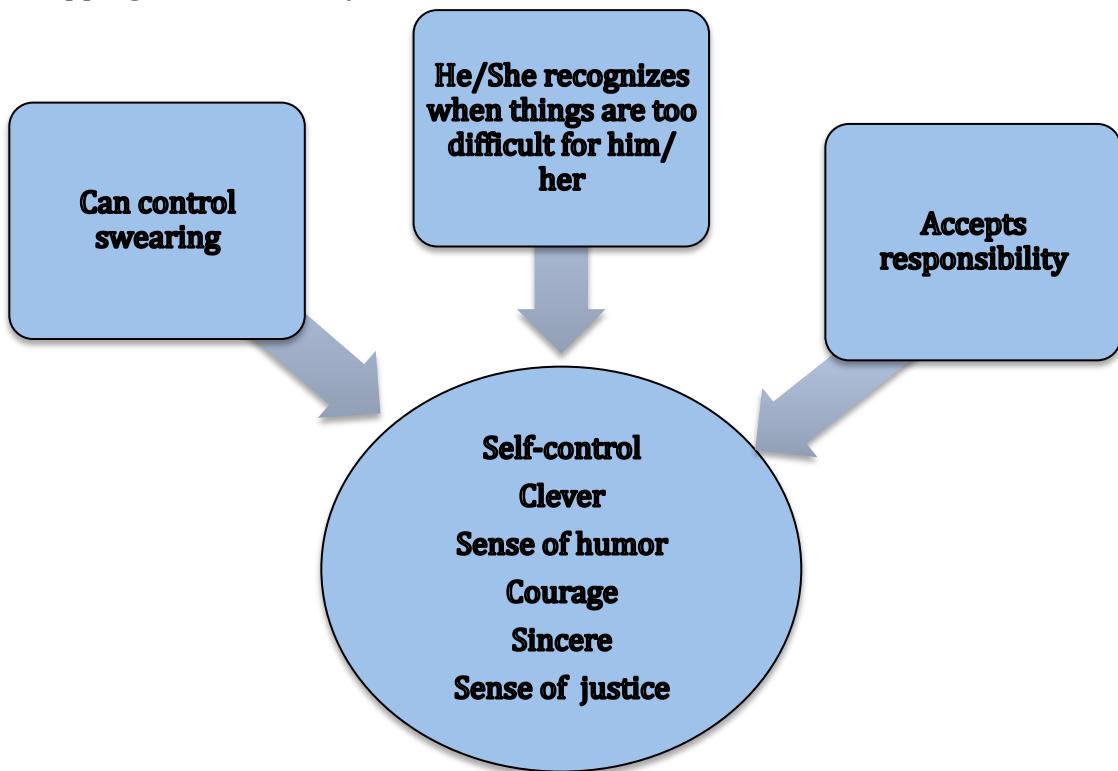
The Counter Story

The focus of the meeting shifts from past to present. The object is to identify the changed perception by hearing a richer description of the person who has done the problem behavior. It begins with the facilitator saying something like this:

So this (indicating the circle diagram containing the problem and its effects) is what we are here to address. But before we do so it is important to remember that no problem story ever tells the complete truth about a person. In order to get a fuller picture let me ask, "What does everyone here know about this person that the problem might blind us to if we only paid attention to the problem story?"

The facilitator now draws another circle and spokes out from it on the board. Moving from the outside inwards this time, the facilitator attaches words to the spoke first and then asks participants to figure out what goes in the middle (See Figure 3).

Figure 3. Mapping a Counter Story



In this phase we do the spokes first, then the center.

As above, the facilitator asks about any discrepancies everyone knows about the offender that do not fit with the problem story. Remember that these always exist and it is worth continuing to ask about them until they emerge. When exceptions have been found, they are mapped onto the spokes of the second circle. Encourage the telling of brief stories to flesh these out.

Then the facilitator asks about each of the exceptions, "What does this story tell us about the offender?" Usually a number of words describing the offender as more positive are mentioned. These are written in the center of the second circle. The facilitator can then ask about the difference between the two stories (optional).

Forming the Plan

In the next stage of the process, the concentration is on forming a plan that will address the harm that had been done and set relations between all parties on a new footing.

The process begins with the facilitator asking the offender to look at the two circle diagrams. The facilitator asks the offender to think about which of these two diagrams, the problem story and the counter story, he or she would like to go forward from this meeting and be the story that everybody knew about him or her from now on. He or she is asked to indicate a choice, usually by pointing at the chosen circle. If, as usually happens, the offender indicates the counter story, then the facilitator announces that what now needs to happen is for “*... us all to work together on forming a plan to make sure that this story has a chance to go forward.*”

The next step is for the victim to be asked what needs to be set right in order for the harm done by the problem to be addressed. After the victim and his or her supporters have addressed this question, the facilitator can ask everyone who has been affected by the problem to contribute to a list of ideas for setting things right. Addressing all of the effects listed around the outside of the problem story can now be done.

In this stage, the meeting is directed towards a future focus. A plan is formulated. The plan needs to be about: When, Where? How?” These are the questions that should be asked.

- What needs to happen to make things right?
- What do you need (victim)?
- What can you offer (offender)?
- What else can anyone suggest that will make the counter story stronger?
- What difference will this make?
- How can we ensure this plan happen?

The plan should be:

- specific and clear about who will do what
- specific with regard to when things will happen
- reality tested
- specific with regard to who will supervise the carrying out of the tasks.

The facilitator should invite everyone to take up responsibility, including teachers, administrators, and family members. The offender clearly is invited to take appropriate responsibility, but should not be left with all of it. (In Appendix C there is a detailed plan.)

Publish the outcome to those who need to know. Build in a review process, including inquiry into what has happened since the meeting.

Problems that Can Arise

Holding a restorative conference requires between 4-8 hours of preparation. What is involved is the following:

- consultation with key school personnel to decide to hold the conference
- meeting with student who has offended and his/her family members

- meeting with the victim and his/her family members
- inviting other key stakeholders to attend
- setting up time and venue for conference.

Holding a conference also requires the willingness of stakeholders involved to participate. The time involved before, during, and after a conference is an issue that needs to be addressed. The hours spent setting up a conference make a difference to its effectiveness.

Up to two hours are needed for the conference itself. Additional time may be required for following up with the plan after the conference.

Other issues to consider are:

- Who will decide to hold conferences in the school?
- Who will facilitate the conference? (It is often the school counselor who will do this work but not always.)
- Who will do the preparatory work entailed? (Some of this work can be done by clerical staff but not necessarily all of it. Some of it requires professional input.)

There are other issues facilitators need to consider within the conference process.

- Offenders and victims can feel intimidated by the number of adults present. They need to be prepared for this.
- Some victims are uncertain about the number of people present and wonder about a less public forum. They need to discuss this in advance and have explained to them the value of other voices in the conversation adding to the possibilities of what can come out of the conference.
- Some offenders may not feel safe enough to talk openly and feel pressured to respond in certain ways. They can be helped by preparing them in advance for what they might say.
- Adults present in a conference may dominate or hijack the conversation for their own purposes or they may speak about a young person as if that person were not in the room. This can be countered by simply asking the young person to comment on the ideas suggested by the adults.
- Having a number of teachers present at a conference may be a problem if the teachers dominate the discussion and exclude the family members. The facilitator needs to monitor this and elicit the involvement of the family members.
- If one or more people dominate the conversation, the victim and offender may have little time to talk. In addition, the victim's needs may not receive as much attention (Hansen, 2005).

There are many issues to consider that can go wrong with the plan. People may fail to follow through (and that includes administrators, teachers, parents, or students) and may not do the things they said they would do. The plan may not be concrete enough. For instance, times and dates may not be included in the plan or who will do things may not be specified in the plan. Therefore, confusion can develop and it makes it harder to determine whether the plan has been achieved or not.

A Checklist for Facilitating a Restorative Conference

1. The conference will begin with an appropriate greeting.
2. Explain the purpose of the conference and outline what will happen.

We are not here to establish guilt or sentence anyone to a punishment. This conference is not about blame, it is not a court case, but it is about making things right. The conference might take an hour and a half or two hours but no longer. I will ask you to please respect the privacy of what each person says here. Are you willing to do that?

