

Restorative Practices Support Document for Nevada
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History and Summary

The earliest applications of Restorative Justice (RJ) in the United States were in the criminal and juvenile justice systems. The evidence of RJ's effectiveness within the justice system (e.g., Sherman & Strang, 2007) has led for a call to implement RJ interventions on a broader scale, particularly for low-level crimes that are nonviolent, and for juveniles.

Restorative Practices, as they are typically called in a school or community setting, include many specific program types and do not have one specific definition in the literature; they are broadly seen as a nonpunitive approach to handling conflict (Fronius et al., 2016). Restorative practices both prevent harm through relationship-building and respond to conflict in ways that repair damaged relationships (González, 2012). Restorative Practices (RP) are not a quick fix to student behaviors or disciplinary issues, but rather a school culture focused on relationships and high levels of support to create long-term impact.

Key Principles of Restorative Practices

The **fundamental hypothesis** of RP is that 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. Adults know this from their own experiences, and it holds just as true for students. The **aim** of RP is to develop community and to manage conflict and tensions by repairing harm and restoring relationships. Relationships can only be restored if they are there to begin with; this is why building relationships is the foundational work that needs to happen in schools.

- 1) A school is a **COMMUNITY**. Relationships are the heart of school communities, and we must work diligently to build, strengthen, and restore these relationships. We cannot “restore” a peaceful community when the peace was not built in the first place.
- 2) Students need **SOCIAL & EMOTIONAL LEARNING** to succeed in school, college, career, and life. Our schools and our disciplinary systems must intentionally teach students self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision making.
- 3) **ACCOUNTABILITY** is achieved when someone understands the impact of his/her actions, takes responsibility for choices, and works to repair harm done. Adults help students hold themselves accountable by both setting high expectations and providing high levels of support.
- 4) When someone does something that harms a community, the goal of an effective response is to **HEAL AND REPAIR HARM**. In order to do so, it is essential to identify

the needs of all parties involved and provide them with opportunities to voice those needs.

- 5) Restorative Practices require RESTORATIVE SYSTEMS AND MINDSETS. We must align our school policies, procedures, and culture to a restorative philosophy that values every member of the community.

Empirical Evidence

“The research on restorative practices in schools is still at the infancy stage, but several exploratory studies have indicated promising results of RJ approaches in terms of their impact on school climate, student behavior, and relationships between students and with staff, among other outcomes” (Ashley & Burke, 2009). Despite the nascent state of the empirical literature, there are countless reports, articles, and case studies that provide context on RJ practices in U.S. schools. The research that has been published lacks the internal validity necessary to exclusively attribute outcomes to RJ. “Schools that decide to implement RJ face a number of challenges in development, implementation, and sustainability. Researchers suggest that schools that integrate RJ into their overall philosophy are perhaps better suited to establish a program that works and lasts” (Ashley & Burke, 2009 as cited by Fronius et al., 2016).

The overarching concern is that replicability and evaluation are still emerging with respect to school-wide implementation of RP. While some schools have begun to integrate RP into MTSS frameworks, such as PBIS, it is important to note that larger scale replication and evaluation has not been reported within the literature (Swain-Bradway & Maggin, 2015). When considering the integration of RP, schools should first identify the need, data that supports that need, and valued outcomes to monitor progress over time. What follows is a conceptual review of how RP could be integrated into the MTSS framework.

MTSS Alignment

While Restorative Practices may be used informally by individuals, best practice suggests that a school-wide approach to Restorative Practices should be implemented intentionally and systematically to create culture change and ensure success. Restorative Practices can easily be imbedded into a Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework. In fact, if you are already implementing Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS), integrating RP is a light lift. School-wide Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) is a large-scale example of MTSS that focuses on teaching as prevention. MTSS provides the backbone for data, systems and practices across a hierarchy of supports for all students.

