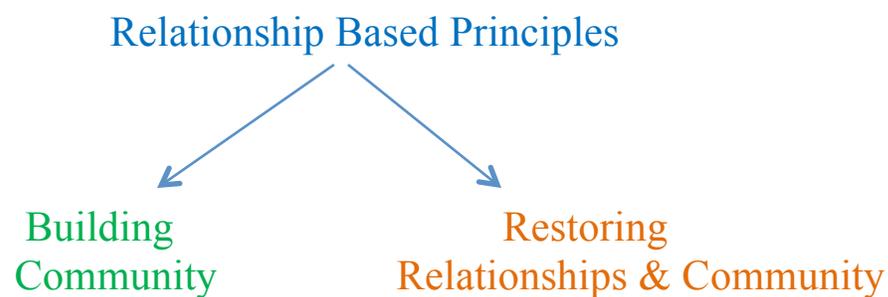


San Francisco Unified School District

Restorative Practices: Definition

Restorative Practices are based on principles and processes that emphasize the importance of positive relationships as central to building community and repairing relationships when harm has occurred.



Restorative Practices: A Movement

RP is a movement grounded in principles designed to create powerful relationships, which are central to building thriving communities and represents a paradigm shift that focuses on the harm done, rather than on the rule broken, in the restoration of relationships. RP is a reflective practice that encourages personal responsibility, giving a voice both to the person harmed as well as the person who caused the harm and aids in the acceptance of cultural differences by offering an equitable process where all members of a community feel valued and heard, and in turn, are more likely to bring their best self to the community.

Restorative Practices in SFUSD

Restorative Practices, when broadly and consistently implemented, will promote and strengthen positive school culture and enhance pro-social relationships within the school community.

Restorative practices allow for a shift in practice that results in a culture which is inclusive, builds fair process into decision-making practices, and facilitates students learning to address the impact of their actions through an approach that allows for true accountability, skill building, cooperation, and mutual understanding.

Through restorative practices, members of the school community will:

1. have an opportunity to be heard
2. understand the greater impact of one's actions
3. learn to take responsibility
4. repair the harm one's actions may have caused
5. recognize one's role in maintaining a safe school environment
6. build upon and expand on personal relationships in the school community
7. recognize one's role as a positive contributing member of the school community.

Ultimately, people will learn to make positive, productive, and effective choices in response to situations they may encounter in the future after engaging in a restorative practice.

The underlying premise of restorative practices is that people are happier, more cooperative, more productive and more likely to make positive changes when those in positions of authority do things **with** them rather than **to** them or **for** them.

A Response to, and Prevention of Harm

In schools, Restorative Practice/Approaches are multifaceted in nature. Restorative practices include interventions when harm has happened, as well as practices that help to prevent harm and conflict by helping to build a sense of belonging, safety, and social responsibility in the school community.

Benefits of Restorative Approaches in the School Setting

- * A safer, more caring environment.
- * A more effective teaching and learning environment.
- * A greater commitment by everyone to taking the time to listen to one another.
- * A reduction in bullying and other interpersonal conflicts.
- * A greater awareness of the importance of connectedness to young people. The need to belong and feel valued by peers and significant adults.
- * Greater emphasis on responses to inappropriate behavior that seek to reconnect, and not further disconnect young people.
- * Reductions in fixed term and permanent suspensions and expulsions.
- * A greater confidence in the staff team to deal with challenging situations.

At the core, restorative practices is about building and restoring relationships.

Community

Creating a Sense of Belonging and Value in a Group

Components of Community formation:

Gibbs J. (2001), *Discovering Gifts in Middle School: Tribes*, CA CenterSource Systems p. 74

1. **Capacity:** Communities are built upon recognizing the whole depth, the strengths, weaknesses, and the unique capacities of each member.
2. **Collective Effort:** Communities share responsibility to achieve goals for the common good, and to engage the diversity of individual talents and skills.
3. **Informality:** Interactions are based on consideration; care and affection take place spontaneously.
4. **Stories:** Reflection upon individual and community experiences provides knowledge about truth, relationships and further direction.

“To build a sense of community is to create a group that extends to others the respect one has for oneself, to come to know one another as individual, to respond and care about one another, to feel a sense of membership and accountability to the group.”

Thomas Likona, author on moral development and education



SFUSD Restorative Principles

The following principles reflect the values and concepts for implementing restorative practices in the school setting. Under each principle are some of its important implications.

Restorative Practices:

1. Acknowledges that relationships are central to building community.

- Considerable effort and time is spent on building and sustaining positive, trusting relationships among ALL members of the school community.
- Every student, teacher, administrator, staff member, and parent/guardian is a valued member of the school community.
- All members of the school community are involved in a process of naming the values and principles to live by within their school community.

2. Ensures equity of voice among all members of the community. All voices are valued, everyone is heard.

- Systems and structures are established to ensure that all members of the school community have equal opportunities for meaningful participation.
- A culture of non-judgmental, authentic listening and sharing is encouraged and reinforced.
- Inclusive decision making practices are utilized to ensure that those impacted by decisions have a voice in the process by providing opportunities for input. Once decisions are made the reason for the decision and new expectations are clearly communicated.
- Negotiation and cooperation are key components towards building a collaborative classroom and school environment.