3. Write on the whiteboard, "The person is not the problem, the problem is the problem." This helps to set the tone for the meeting.
4. Ask the school principal or representative to read out a statement of the event that led to the conference and also say why the school takes this offense seriously.
5. Ask the offender and the victim to agree that this is what happened (establish accuracy in advance).
6. Ask each person present to introduce themselves and say what they hope will come from the conference.

As you introduce yourselves, can each of you say one thing you hope will come from this conference.

7. Ask each person to name the problem from his or her own perspective.

**How could we describe in a few words what the problem is?
If we could give a name to it what would that be?**

8. Draw a circle on a whiteboard. Write all the descriptions of the problem in externalizing language in the middle of the circle.
9. Ask each person about the effects of the problem (as written in the circle) on them.

When this problem is present how does it affect each of you?

10. Find moments, places, and relationships where the problem is not present.

What does everyone here know about this person that the problem might blind us to if we only paid attention to the problem story?

11. Ask the offender which story he/she wants to go forward?
12. Ask the victim what he/she needs to happen in order to feel that things are made right.
13. Ask everyone to contribute ideas about what needs to be done to make the counter story go forward. Who will do what? When? How?
14. Formulate and write up a plan to overcome the problem. Invite everyone to take up responsibility. Plan for follow up and review.

What needs to happen to make sure that the counter story goes forward?

What amends need to be made to set things right?

Who will do these things? When will we meet to review progress?

Chapter 4

How to Facilitate a Restorative Conversation

Principles

Restorative conversations can be applied as less formal, less time-consuming, and lower-level interventions. These are sometimes called impromptu conversations or even hallway conversations. They are, however, built on the same premises as a restorative conference.

The initial focus in a restorative conversation is on the relational effects of the problem, rather than on a punitive response. Maps may be used as a guideline and checklist to refer to at the start of a conversation and a reference to answer internal questions. It may be necessary to cycle through what the map refers to twice, or even three or four times.

Stages in the Process

Opening

The process begins with what we call establishing the conversation. The objectives of this stage are to determine who will be part of the conversation and to establish a time and place for it to occur without interruption.

What happened?

Once participants are brought together, what happened is addressed. The problem needs to be told in a matter that creates a new story and is heard and acknowledged in a new perspective.

Naming the Problem

Using externalizing language, the problem is named as a relational event and referred to. Naming the offense, avoids the logic of making the person the problem (Winslade & Williams, 2012). (See Figure 4).

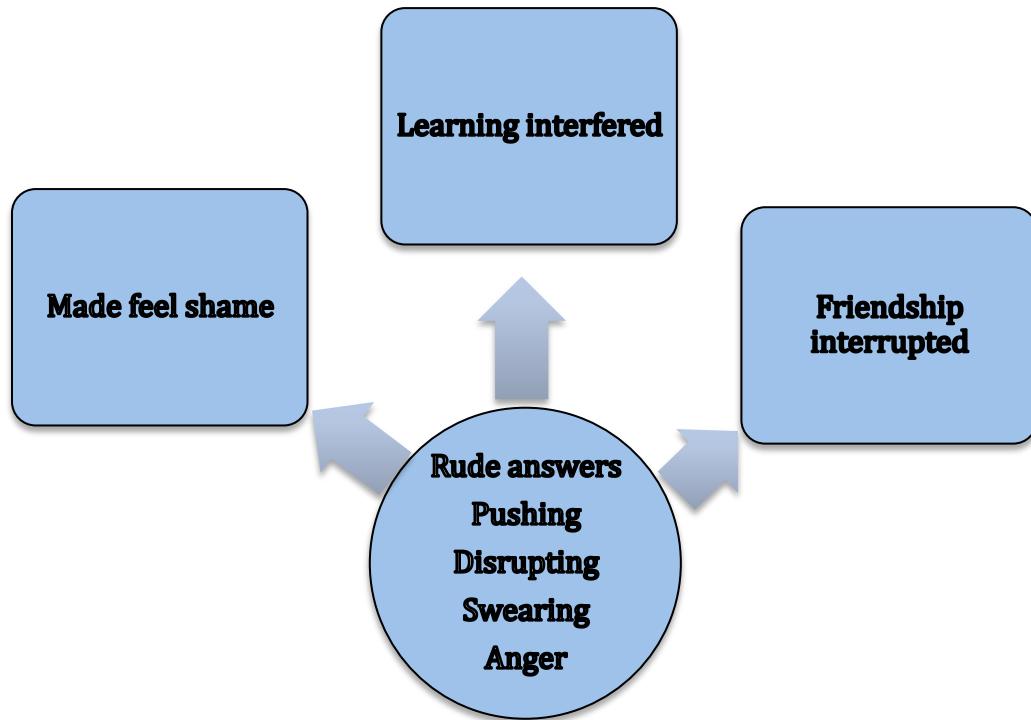
Figure 4. Naming the



Mapping the Effects

The next stage includes tracing the effects of the problem on all stakeholders. Tracing the effects involves asking questions that map the effects of the problem so that the harm done is clarified. A circle diagram with spokes emerging can be used. In the center of the circle, the names for the problem are written. Each spoke emerging from the circle is used to refer to the affect of the problem on one person (Winslade & Williams, 2012, p. 105). (See Figure 5.)

Figure 5. Mapping the effects of the problem



The Counter Story

Now that the harm has been identified, an obligation is created to do something about it (Winslade & Williams, 2012). The conversation is directed to what is needed to put things right. The person who has done the harm can be asked to pick up the responsibility and put things right. Others may also pick up responsibility for supporting the making of amends.

Forming the Plan

In the final stage, a plan is formed listing actions that are agreed to (Winslade & Williams, 2012). The plan needs to be specific about who will do what, when, and where. It needs to include a plan for reviewing and whether the plan was followed up. In Appendix D one can find detailed plan.

Problems that Can Arise

There are some issues to consider when facilitating a restorative conversation. Firstly, the offender may unlikely understand the full impact of his or her behavior on other people affected by the offense. If the offender is not willing to make amends for it, then there is a serious risk the conference can turn into an unpleasant experience. It is necessary for the facilitator to know that the student is ready to take responsibility and make amends prior to the conference starts.

Secondly, participation of others who are part of the victim and offender's community of support, including family, may be limited. The victim and offender's family play an important role in offering follow-up support to the victim or offender.

A Checklist for Facilitating a Restorative Conversation

Stage 1: The objectives of this stage are to determine who will be part of the conversation and to establish a time and place for it to occur without interruption.

What happened?
Who was affected by what happened?
Who has a stake in seeing things put right?

Stage 2: Using externalizing language, the problem is named as a relational event and referred to.

What happened?
What can we call it?
What part did it get you each to play?
What drew you into trouble?

Stage 3: Trace the effects of the problem on all stakeholders.

Who do you think is being affected?
How did it get you to feel?
What did it get you to do?
What did it get you thinking?
How have others been affected?
How did it affect the way you are with each other?

Stage 4: The conversation is focused on what can be done to put things right. Ask all members involved:

What do you think of this problem having all these effects? Is that okay with you? Or would you prefer something else?
To the victim: If this situation were to be put right, what would you need?
To the offender: Are you willing to make amends? How could we make sure this doesn't happen again?

Stage 5: Form a plan to overcome the problem. Invite everyone to take up responsibility.
Any follow up is planned for.

Who will do what?
When and where?
How will we know it is done?

Chapter 5

How to Facilitate an Undercover Anti-bullying Team

Principles

Undercover anti-bullying teams address bullying problems and transform relationships without resorting to an authoritarian approach. Perpetrators, victims, and bystanders are participants in a problematic storyline, rather than problem persons in their essence.

In this case the aphorism, "The person is not the problem, the problem is the problem," becomes, "The bully is not the problem, the bullying is the problem (Winslade & Williams, 2012, p. 128)."

The challenge is to provide an opportunity for each member to step out of the bullying story. The undercover team process targets the bullying relationship directly for transformation.

Stages in the Process

The first step is for the counselor to meet with the victim or target of the bullying. The counselor must then ascertain whether or not an instance bullying has taken place. If the act of bullying has taken place, the counselor introduces the idea of an undercover team to the victim.

If the victim is willing to set this process in motion, the counselor takes out an undercover anti-bullying team meeting form and begins to work through asking the questions on it. (See Appendix E.) The victim's answers are carefully recorded in his or her own words. The questions asked are:

1. Brief outline of incident /concern (where, when and what happened?)
2. Have you been made to feel different? How?
3. What effect did the incident have? Feelings? Thoughts?
4. How has the bullying affected your schoolwork?
5. What has the bullying got you to do or contemplate doing?
6. Ideally, how would you like things to be?