Tier 1 focuses on prevention of problem behavior by emphasizing universal supports. The critical features of Tier 1 include establishing school-wide expectations that are taught and encouraged, developing systems that discourage inappropriate behavior (i.e., discipline flowchart), and using data to evaluate effectiveness. Tier 2 is designed to prevent the development and escalation of problem behaviors for students who are identified as being at risk for developing chronic behavior problems. It involves specialized group interventions to supplement the Tier 1 supports. Tier 2 interventions focus on targeted and explicit instruction of skills, structured prompts for appropriate behavior, opportunities to practice new skills in the

natural setting, and frequent feedback. Tier 3 is designed to reduce the intensity, frequency, and/or complexity of problem behaviors by providing individualized behavior supports. Tier 3 interventions are utilized for students that demonstrate the highest need, based on lack of responsiveness to Tier 1 and 2 supports. These interventions are evidence-based, informed by a functional behavior assessment, and person-centered. Interventions may include instruction of a replacement skill for problem behaviors, rearranging the environment to prevent problem behaviors and encourage desirable behaviors, procedures for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the intervention, and emergency procedures when necessary to ensure safety.

The commonly used Social Discipline Window (See Figure 1), suggests that schools that have both high control and support, which function in the with quadrant signifying a more restorative approach. Since there is not a more comprehensive description of what constitutes high control and support, it leaves it to be assumed that schools have these foundations already established. However, when implementing MTSS, high control can be achieved through the development of systemic features to support both staff and students. The development of a universal Tier 1 foundation provides an example of control and support. For example, schools that define and teach behavioral expectations (i.e., aligns with the limit setting in the social discipline window) school-wide, develop acknowledgement systems to recognize students for engaging in prosocial behaviors (i.e., aligns with the encouragement and support in the social discipline window), and development of a set of standard protocols for responding to unhelpful behaviors, each set the conditions for safe and predictable environments (Refer to continuum of PBIS practices in Figure 2).

When integrating RP into MTSS, other important systems components include:

- 1) Gaining commitment by establishing administrative support and introduce Restorative Practices core components to all staff.
- 2) Creating ownership by identifying restorative practices leaders into preexisting school climate teams to oversee implementation.
- 3) Creating staff buy-in by developing a shared vision and supporting staff in developing their practice.
- 4) Developing a continuum of supports through the identification of preventative (Tier 1) restorative practices that all staff can use to build community and establish a restorative discipline system.
- 5) Continuously improve through the tracking and monitoring of data to reflect and improve practice

Restorative Practices Alignment within MTSS

IIRP specifies a continuum from informal (i.e., affective statements) to more formal restorative practices (i.e., formal conferences). Figure 2 provides a brief description and example of each of the practices across the RP continuum.

- Affective statements are statements describing how the adult was impacted by the student's behavior. They can be used as a proactive tool within Tier 1 when delivering acknowledgement/praise to students in a variety of contexts. When an adult uses words to

describe an emotional state (e.g., it brings me joy to see you all collaborating so well on that assignment) models' emotional literacy. Conversely, affective statements could also be included within the discipline flowchart as a tool for providing feedback when a student engages in unwanted behaviors.

- Affective questions are used when a student engages in unwanted behaviors by asking questions such as who and how other individuals were affected when the student engaged in the behavior. This approach could be included within the discipline system as a tool for adults when responding to unwanted behaviors.
- Small impromptu conversations ensue when student(s) and the adult meet to address and solve a particular problem. This can be included within the discipline system as a tool for adults when responding to unwanted behaviors. Additionally, these conversations could be used within Tier 2/Tier 3 supports such as youth/peer court, peer mediation, conflict resolution, restitution as alternatives to suspension.
- Circles can be used as both preventative and responsive approaches. Proactive circles are used to build a sense of community within the classroom (i.e., Tier 1). They can be used to develop classroom norms, content, and academic goals. This strategy can be combined within classroom routines (See Figure 4) and used to reinforce social, emotional, and academic development goals. Responsive circles are used in response to conflict that caused harm among students. This can be included within the discipline system as a tool for adults when responding to unwanted behaviors in the classroom (i.e., Tier 1). It is possible that sensitive information or topics may arise during a restorative circle. Therefore, teachers should only use responsive circles if they have been adequately trained by certified trainers on how and when it is appropriate to use this approach. Understanding what types of incidents/topics should and should not warrant responsive circles are vital to the mental and behavioral well-being of students and staff and ensures no further harm, trauma, or re-traumatization occurs among students. We must continually provide safeguards so that teachers are practicing within their scope and expertise of their professional obligations.
- There are two types of formal conferences, restorative conferences and family group decision making conferences. These are formal responses when harm has been done between individuals. All individuals who were affected by the event are brought together by a trained facilitator, who uses a scripted process for facilitating repair to the relationship(s). Formal conferences require more intensive resources and time and therefore, more adequately align with Tier 3. Due to the formality of this approach only highly trained individuals as facilitators engage in this process.

