



FOUNDATIONS OF RESTORATIVE PRACTICE



WHAT IS RESTORATIVE PRACTICE?

Restorative Practice is a way of thinking and being that **cultivates community**, supporting **well-being and achievement**. Restorative Practice fosters the conditions that promote a positive sense of *self, spirit and belonging*. Restorative Practice provides a framework to **maintain** community when challenges and conflicts arise and to **restore** community when needed.

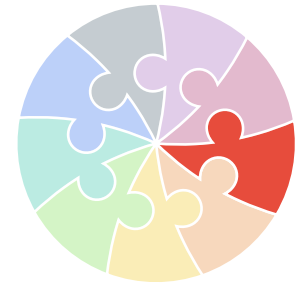
FOUNDATIONS OF RESTORATIVE PRACTICE

There are nine interconnected elements upon which Restorative Practice is based. These elements provide the foundation to cultivate caring and healthy communities.



FOUNDATIONS OF RESTORATIVE PRACTICE





Healthy Relationships

As described in the Ontario Health and Physical Education Curriculum (2015) “healthy relationships are based on respect, caring, empathy, trust, and dignity, and thrive in an environment in which diversity is honoured and accepted.” To feel valued, connected and included within a social environment, healthy relationships need to be built and maintained among students, parents/guardians, staff and other members of the school community.

The Restorative Practice Continuum provides a variety of approaches that range from less formal to more formal (e.g., affective communication, circles and formal conferencing) that support well-being by building, strengthening, responding to, repairing and restoring relationships.

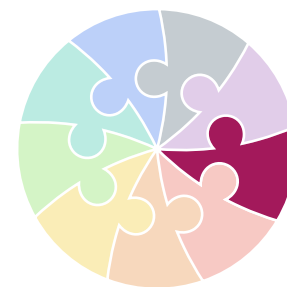


The need to belong is a deeply embedded human trait. “There is an increasing body of research showing that students who feel connected to school – to teachers, to other students, and to the school itself – do better academically.”

(Realizing the Promise of Diversity: Ontario’s Equity and Inclusive Education Strategy , 2009).

Restorative Practice is built upon the notion that all are included, valued and respected and that all belong. Restorative Practice supports equity by promoting the fair, inclusive treatment of all people, while recognizing individual differences. The less formal and more formal approaches of the Restorative Practice Continuum seek to create connections between individuals, build and maintain relationships, and restore relationships when harm has occurred. Restorative Practice helps cultivate community and foster a positive climate.

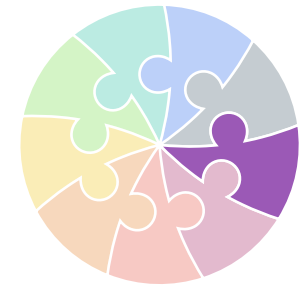
Restorative Practice considers the individual need to belong as well as the relationship between the individual and the group. This interdependence requires the contribution of all community members in order for the community to reach its full potential.



Belonging & Interdependence



Learning involves the development of knowledge, skills and characteristics that lead to personal success, economic productivity and active and engaged citizenship (*Achieving Excellence: A Renewed Vision for Education in Ontario, 2014*). Growing evidence has demonstrated that “students cannot achieve academically if they don’t feel safe or welcomed at school, if their mental health is at risk and if they don’t have the tools or motivation to adopt a healthy, active lifestyle outside of school” (*Ontario’s Well-Being Strategy for Education: Discussion Document, 2016*).



Learning

A restorative approach supports learning by fostering a healthy, safe and caring environment that promotes well-being, including positive cognitive, emotional, social and physical development (*Foundations for a Healthy School, 2014*). A restorative learning environment is learner-focussed, stressing collaboration and community. Using a restorative approach when things go wrong helps those involved to learn from the experience and work toward restoring relationships.

Restorative Practice supports the development of knowledge and skills across subject areas and builds competencies that foster social and emotional learning, such as self-management, self-awareness, responsible decision-making, relationship skills and social awareness (CASEL, 2015).





Fair Process

Restorative Practice embodies fair process, recognising that all people want to feel respected and valued. Kim & Mauborgne (1997) identified three principles of fair process:

Engagement – involving individuals in matters that affect them by listening to their views and genuinely taking their ideas and perspectives into account;

Explanation – ensuring that people understand the why (i.e., purpose, rationale);

Expectation Clarity – making sure that everyone clearly understands what is expected of them and of others.



Fair process helps to build trust, commitment and cooperation.

Restorative Practice is anchored in the belief that “people are happier, more cooperative and productive, and more likely to make positive changes in behavior when those in authority do things *with* them, rather than to them or for them” (IIRP, 2017).



Restorative Practice combines both high structure (e.g., fair process, effective procedures, high academic, social and behavioural expectations) and high support (e.g., caring, encouraging, nurturing), creating conditions for success.

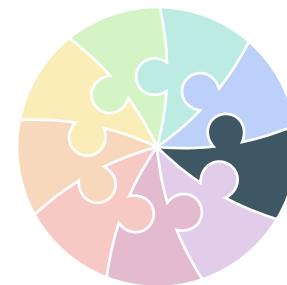
High structure and high support are evident throughout the Restorative Practice Continuum. Less formal approaches, such as affective communication and restorative questions, are structured in a manner that provide members of the community a means to express needs, feelings and emotions. The structured format of circle helps to create the conditions for a welcoming, equitable, inclusive and safe environment for all. The scripted process of formal conferencing, when things go wrong is structured to focus on the behaviour, how people have been affected, and how to make things right, through respectful dialogue. Formal conferencing allows for support for participants by encouraging community and individual supporters.

Restorative Practice supports bias-free progressive discipline by working **with** people to help build, maintain, repair, and restore relationships, by providing both structure and support.



Structure & Support

Restorative Practice promotes ownership by fostering an environment in which people feel connected, engaged and meaningfully involved. In a restorative community, people are invested and have an individual and collective responsibility to contribute to the success and well-being of all. Restorative Practice promotes voice, collaboration and accountability whereby people work with others to address individual and group needs.



Ownership



Empathy is “the ability to understand and relate to the feelings, situations and motives of others” (CAMH, 2007). Restorative Practice encourages people to put themselves in the ‘shoes’ of others, as well as to consider the impact of words and actions on others. Restorative Practice helps to develop empathy and encourage perspective-taking by providing the structure and support for people to hear and experience the story, needs, and perspectives of others and to differentiate from one’s own experience.



Empathy and Perspective-Taking

Voice aims to promote engagement and active participation to support healthy relationships and foster learning.

In a restorative community, all members have the opportunity to 'have their say' by sharing their thoughts, ideas and feelings, and to be heard, in a welcoming, equitable, inclusive and safe environment. Participants are asked to listen to and learn from the other members of the community. Restorative Practice has a key role to play in promoting voice by providing the structure and support to foster an environment in which individual and community needs are met.



Voice



Growing evidence has demonstrated that “students cannot achieve academically if they don’t feel safe or welcomed at school [...]” (*Ontario’s Well-Being Strategy for Education: Discussion Document, 2016*).

Restorative Practice promotes a positive school climate by fostering learning environments that are safe, inclusive and accepting. Restorative Practice helps to create the conditions whereby everyone can feel seen, heard, valued and respected, and where diversity is celebrated.

When harm has occurred, Restorative Practice can help to restore a sense of security to those who have been impacted.



Safety



To learn more about
RESTORATIVE PRACTICE
in your school board and school, please contact:



This publication was created by the Restorative Practice Consortium, with funding from the Province of Ontario, Ministry of Education.