The counselor explains that the work of the team will be kept as a secret mission or project and that the victim won't have to meet with the team at all.

The counselor, the victim, and teachers collaborate to select the members of the undercover team, but the primary voice is given to the victim.

The second step is to assemble an undercover team. The counselor first asks the victim to name the two worst bullies who will be invited to be members of the team. But he

or she explains that they will not be accused of or blamed for anything. They will just be asked to help change the dynamics of relationships so that the victim feels better. The counselor invites the victim to select four other members of the team who should be students who are not bullies nor should they be others who have been bullied. These other four members should be two boys and two girls. It is vital to select members who can keep a secret and others might look up to as respected classmates.

The third step is for the counselor to meet with the chosen team. The counselor reads the story of the bullying and outlines a list of its effects. The counselor draws directly on the words of the victim but without naming anyone. The counselor provides the opportunity for the team members to respond to the story by asking a question like this:

"What would it be like if that was happening to you?"

The team members are then invited to participate in a special operation for which nobody knows about its existence. The counselor must stress more than once that the operation must be kept a secret. As a team, the students will work undercover to support the victim and help this person through a difficult time. They are asked to be friendly to the victim. Upon the successful conclusion of the team, when the victim is sure that the bullying has stopped, the team will be rewarded. The counselor reads the name of the victim after all the students have agreed to take part in such a mission.

The counselor then asks the team to develop a five-point plan. This is a plan to create a different experience of school for the victim. A list of actions is brainstormed first. Then a discussion then takes place to decide how will the team carry out the plan and who will do which items. The team is then sent on its mission.

The fourth step in the process is about monitoring progress with the plan. After a few days (day five), the counselor checks in with the victim about what has been happening. In addition, the counselor checks in with the teachers to confirm what has been happening in class.

On day seven, the counselor meets again with the undercover team to determine the effectiveness of the plan from their perspective. At times, refinements to the plan may need to be discussed and its effects studied. A few days later (day nine), the counselor meets with the victim to check in with the teams' progress. The counselor asks the victim whether the bullying has stopped. Together, the counselor and the victim discussed whether the undercover team should continue with their plan or whether it is time to stop the mission.

The fifth step is the celebration step. This step happens only when the victim is satisfied that the bullying has stopped. The team is then awarded certificates signed by the principal and/or vouchers. Lastly, the team completes an evaluation form and discusses a plan for the long term.

A Checklist for Facilitating an Undercover Anti-bullying Team

Day 1. Interview the victim:

- 1. Briefly outline where, when and what happened?**
- 2. Have you been made to feel different? How?**
- 3. What effect did the incident have? Feelings? Thoughts?**
- 4. How has the bullying affected your school work?**
- 5. What has the bullying got you to do or contemplate doing?**
- 6. Ideally, how would you like things to be?**
- 7. Who are the two worst bullies?**
- 8. Can you suggest 4 other students who might be good members of the team?**

Day 2. Assemble Undercover team, explain their mission, and generate a five-point plan (40 min.). Teachers are informed of the existence and purpose of the team.

You have been specially selected to be part of an undercover team of secret agents whose job is to eliminate bullying in your class.
I would like to read what happened and its effects.
What would it be like if that were happening to you?
If you were going through the same thing, what would make a difference for you?
What ideas do you have for a 5 point plan to change this situation?

Day 5. Check in with victim on progress. (10 min.) Check with teachers to confirm progress.

How has it been going? Has the bullying stopped or changed?

Day 7. Meet Undercover team to check on progress and give encouragement. (10 min.)

How has it been going?
Have you been sticking to the plan?
Any changes needed?
Any advice for the victim?

Day 9. Check with victim on progress and find out whether bullying has stopped.

Has the bullying gone?
What needs to be done for the future?
What do you think of the team's advice?
Has the team done its job?

Day 14. Meet Undercover team again to plan for long-term change, give out awards, and evaluation forms.

Chapter 6

How to Facilitate a Classroom Conference

Principles

A classroom conference may be helpful where the concern seems to be associated with the class as a whole, rather than with an individual or group. Perhaps a rash of problem behaviors has developed in the culture of the class. Or a group of class members has fallen into a pattern of disruption that is affecting others who are starting to complain about it. Or a norm has evolved in which behaviors that disrupt learning have spread across the surface of many classroom interactions.

Teachers, concerned parents, or students may initiate the call for a conference. All members join together in a conversation to address either learning or behavior issues (or both). Restorative questions are used as a framework for creating dialogue aimed at reaching an understanding and creating a mutual agreement about how to make things right. Samples of these questions are outlined below.

It is important that willingness to participate is established before the conference is initiated. It is also important that the participating class knows that the conference is about hearing their voices. It is not just about something being done to them. This principle is easiest to establish if circle conversations are part of the routine of the class.

Stages in the Process

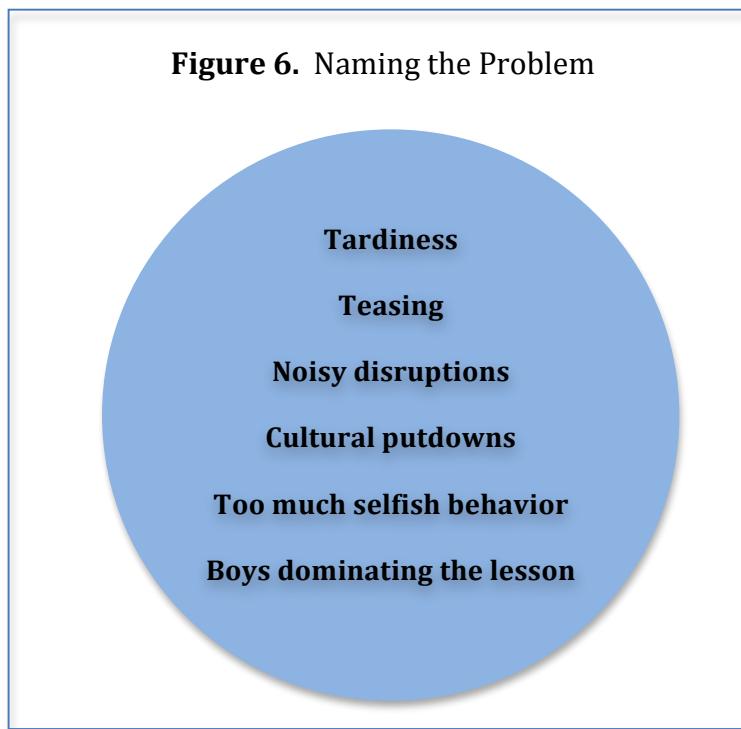
The conference begins by stating, "The problem is the problem; the person is not the problem." This aphorism is written on the board and is referred to throughout the conference. Students can sometimes be invited to reflect on what this statement might mean. As the conversation develops, the problem or problems that emerge are spoken about without referring to any person as a problem person. If anyone does stray into speaking about a person as a problem, the facilitator can simply paraphrase what was said in more externalizing language.

It is useful early in the conference to clarify that the conference participants are about to hear how problems give classes reputations, and invite students to be concerned about the reputation their class has developed. The facilitator may wonder out loud how any reputation that has been heard of has developed. Has it been earned in any way, even inadvertently? What may have helped it to develop? Do the students like it? Is it fair? Would they like to change it?

Naming the Problem

In the next step, using externalizing language, the problem is named as a relational event and referred to. This allows what is being said to stay consistent with, "The problem

is the problem; the person is not the problem." Any class reputation that has been heard might be described as part of the problem, but students and teachers are also invited to name anything else in the atmosphere or interactions in the class that they experience as problematic. As in the restorative conference process described above, the facilitator should write all the suggested names for what is problematic into a circle on the whiteboard (See Figure 6). Only externalizing language should be used however. No person's name should be written in the circle. The names for what people experience as problems should be written as actions that are external to persons. It is important too that no class member's suggestions should be excluded. Even outlandish or distracting problems should be accepted at face value and written in the circle.