Conclusion

Figure 3 provides one example of how RP can be aligned across the three tiers of support. As mentioned previously it is equally important that before considering integrating RP, or any practice for that matter, schools have a strong universal foundation, identify the need for additional practices, data to support that need, and outcomes to monitor progress over time.

Deciding that a school requires RP does not mean that the entire continuum of restorative practices is necessary.

The Tiered Fidelity Inventory (TFI) is a fidelity tool that affords a valid and reliable measure of the degree to which the core elements are implemented across all three tiers. The three subscales assessed in Tier 1 include: teams, implementation, and evaluation. Within each of these subscale, specific features are measured which are critical to the accurate implementation of MTSS/PBIS at the universal level. Using the examples above when describing the RP continuum, figure 5 provides models how teams would use those examples to enhance specific components of their Tier 1 system within the specific features.

References

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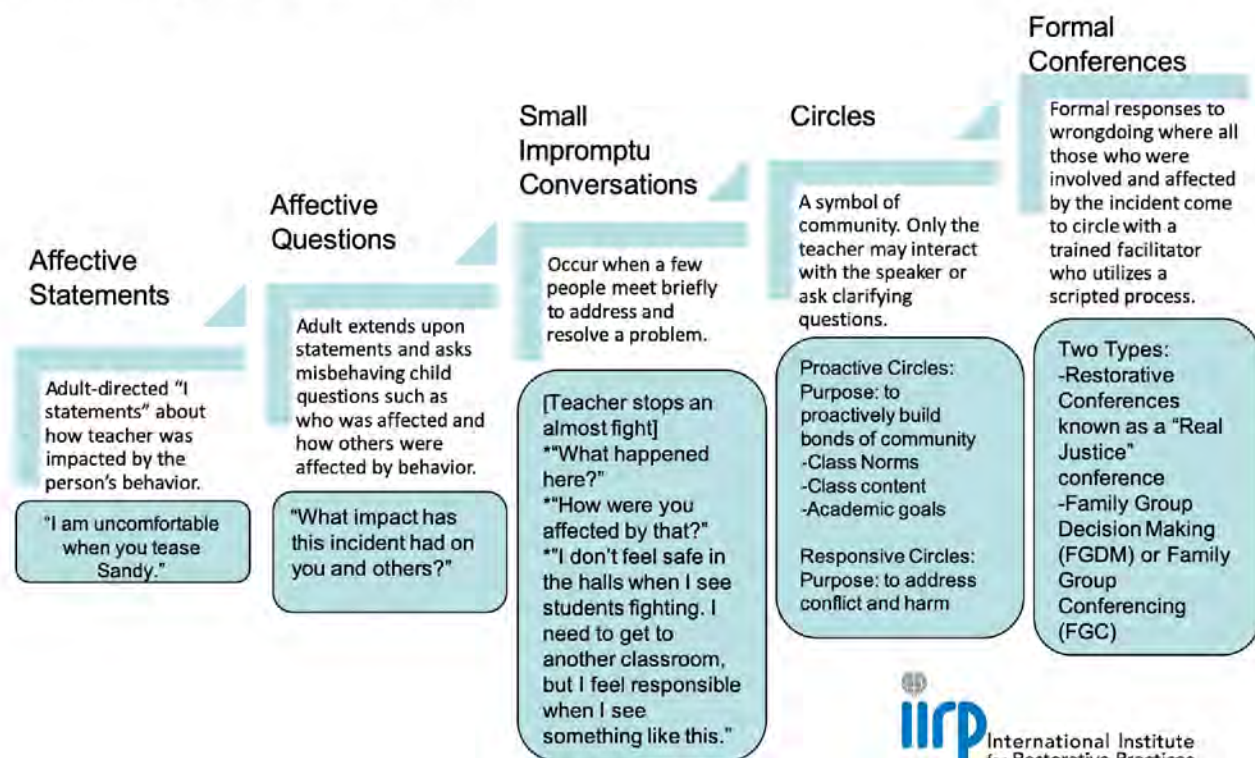
Figure 1
Social Discipline Window



Adapted by Paul McCold and Ted Wachtel from Glaser, 1969

Note. Swain-Bradway, J. (2019, July 15). *Restorative Practices in MTSS* [PowerPoint slides].

