



Trinity College Dublin

Coláiste na Tríonóide, Baile Átha Cliath

The University of Dublin

Introduction to Restorative Justice and Restorative Circles

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Restorative Justice - Roots

Rooted in indigenous culture

- A healing process
- Protect individuals, the community and their integrity and stability
- Processes involving the victim of a crime and the offender

Alternative to retributive justice

- Focuses on the harm that has been done
- Prioritises rehabilitation through reconciliation

Restorative Justice - Objectives

- **Address the harm caused to the victim**
- **Challenge offenders to understand the harm they have caused**
- **Dissuade offenders from committing future offenses**
- **Reintegrate offenders into society**
- **Reinforce collaboration, reintegration, respect, accountability**

Restorative Justice in Action

Meetings

- Victim-offender dialogue
- Family group conferencing
- Restorative conferences
- Circles of support and accountability

Restorative Justice in Education

- **Referred to as restorative approaches or restorative practices**
- **Whole-school ethos**
- **Address discipline**
- **Foster positive behaviours**

Benefits of RJ in Education

Reductions in:

- Disciplinary referrals to principals
- Suspensions and expulsions
- Amount of time lost to managing student behavioural challenges
- Disproportionate referrals of minority students

Benefits of RJ in Education

Improved:

- Teacher morale
- Teacher retention
- Academic outcomes

Restorative Circles

Stronger sense of community

Supporting kind, honest and authentic dialogue

Reactive

- Used for discipline

Proactive

- Used to foster positive behaviours

Proactive Restorative Circles

- **Can be used in a variety of contexts, and in response to various events**
- **Inculcate feelings of belonging**
- **Participants must feel heard, seen, and respected**
- **Facilitator**

Goals of Proactive Restorative Circles

Students:

- Motivated to build and maintain a peaceful learning community
- Develop and enhance deeper connections with peers
- Learn conflict resolution
- Develop healthy communication skills

Building a Restorative Circle

- **Physical space**
- **Talking piece**
- **Prompts and questions**
- **Principle of non-interference**
- **Agreements**

Prompts and Questions

- **Relevant**
- **Simple and clear**
- **Open-ended**
- **Inquiry, not advocacy**

Prompts and Questions

- **Related to current events**
- **Support re-examining ourselves and others**
- **Grabs attention**
- **Invite follow-up questions**

Circle Guidelines

- **Respect the talking piece**
 - Give those who hold it your full attention
 - When you are holding it give full attention to your truth
 - Speak to the center of the circle
 - Handle the talking piece respectfully
- **Speak from the heart: Speak for yourself: your perspectives, needs, experiences**
 - Trust that what comes from the heart will be what the circle needs
- **Listen from the heart: Let go of stories that make it hard to hear others**
- **Say just enough: without feeling rushed, say what you need to say (“lean expression”)**
- **Trust that you will know what to say when it is your turn to speak: no need to rehearse**



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Thank You