Mapping the Effects of the Problem

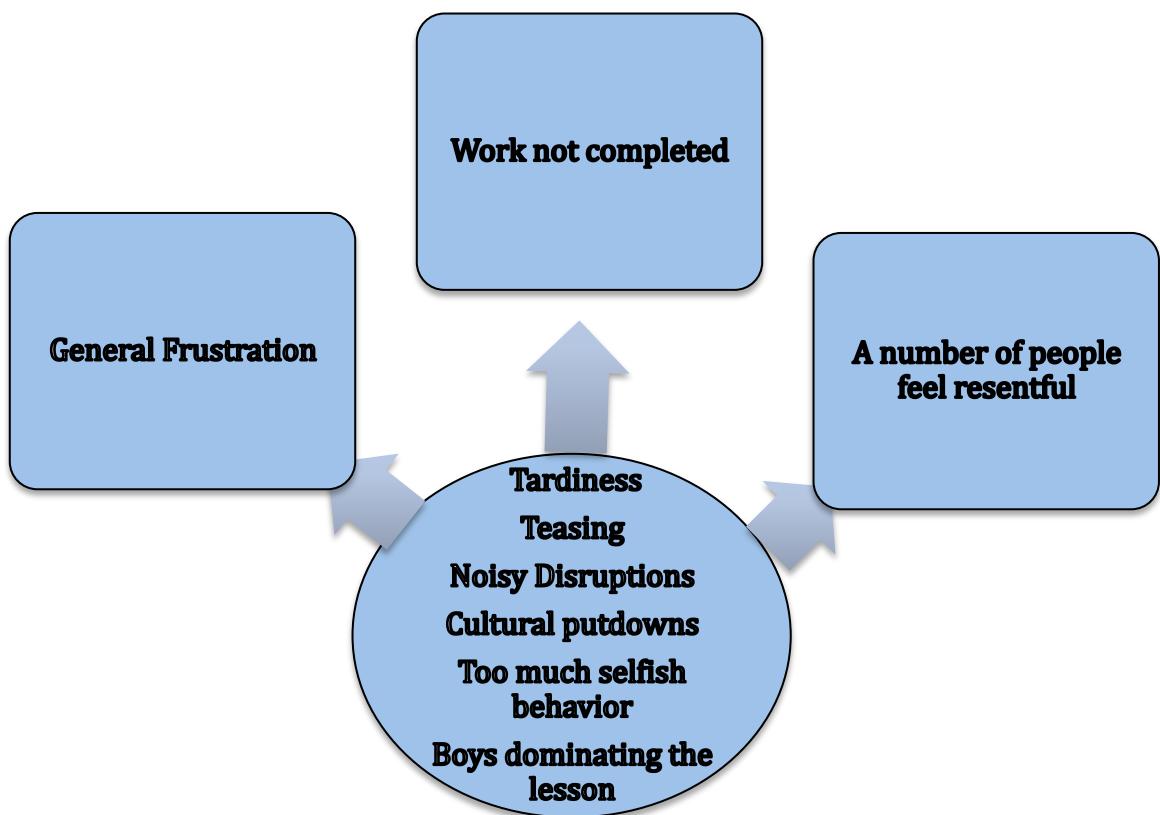
When the various problems have been named, the facilitator should summarize what has been said by saying that all of these things are what we are here to address in this meeting. Next, the conference is asked to speak to the effects of the problem on each member as individuals as well as on the class as a whole or on relationships between people in the class. This includes effects on teachers and effects on students' learning.

There is importantly no effort to dig up the causes of these problems. The reason is that this is often a pointlessly complex task and anyway it distracts attention back toward what has happened in the past. The inquiry into the effects is an inquiry into what is

happening now and what may possibly continue into the future. This is the territory where something can change and it is, therefore, the site where growth of a different story is targeted. So the inquiry is directed into tracing the effects of how the incident, or the problem practice, or class behavioral norms, or whatever else is on the list, may affect all stakeholders.

Some effects may be positive and these should be noted as well as any negative effects. But the unwanted effects should be highlighted. Facilitators should listen for the key words that class members mention and write these down on the spokes that project out from the circle in which the problem has been named. It is important to ensure that what is written on the board reflects what each person feels they said. If possible, use different colors for different groups of responses to enhance awareness of the nature of problems' effects (See Figure 7).

Figure 7. Mapping the effects of the problem



Evaluating the Problem

The judgment call about whether the problem and its effects are OK or not should be posed to the class meeting, rather than assumed to be worthy of change by the adults in the room. The class should therefore be asked:

"Is it OK that this problem and all the effects it is having should have their own way in deciding on the reputation of this class? Or do you not like it doing that?"

If there is general consensus (but not necessarily total agreement) that class members would like the problem not to be having these effects, then the class can be asked:

"What would you prefer?"

This question opens the counter story. What class members say should be carefully noted. It is also important to thank participants for their contributions.

The Counter Story

The growth of the counter story is now the subject of the conference and attention shifts to the second circle on the whiteboard. The facilitator begins the conversation about this circle by saying something like this:

"So here we have a representation of a problem story about this class (indicating the first circle). But no one story ever tells us everything that can be known about a class. So I am wondering what you might know about yourselves as a class that we would be blind to if we only paid attention to this problem story?"

Now the invitation is given to tell stories about incidents in the life of the class, or aspects of their interactions in classrooms that do not fit with the problem story. The facilitator can ask about times when the problem was not present in the class, or actions people have taken to stop the problem getting worse, or values that are widely held in the class that contradict the problem reputation. The more specific these contradictions are to what was written into the problem story the better.

This time, the recording of ideas on the circle starts from the outside and moves in towards the inside. Stories of difference are referred to in a few key words around the spokes on the outside of the circle first (See Figure 8). Each time a piece of difference is recorded on the spokes around the circle the facilitator should ask:

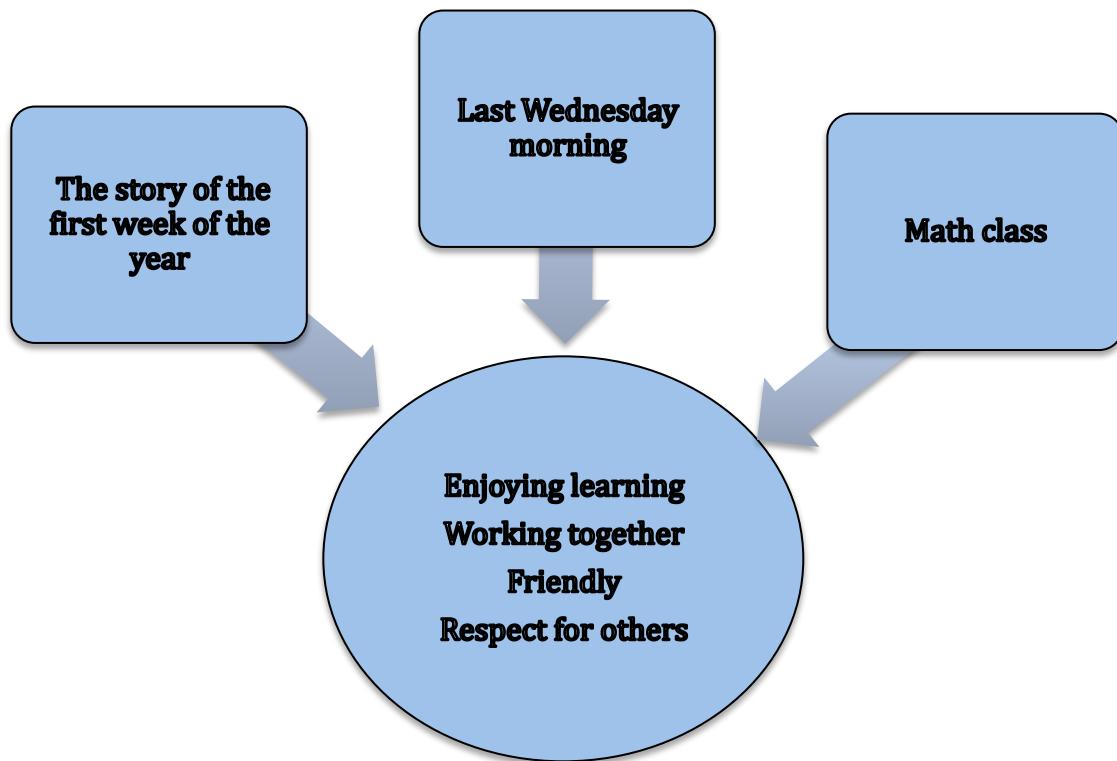
"What does that tell us about this class?"