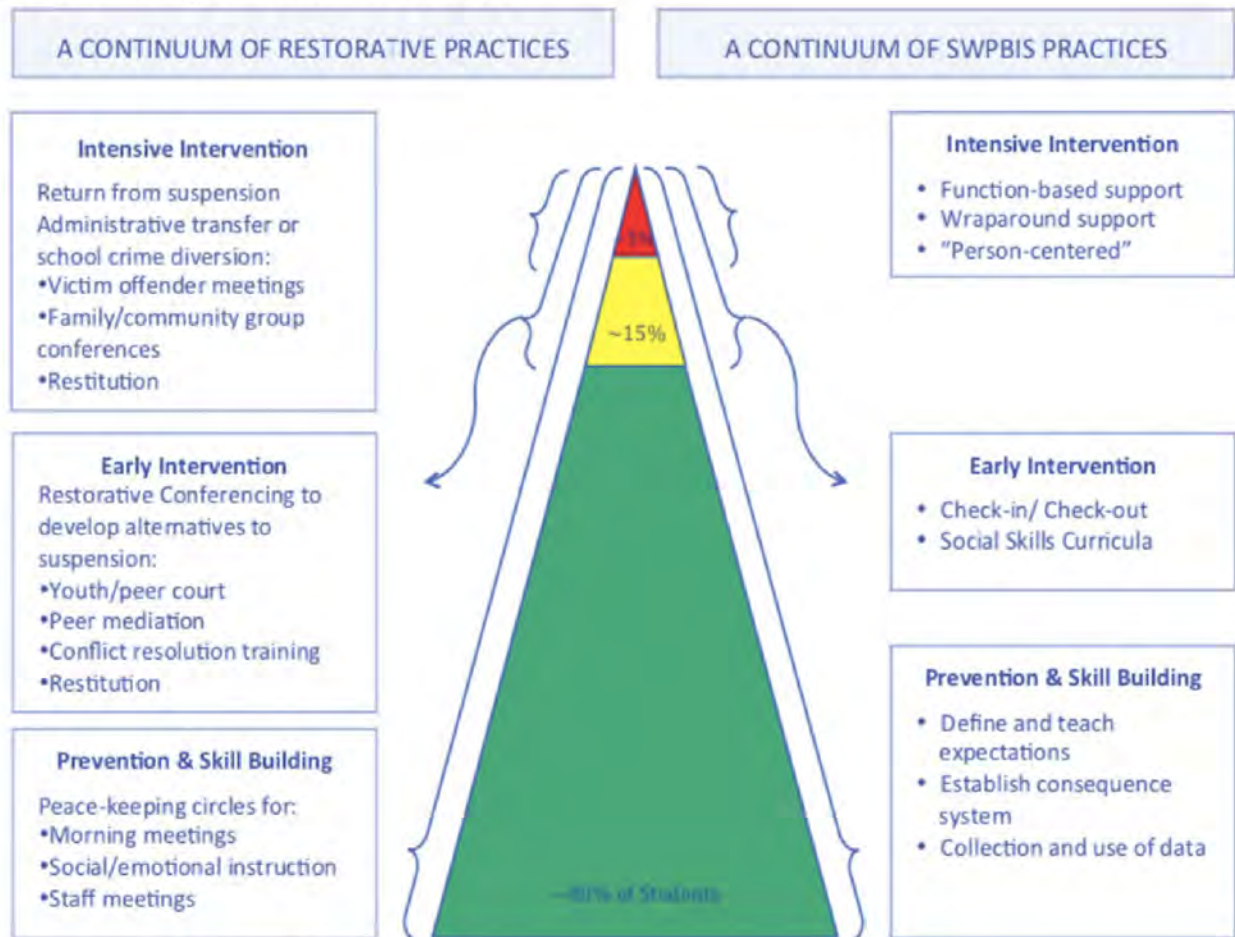
Figure 2
Continuum of Restorative Practices