3. Establishes a culture of high expectations with high support, emphasizing doing things "WITH" not "TO" or "FOR".

- Supports high standards and expectations for both learning and behavior in the school and classroom community, AND offers high levels of support to create positive change = Doing "WITH".

4. Builds systems that address misbehavior and harm in a way that strengthens relationships and focuses on the harm done rather than only rule-breaking.

- Schools establish policies to provide a safe place for learning. Real safety however comes from fostering and maintaining caring relationships.
- Misbehavior is recognized as an offense against people and relationships, not just rule-breaking.
- Policies need to address the root causes of discipline concerns rather than only the symptoms. The causes of misbehavior may be multiple and should be addressed by all members of the school community equally asserting high levels of expectation within a supportive environment.

- The person/s harmed is the center of the primary relationship that needs to be addressed. Secondary relationships that may have been impacted might include other students, teachers, parents, the administration, and the surrounding community.

5. Engages in collaborative problem solving.

- There is a shared responsibility and participation among all members of the school community to contribute to the sustainability of positive relationships by working together to identify potential problems and determine solutions.
- Misbehavior can become a teachable moment and the community/relationships can be restored when all those impacted/harmed by an incident are involved in a collaborative process of determining unmet needs and solutions to make things as right as possible.
- Recognizes all of us act to satisfy our human needs (ex. belonging, freedom, power, and fun). Behaviors are chosen to meet these underlying needs.

6. Enhances accountability, responsibility and empowers change and growth for all members of the community.

- All members of the school community are responsible for contributing to the establishment and sustaining of a positive school culture by taking personal responsibility to follow through and hold one another accountable to the collective values and principles that define the community.
- Conflict presents opportunity for change if the process includes careful listening, reflecting, shared problem-solving, and trust.
- High accountability occurs when systems and structures are in place that allow for one to take responsibility for their actions by providing them the opportunity to learn and understand the impact of their actions, determine how to make things as right as possible, AND follow through with the plan.
- Consequences as part of the restorative process should be evaluated based on whether they are reasonable, related to the offense, and respectful.
- Some students choose to resist participation in a process that will allow for change and may need adults to support and guide them in decision-making concerning their accountability.

Restorative Discipline

You are working toward restorative discipline in schools when you....

1. Focus primarily on relationships and secondarily on rules.

- Does the proposed response go beyond focusing solely on policy violations? Is equal concern also being given to harm experienced by individuals and the community?
- What steps are being implemented to ensure the safety of the individuals involved while information is being gathered?
- Have support people (e.g. an advocate, mentor, or other person deemed appropriate given the circumstances) been identified, approved by, and provided for each person involved?
- Are needed resources available for all persons involved, i.e. transportation, childcare, an interpreter, accessibility?
- Has the issue of whether or not to maintain confidentiality within the process and the findings been addressed?
- How will information be shared more broadly if necessary?
Are there mandated reporting issues?

2. Give voice to the person(s) harmed?

- Does the response address the needs of the person harmed, both the immediate victim as well as others who may be affected?
- Does the response allow an opportunity for those harmed to be part of the resolution?
- Has the person harmed been asked what s/he needs?
- Has the person harmed been asked what a just process would look like?

3. Give voice to the person(s) who caused the harm.

- Has the person who harmed been asked what s/he needs?
- Does the response address the needs of the person who did the harm?
- Does it allow an opportunity for those who harmed to be part of the resolution?
- Has the person who harmed been asked what s/he can give/offer?
- Has the person who harmed been asked what a just process would look like?

4. Engage in collaborative problem-solving.

- Are the solutions being arrived at collaboratively, meaning that all those affected by the harm/incident are fully involved?
- Are all participants represented at the decision-making table?
- Are all decisions reached collaboratively, with assurance that all voices are heard?
- Given the imbalances that often exist between person and institutions, have these been recognized, acknowledged, discussed, and addressed?

5. Enhance Responsibility.

- Does the response help the person take responsibility for the harm caused, or does it focus primarily on punishment.
- Does the person who caused the harm understand how his/her actions have affected other people? If not, is there a plan in place that includes steps to assist the person in a process of understanding (which may include education on a particular issue, counseling, or training)?
- Is there acknowledgment that some persons choose to resist change and need others to assist in making decisions regarding their accountability? The consequences in that case may need to be made or suggested by others involved in decision-making.

6. Empower Change and Growth.

- Does the response allow the person who harmed to be involved in the process of repair with a concern toward that individual's growth and competency?
- Has the individual acknowledged responsibility for the harm of his/her actions? If not, what steps should be taken to address ways of meeting and supporting that person's need for growth?

7. Plan for Restoration.

- Does the response allow for the person who harmed, as well as the person harmed, to be supported and reintegrated back into the community?
- Has the issue of accountability been appropriately addressed to the satisfaction of the person harmed?
- Has a process been developed that ensures ongoing accountability if an agreement for next steps is reached?
- Is there recognition that one possible solution is a "parting of ways" (or setting procedures to avoid interaction), in an effort to give primary consideration to the needs of the person harmed?