The answer given to this question as a quality or principle or value can then be written in the inside of the circle. Gradually a picture is built up of the class that is different from the picture embodied in the problem story. When this picture is substantial enough the facilitator should ask:

"So I would ask you all to look at these two stories. The problem story is here and this is a very different story. So which one of these stories would you like to see become the reputation of this class in future?"

Class members are asked to raise their hands for each of the two stories. Usually a forest of hands is raised for the counter story.

Figure 8. Mapping a Counter Story



In this phase we do the spokes first, then the center.

Forming the Plan

Now the meeting is ready to envision a future. The next question that logically follows is to ask:

"If this (the counter story) is the way you would like the class to be known in future, what ideas do you have about now to make this more likely?"

Class members can then brainstorm ideas. All ideas should be written down on the whiteboard at first and then subsequently the class can be asked to choose which ones they will commit to. Everyone is invited to take up responsibility. No individuals are expected

to be isolated as troublemakers.

The last step is to summarize the emerging plan. The plan should be written up and displayed in the classroom for future reference. The plan should specify who will do what as this is agreed upon. A review should also be built in to ensure that everyone is held accountable for its completion. In Appendix F one can find detailed plan.

Problems that Can Arise

There are issues to consider when facilitating a classroom conference. Facilitating and organizing a classroom conference demands time. It may be difficult to schedule or facilitate a conference accordingly to the school's schedule.

Offenders are unlikely to understand at first the full impact of their behavior on other people. In such situation, the facilitator should be prepared to facilitate the conference to make it safe for victims.

The facilitator may find him or herself in a dual role in some situations. If the facilitator has been affected by the problem, it is possible to feel constrained in the conference.

A Checklist for Facilitating a Classroom Conference

Step 1: Write the phrase on the board: "The problem is the problem, the person is not the problem."

**In this conversation no one will be spoken as if they were a problem.
We are interested in hearing how problems have a way of giving classes
descriptions and reputations, and then about the descriptions that exist that the
problem is not telling us.**

Step 2: Using externalizing language, the problem is named as a relational event and referred to.

**If we think about the problem as the problem, rather than any persons as the
problem, what sort of names might you give for what the problem really is?
Is there a key name here on the board or does this problem go by a collection of
names?**

Step 3: Trace the effects of how the incident may affect all stakeholders.

**What are some of the effects that these problems have as they roll around our
classroom?
If we were to think about these problems, what might that protest or frustration be
about?
What is continual disobedience protesting about?
What is a teacher sending students to the office protesting about?
Are there times or places where these problems are not so strong or absent?
What is the description of the class when we look at the times that the problem is not
running things in this class?**

Step 4: Map the behavior that might be seen as actions taken for a specific purpose, for example as a protest about something else.

Step 5: The conversation is focused on what can be done to put things right.

What are some of the possibilities for our next step as a result of this conversation?

Step 6: Discuss and summarize the emerging plan. Specify who will be held accountable for each aspect of its completion.

Chapter 7

How to Facilitate a Classroom Circle

Principles

Classroom circles can be used at any point when tensions or problems have arisen, or when decisions need to be made. They provide a problem-solving forum that can be used to teach values such as honesty, accountability, responsibility, and compassion for others.

A classroom circle may also be used to respond to problem issues that arise in a class. Responsive circles allow for issues such as bullying, harassment, disruptive behavior, tardiness, not doing homework, theft, etc., to be addressed with the entire class. This is especially useful when a pattern of problem behavior has taken root in the network of classroom relationships. Through a responsive circle, all members of the classroom community are included in the process of change.

Community Building and Response to Harm: Two Circle Themes

Circles can address two types of objectives: community-building and responding to harm. Community-building creates an experience in which students have the opportunity to contact each other and experience being seen and heard. Responding to harm means having difficult dialogues that aim to repair the harm caused by wrongdoing.

Community-building circles provide opportunities for students to share thoughts and feelings and values, establish positive connections, and develop a mutual understanding on how students should treat each other. Activities are included in the initial round of every circle. Community circles focus on building and deepening connections among students. Participants gain valuable life skills and connectedness that contribute to improved interpersonal relationships. There is a physical and emotional connection process. Community-building circles can be used to support students in expressing emotions, discussing conflicts or other class issues.

Responsive Circles explore challenging circumstances and move toward making things right. Restorative questions are used to elicit essential content. The circle will be focused with these questions since the content of the circle will be relevant to the lives of the students. Restorative questions are also used to address conflict or when harm is done.

Stages in the Process

The first step is to place all chairs (or desks) in a physical circle. The chairs should be arranged so that everyone is able to see everyone else's face. Give students instructions for how to best move into the circle.

Once the students are properly seated, the teacher introduces the guidelines for the circle conversation and the talking object to the class. A talking object is selected to guide the conversation. Only the person holding the talking object may speak. Students are encouraged to pass the talking object respectfully from one person to the next. Demonstrate passing the talking object prior to initiating the circle.

In the second step, using externalizing language, the problem is named as a relational event. For example, the problem may be spoken about as “lateness to class” and referred to as “it”. This allows what is being said to stay consistent with, “The problem is the problem, the person is not the problem.”

Next, a round in the circle conversation can be facilitated which asks about the effects of “lateness to class” on all stakeholders (teachers should also speak to how they personally are affected, rather than commenting on the effects on the class). Through this round it is useful to highlight the unwanted effects. There may also be times when “lateness to class” was not present. The class may be asked about the difference on these occasions. It is worth asking too about these moments of exception. How would the class be described differently on those days?

In the fourth stage, the conversation is focused on what can be done to put things right as an alternative to punishment. If the class needs any reminders, they can look at the list of effects of the problem, for example “lateness to class”. Then they can be asked about what would reduce these effects.

Next, invite everyone to take up responsibility. Ask them, “What can you each do to change the situation in the class?” A list of possible next steps can be drawn up and discussed. It is important that the students’ ideas take prominence in this list and that teachers’ ideas take a backseat.

The last step is to discuss and summarize the emerging plan. The plan could be written up and displayed in the classroom for future reference. The plan should specify who will be held accountable for its completion. Plan to return to the circle and review the plan regularly.

The circle comes to an end with a short reflection or acknowledgement of the contributions made during the time in the circle.

A Checklist for Facilitating a Classroom Circle

Stage 1: The objectives of this stage are to properly introduce the circle to the participating members, and explain the purpose of the talking object. (The talking object is passed around in between 3 and 7 rounds during a circle conversation.

In our circle we will use a talking object.

Only the person who is holding the talking object may speak.

It is sometimes important to be silent when holding the talking object.

Pass the talking object respectfully from one person to the next.

Stage 2: Using externalizing language, the problem is named as a relational event .

What happened?

What might we call the problem?

Stage 3: Trace how the incident may have affected all stakeholders.

Who has been affected by the problem? In what way?

What do you think of this problem having all these effects?

Is that okay with you?

Stage 4: What can be done to put things right as an alternative to punishment.

Stage 5: Invite everyone to take up responsibility.

If this situation were to be put right, what would be needed?

What can you do to repair the harm that has been done?

What sorts of things can help us put these things into practice?

Step 6: Discuss and summarize the emerging plan. Specify who will be held accountable for its completion.

Step 7: End the conversation with a closing ritual.

Chapter 8

Responsive Circles

“Because of our class circles, students accepted more responsibility for their roles in both creating and solving the problems. It became much easier to encourage students to solve their problems themselves; in part because I gained more confidence that students had the skills to do so, but also in part because of how the project shifted the way I communicate with my students.”

--Fourth Grade Teacher
(Clifford, n.d., p. 1)

The Circle Process Focuses on

- Building and maintaining a positive classroom community.
- Enhancing positive and supportive connections with peers.
- Supporting conflict resolution and other types of communication.
- Developing appropriate ideas to make things right when harm has occurred.
- Learning how to communicate effectively in given situations by using restorative questions

(Clifford, n.d., p. 4).

Indicators of Restorative Practice

- Students feel safe and supported when using restorative practices to deal with conflict.
- Students work as a team to solve problems that are interfering with a constructive learning environment.
- There is a shift from individual to shared responsibility for behavior.
- Student's needs for social and emotional learning are reinforced.
- Conflicts are managed using restorative questions to reach a mutual acceptance of how to make things right (Clifford, n.d., p. 4).