iirp International Institute for Restorative Practices

Note. Cite IIRP book here

Figure 3
A Continuum of RP and PBIS Practices



Note. Swain-Bradway, Eber, Sprague, & Nelson, 2016

Figure 4

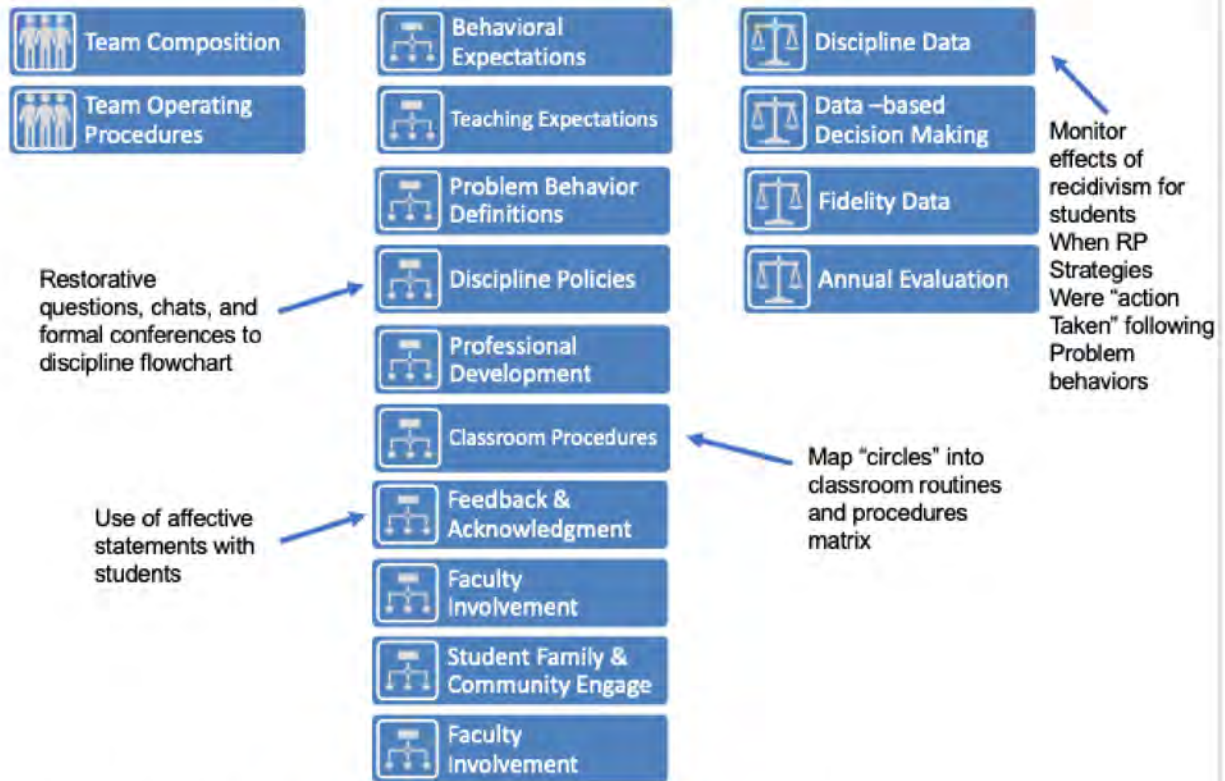
Integration of Restorative Practices in Classroom Routines/Procedures

Teaching Matrix		SETTING				Circle
		Hallways	Cafeteria	Library/ Computer Lab	Bus	
EXPECTATIONS	Be Respectful	Keep hands feet and other objects to self	Eat only your food	Study, read, compute	Watch for your stop	
	Be Responsible	Use quiet voice			Stand in line and wait patiently	
	Be Safe	Maintain your own physical space Stay to the right	Clean up your eating area	Whisper. Return books	Use a quiet voice Stay in your seat	
	Conditions for Learning	Stand in hall during passing periods	Supervise students until all enter cafeteria	Instruct from back to keep eyes on all screens	Ensure students enter bus calmly	

Considerations for "Circle" as a location on the Matrix. Can be embedded into Classroom Matrices.

Note. Swain-Bradway, J. (2019, December 3). *Restorative Practices in MTSS* [PowerPoint slides].

Figure 5
Aligning Restorative Practices to Tier 1 System Features



Note. Example of where Restorative Practices align within Tier 1 features.