Circle Dialogue and Circle Keeping

Circle processes provide a fundamentally different experience from sitting in rows, or meeting across a desk. When we sit in rows, the person standing in front becomes the person-in-charge, who has the answers. This is the person to whom the class is accountable. When we are meeting across a desk with someone who faces us, the authority and power belongs to that person. Restorative practices are intended to complement appropriate functions that can be effective, rather than replace them completely.

Circles open a stronger sense of community. Participants who sit in the circle share

responsibility for its function. Class members are given the opportunity to be accountable to each other. The whole group makes decisions. However, decisions can take unexpected forms and can come slowly.

The main purpose of circle dialogue is to strengthen a sense of community in a class. Another purpose is to effectively address challenging behavior and circumstances. These two objectives correspond to two different designs for types of circles: community building and responsive. Responsive circles respond to misbehavior and harm. In order for a responsive circle to work best in a classroom, a foundation has to have been laid through community-building circles.

Every Voice Is Heard: How to Use a Talking Piece

A talking piece is commonly used during a circle. It can be any object that is easily passed from one student to another. Feathers, river stones, seashells, animal figurines objects can make great talking pieces. Talking pieces can be created as a class project and over time added as a class names and solves a conflict that has occurred. For instance, a new bead, feather, or ribbon can be added by lacing it on to a string for each time the class meets in a circle.

The advantage of using talking pieces is that each and every student has an equal opportunity to speak and be heard. The talking piece reminds students to respect the student who is holding it and provide them with their full attention. In order to reinforce the importance of the talking piece, two or three students can be assigned to act as the “talking piece defenders.”

There are times when it makes sense not to use a talking piece and instead to simply call on students who raise their hands. If you do set the talking piece aside, call attention to the shift by stating, “I’m setting the talking piece aside for now.” The same signaling of a shift should take place when the talking piece is picked back up.

A Circle Keeper’s Toolkit

A Circle Kit is a basket with things that reflect distinctive styles of circle leadership. The toolkit is carried to all circles. The following are examples of what can be included in the kit:

- A small meditation bell
- 3-6 various talking pieces (sticks, stones, seashells, feathers, stuffed animals, toys)
- Fabrics with rich colors and/or textures that cover an area about 3' on each side
- Kalimba: An African musical instrument
- Stones
- A handmade bowl
- Animal Figurines

- Battery-powered LED candles
- Rattle: It can be used as a talking piece, or to signal if the circle needs to refocus.

Prompting Questions

The following questions are designed as sample focus questions for a community-building circle.

- How would your best friend describe you?
- What would you NOT want to change about your life? Why?
- If you could talk to someone from your family who is no longer alive, who it would be? What would you want to talk about?
- Who do you respect, and why?
- What change would you like to see in your community?
- What can you do to promote that change?
- What's a value that matters to you?
- When have you stood up for that value?
- Who would not be surprised that you stood up for a principle?
- What was a time when you were outside your comfort zone? What did you do, and what were the results?
- What difference did that make?
- What is it like for you when someone is angry at you?
- What happened at the time of the incident?
- Who has been affected by what happened and how?
- What were the effects of the incident on you and on others?
- What contributed to these effects?
- What have you thought about since?
- What about this has been hardest for you?
- What's at the heart of the matter?
- In your best self what would you like to see happen?
- What do you think needs to be done to make things as right as possible?

Characteristics of Prompting Questions

- Questions are relevant and meaningful to the lives of the students.
- Questions provide an opportunity to give a voice to implicit unspoken thoughts.
- Language used is simple and clear.
- Open-ended questions invite a deeper inquiry.
- Questions invite reflection on experience and action.
- Questions are about inquiry, not advocacy. Asking, "What makes relationships work out well?" makes room for discovery. It does not convey a teaching point.

- Prompts may be related to current events. Discussing current events in circles provides an opportunity to express emotional loads carried by students.
- Support re-storying. Re-storying opens new possibilities for how we see and experience each other.
- Ask about the difference that is produced by a question or a conversation.
- Ask follow-up questions and invite students to generate new questions themselves.

Instructions for Establishing Trust

1. Speak from the heart. This means speaking for yourself and communicating what is important and true based on your own experiences.
 2. Listen from the heart. When listening from the heart try to set aside any judgment and assumptions about others. We sometimes make assumptions about others without even knowing anything about the other person. Assumptions prevent us from really hearing what others have to say. Listening from the heart means setting aside stories we hold about the person. It opens the possibility of making new connections others.
 3. No need to rehearse. Be spontaneous. Don't mentally rehearse what to say while waiting for your turn to speak. Your full attention should be focused on the person speaking.
 4. Without feeling rushed, say just enough. Sometimes saying less is enough. Express yourself with fewer words. When you do your words may have more impact.
- (Clifford, n.d., p.12).

Sequence of Events in a Responsive Circle

The sequence of events is important in a circle. A circle pattern establishes consistency on what to expect and what will follow in the circle process.

Prior to initiating the circle, it is important to check in with yourself. Assess your energy level, emotional state, physical condition, and anything else that may interfere your ability to facilitate a circle. The objective is to become aware of your condition. Awareness can be a powerful in circle keeping.

Once the students are seated in a circle, use a ceremony to initiate each circle. The ceremony transitions from regular classroom instruction into a special time of circle. At this time, items are placed in the center of the circle to give it focus.

The next step is to remind the class of the guidelines of the circle. The guidelines may be written on the board or on a poster. Ask the students to recall the guidelines to help function the circle well.

Circle guidelines include the following:

1. Respect the talking piece
 - o Give those who hold the talking piece your full attention
 - o Speak to the center of the circle
 - o The talking piece should be handled respectfully
 - o Speak from the heart
2. Speak your perspectives, needs, experiences
 - o Trust what comes from the heart
 - o Listen from the heart
3. Say just enough
4. There is no need to rehearse

Circle agreements should be established when a circle is formed and recalled in subsequent meetings of the circle. The purpose of these agreements is to protect the integrity of the circle and ensure a safe place to speak. The agreement is not written in advance by a teacher but worded by the group. In other words, authority should not impose an agreement, otherwise it is not an agreement. Differences need to be negotiated so that consensus is reached. Additional items can be added to an agreement over time. The agreement may, for example, address issues such as confidentiality, privacy, gossip, and so on. The circle keeper needs to take responsibility for ensuring that the class has established agreements, and should listen out for new items that need to be added later .

Begin every circle with a check-in round. Use the talking piece for the check-in round, and invite students to respond to a question. This question should be designed to allow for building connections, strengthening mutual understanding, and voicing what matters to students. The questions asked in the check-in round should be “low-risk” questions that are not too personal and help ease the class into a conversation. At the same time, a useful check-in question should be meaningful to students and their lives. For example, a check-in question that could be asked after students have returned from a holiday might be, “What was memorable on your holiday?”

After a check-in, the circle can move to the addressing of “live” issues that need to be responded to. A restorative conversation process should be used to assist students to respond to a . The process begins by firstly naming the problem. The problem is clearly identified and named but multiple names are allowed in order to respect multiple perspectives. It works best when the students name the problem. The circle process is then shifts into mapping the affects of the challenging circumstance. During this process, restorative dialogue is required to shift the participants from thinking in terms of, “Who is wrong and how should they be punished?” to “Who is affected by what happened, how, and what do they need?”

Key questions to ask:

- Who is affected?
- How are they affected?
- What actions can make things right without reliance on punishment?
- What can we all do to help make this happen?

Prior to closing the circle, ask students to comment on their experience of the circle conversation. One way to do this is to ask students to share two words about the circle. As the talking piece goes around you will likely hear a range of comments. Some students may say that the circle was “boring” or “pointless.” If so, you can hold a further circle to discuss and explore why.

Lastly, the circle should be closed in a ritual, and sometimes, theatrical format. A circle may close by ringing a bell or making a small gesture that serves as a signal to move the class back to ordinary class time.

Chapter 9

How to Handle Apologies

Apologies are important to restore reputations and embrace preferred identities. It is common for people to anticipate an apology when people get hurt, humiliated, or embarrassed. An apology brings hope to put those bad feelings towards the other person aside and move on. Apologies and forgiveness promises freedom from a life constrained by growing fear, hatred, and resentment.

In conflict, people assume that an apology ends the conflict story. Apology from a narrative perspective is an event in a story. An apology is understood as the initiation of a new storyline. Rather than assuming a position of ending something, it can be a beginning of something. An apology or a gesture of forgiveness is thought as the possibility of a counter story rather than a conclusion of a conflict story. Questions are asked during this stage to further elaborate on the story of peace.

Questions to ask the offender:

- In the spirit of that apology, what do you plan to do differently?
- What was it about your relationship in the past that prompted you to believe it might be worthwhile taking this initiative today?
- Who else needs to be involved in this new story you are creating and how might they be invited to join it?

Questions to ask the victim:

- Is there any damage that has been done by the conflict that still needs addressing?
- What might you need to happen before you could be satisfied that his apology was genuine?
- How might you both build on that apology so that it could never be looked back on as empty words?

In order to re-establish trust, an apology needs to be connected with other plot events that support a narrative of trust. Actions speak louder than words. Words of apology need to be followed with actions. Words of the apology build trust when they are followed with actions (Monk & Winslade, 2013).

Among teenagers, the term apology is also used to signify the end of a conflict. An apology is more meaningful when the student on his or her own initiates the desire to make an apology. Students can be asked whether they are ready to set things right and offer an apology. An apology may not be appropriate for all, however. For fear of

appearing to blame, an acknowledgement that they have done something offensive may be as far as a person is prepared to go. Such acknowledgements should also be accepted and treated as the start of a new story. Such a gesture is a unique outcome in the context of a conflict story.

Including the student's parents reinforces the work of problem solving and conflict resolution as well as the task of reconstructing relationships. An audience of significant people increases the likelihood that an apology will hold its meaning and it will continue to be performed.

Chapter 10

Conclusion

Our hope is that by now readers of this manual have gathered a sense of the spirit of restorative practices in schools. The central idea is that problem actions should be addressed in a way that maximizes the potential for learning, rather than punished in a way that often produces unwanted side effects and leaves learning largely to chance.

Restorative practice attends also to the relational context of problematic action. It starts from the assumption that people, not just abstract authority, are affected by the actions of others. Neither is it sufficient to say that the rules have been infringed. To fully address a problem means paying attention to the needs and concerns of those who have been on the receiving end. By itself, punishment seldom leaves them with little of value for themselves. Restorative practices seek to repair, as much as is possible, whatever damage has been done.

Those who have been affected by wrongdoing, directly or indirectly, often crave a chance to be heard and recognized for what they have suffered. A restorative practice is one that opens a space for the voice of those who have been affected to be heard. At their best, those affected are also often interested in setting things to rights with the offender. They deserve to be given a chance to do this.

Whose responsibility is it to make amends and to set things right? Clearly the actions of an offender produce a sense of relational obligation to play a significant part in putting right what he or she has damaged. But the offender is less likely to achieve this if he or she is isolated. Restorative practices, therefore, are concerned also to wrap the offender in a blanket of care to give him or her the support needed to address what was wrong and to shape a new direction.

To establish a community of care, others besides the offender also have to be willing to take up their share of responsibility. This means involving teachers, parents, family members and peer group members in the process of addressing problems, not leaving it all up to the offender, or indeed to the victim. Doing so actually builds up stronger individuals than leaving it all to the individual ever does. If anyone doubts this he or she should look at the data. It clearly shows that an individualistic punishment system results in repeated punishments (usually suspension) for the same or similar offenses. By contrast the data on restorative practices clearly shows fewer suspensions, because there are more adequate responses to offending behavior and more learning that takes place.

Does this mean that restorative practices are always successful? No. Are they an answer to every situation? No. Are there any guarantees for success for each of the processes outlined in this booklet? No, of course not, but that is also true for any other process you can think of. Punishment systems clearly often fail repeatedly, if we look

squarely at the results they show. What can be said is that the research data is very promising for these approaches producing positive results.

These results are not achieved without effort, however. Restorative practices do take a bit of time. But the time invested in addressing a problem often leads to saving time spent on recycling the same problem later.

Some people complain that restorative practices are a soft option. We would contend that the opposite is true. It often takes more courage to face up to and listen to someone you have hurt than it does to accept a punishment. To then take action to make amends for what you have done is not easy. It requires some humility and willingness to change. The psychological demands of doing so often go well beyond those of punishment.

Moreover, we need to think about the purpose of schooling. It is not just about producing persons who can do math problems and write clearly. It is about producing citizens who can take their place in a democratic society. Democracy requires something more than voting in elections. It involves people having a say in constructing the conditions of their own lives. Restorative practices teach students how to do this through placing them into a context that requires their participation. Like any other tool, these ones can be turned into weapons and used to hurt students. We do not dispute that. But such usage amounts to a misuse of their intended purpose.

In this manual, we have tried to map out a range of practices and shown how they can be used. We hope that these are useful. We do not, however, claim to have the last word on restorative practices. If you have caught on to the general principles here we would encourage you to apply them to other processes and invent your own new practices on the basis of the same principles.

We wish you well in your efforts to implement these ideas. And we look forward to learning about what you do with them.

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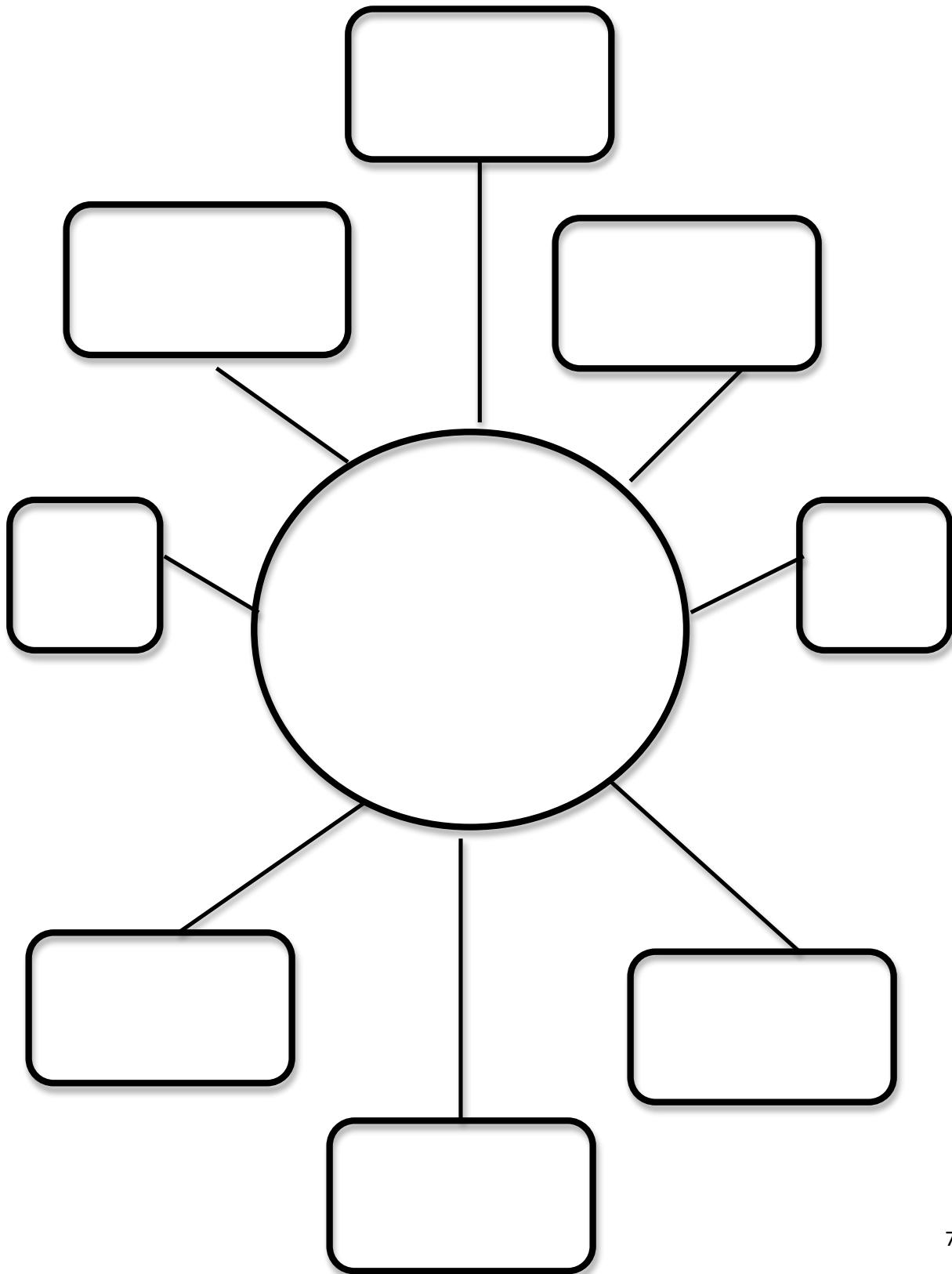
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Appendices

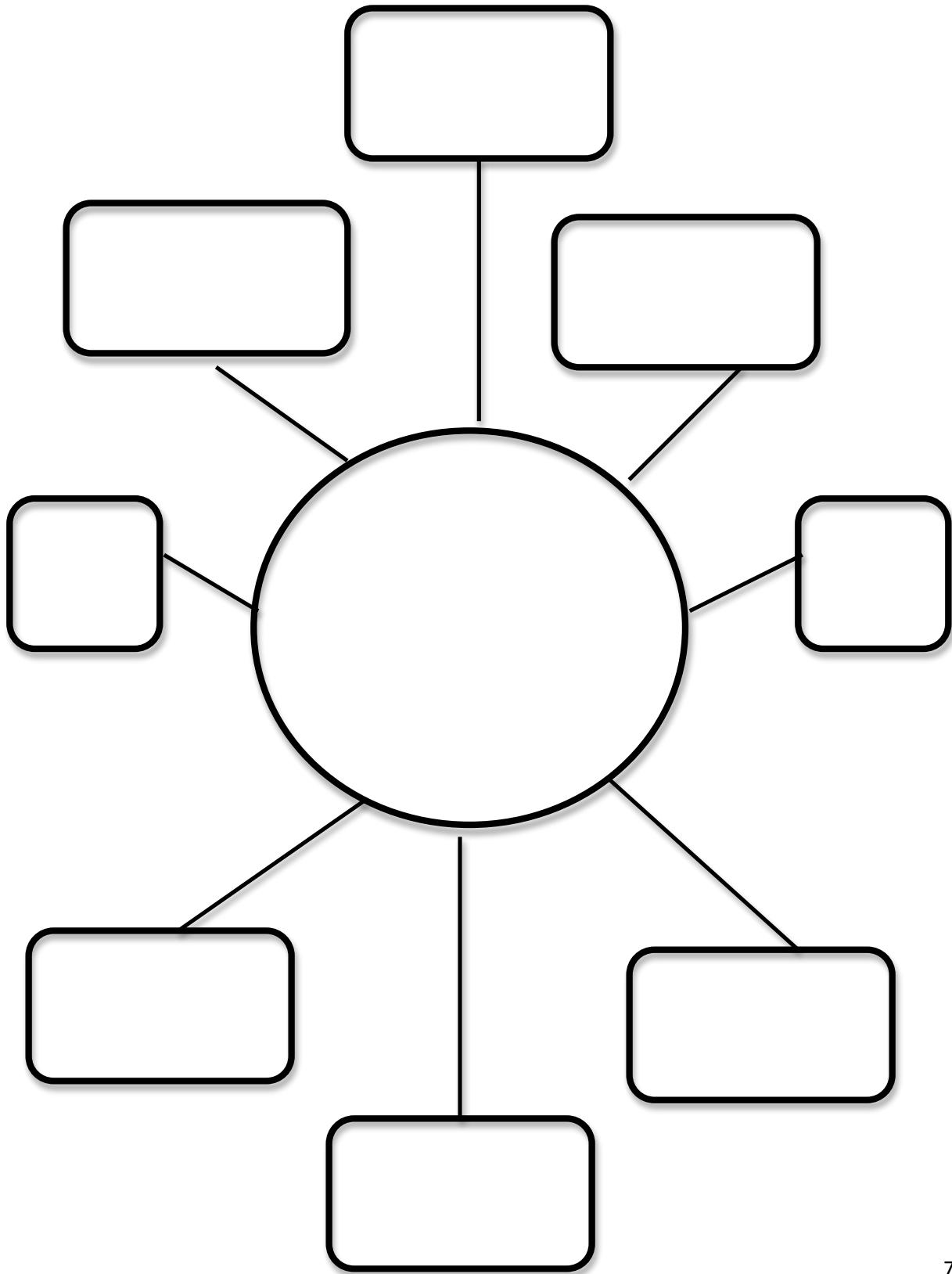
Appendix A: Mapping the effects of the problem

In this phase we do the center first, then the spokes.



Appendix B Mapping a Counter Story

In this phase we do the spokes first, then the center.



Appendix C

A Restorative Conference Plan

Today's Date:
Name of the student being supported:
Name of other students involved in incident: 1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
Facilitator:
Support staff:
Community panel members: Name: _____ Role: _____
Brief outline of incident/concern (When, where, and what happened): _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
Who needs to be notified about specific conference arrangements: _____ _____ _____
Consequences for failure to accomplish desired actions:

Monitoring Plan: Follow-up date: Reviewer's Name:	
Additional comments:	
Signatures: I agree to all the terms above and I intend to fulfill any obligations for which I am responsible.	
Signature of Person who did the harm: /	
Signature of Conference Facilitator: /	
Signature of Other Participants: /	

Appendix D

A Restorative Conversation Plan

Todays' Date:
Name of the student being supported:
Name of other students involved in incident:
Name of those in attendance in the meeting:
Brief outline of incident/concern (Where, when, and what happened):
How the harm will be repaired: Agreements reached at the meeting: Team members participating: When:
Monitoring Plan: Follow-up date: Reviewer's Name:
Additional Comments:
Next Review Meeting Date:

Revisions:

Signatures:

I agree to all the terms above and I intend to fulfill any obligations for which I am responsible.

Signature of Person who did the harm:

/

Signature of Conference Facilitator:

Appendix E

Anti-Bullying Undercover Bullying Team Form

UNDERCOVER TEAM MEETING FORM	TEAM NUMBER:	
Name of student to be supported:		
Date of incident / concern:		
Tutor Group	Core Group	Year Level:
Brief outline of incident / concern (where, when and what happened):		
Physical assault		
Threat of assault		
Mocking/teasing		
Spreading rumors		
Theft		
Property destroyed		
Cyber bullying		
Exclusion from friendship		
Picking on personal difference		
Personal rejection		

	Other	
Have you been made to feel different? How?	About:	
	Your race	
	Your culture	
	Your religion	
	Your accent	
	Your disability	
	Your body	
	Your clothing	
	Your sexuality, eg gay	
	Your intelligence	
	Other	
What effect did the incident have? Feelings? Thoughts?		
	I don't belong	
	Nobody wants me	
	I am different	
	Rejected	
	Punished	
	Scared	
	Alone	
	Angry	

	Ashamed		
	Powerless		
	Going crazy		
	Depressed		
	Less confident		
	More aggressive		
	Other		
How has the bullying affected your school work?	Often	Sometimes	Never
I don't let it distract me			
I can't concentrate in class			
I am getting behind in class			
It doesn't stop me learning			
I stopped doing my homework			
I still do all my homework			
I don't want to try			
I can't learn			
Other			
What has the bullying got you to do or contemplate doing?			
	Cry		
	Say something back		
	Yell at them		
	Hit someone		

	Talk to a teacher	
	Talk to my parents	
	Bully someone else	
	Hurt myself	
	Get in trouble with a teacher	
	Change schools	
	Skip class	
	Stay home from school	
	Run away from home	
	Other	

Ideally, how would you like things to be?

Names of six classmates:

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

UNDERCOVER TEAM TO COMPLETE

Agreements reached at meeting:	Team members participating:
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

MONITORING What has happened?

	Bullying continues	
	Bullying has reduced	
	Bullying has stopped	
	Team intervened to stop bullying	
	Team members are friendly	
	Attitudes toward victim are different	

	Attitudes of victim are different	
	Victim still provoking	
	Victim is happier	
	Victim attends class more	
	Victim is talking more	
	Victim needs more support	
	Class atmosphere improved	
	Class atmosphere the same	
	Teachers have noticed difference	
	Parents have noticed difference	
	What still needs to happen is ...	
	Other	

What have we learned? About those who are different? About namecalling or bullying? About relationships?

Appendix F

How to facilitate a classroom conference

Todays' Date:	
Class Period:	
Name of those in attendance in the meeting:	
Brief outline of incident/concern (Where, when, and what happened): 	
In what way you would like the class to be known in future?	
What ideas do you have about how to make this more likely?"	
Agreements reached:	Team member accountable:

Emerging Plan:
Next Review Date:
Revisions:

