

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE TOOLS AND SUGGESTIONS FOR WHEN TO USE THEM Developed by Nancy Schertzing

TYPE OF INTERVENTION	DESCRIPTION	TYPICAL SITUATION	REASON TO USE
Restorative Philosophy	An approach to misconduct and conflict that looks for ways to heal harm and hold harm-doers accountable by keeping them in community and supporting them as they do the work to make right any harm or problems resulting from their behavior.	This is a philosophy that applies throughout work and personal life in community. It differs from the traditional discipline model which relies on punishments (usually exclusionary) to address misconduct.	It is an approach to discipline and conflict-resolution that engages all people affected by misconduct which allows everyone to have a say in how they will heal and be together in community. It can be developmental and build connections between people.
Informal Circles	A process in which all members of a community are seated in a circle formation so all can see and hear each other. A facilitator leads the circle, usually sharing an item the confers the right to speak. This item, called a talking piece is passed from person-to-person around the circle so everyone has an opportunity to talk about the topics the facilitator raises.	Talking circles can be used in classrooms to teach and create a sense of community among students and adult members. It can also be a powerful method for running staff meetings or business meetings because it engages all members of a community in discussion and ensures that every member has an opportunity to be heard if they choose to speak.	Talking Circles help people connect with each other through listening and sharing stories or thoughts. The circle format provides a different venue than our typical authority-driven meeting techniques. The process of sharing by and listening to each person helps foster social emotional skills and build empathy between group members.
Affective Statements	A message about how someone's behavior or a situation affects the speaker. If used as a restorative tool, the statement must be delivered with respect and should address only the speaker's experience—not speculate or cast blame on others or their behavior	Educators often find affective statements useful when they see a student's behavior causing harm to another. Some useful openings for affective statements include (but aren't limited to): "I see . . ." "I feel . . ." "I wonder . . ."	Frequently, affective statements are the first and most informal technique for addressing misconduct—nipping it in the bud and helping students correct or redirect before their behavior becomes a disciplinary offense. Many teachers who have developed relationships with their students find affective statements powerful behavior management tools.

Affective Questions	A question about how someone’s behavior or a situation affects others—the student, classmates, the speaker or others. As with Affective Statements, the statement must be delivered with respect and should encourage the student to think about other people’s experiences so s/he can build empathy or at least see the situation from a different perspective	Educators might use affective questions when they want to engage students in considering how their behavior could be causing harm to themselves or others. Some useful openings for affective questions include (but aren’t limited to): “How do you think . . . ?” “Who was affected by . . . ?” “Can you think of anything . . . ?”	Similar to affective statements, affective questions are a first-line tool for addressing misconduct or poor behavioral choices before they escalate to disciplinary infractions. As with all restorative interventions, respect is essential in how you ask the question and how you listen to the student’s response. Be sure to listen when the student answers and use the discussion to help him/her choose to behave differently immediately and in future.
Small Impromptu Conference	An informal discussion between two or more parties who have engaged in some behavior that has caused harm or conflict. The person conducting the small impromptu conference (SIC) will generally meet with both parties in a semi-private space shortly after some triggering event has happened. The SIC facilitator will walk the parties through the restorative process defined by the three questions: “What happened?” “Who is affected and how?” “How can you make this right?”	SICs are useful immediately after an incident occurs, especially when the facilitator has observed the behaviors and can give the students a safe space and time to calm down and clean things up right away. Some typical situations that prompt SICs include (but are not limited to): Jostling or rough behavior in the hallway between class periods; Inappropriate language or hurtful statements made between students; Mistakes that cause harm but are not intended to be hurtful.	Again, SICs must be founded on respect for all parties. The facilitator must show equal respect and openness to the stories of all parties as they answer the questions and share their experiences. When they answer the question “How can you make this right?” the facilitator does not need to write out an agreement or document it, but s/he will want to follow up with the students at intervals after the SIC to monitor whether their agreement resolved the issue. If not, a more formal circle or other intervention might be appropriate.
Formal Circles	A circle for conflict-resolution or discipline requires training and considerable preparation to ensure its success. As with a SIC, the formal circle engages those who have experienced harm (the affected) with those who caused the harm (the responsible) and may also include members of the community affected by the incident or situation.	Formal restorative circles are often used in discipline situations where the affected is willing to meet with the responsible party and the person responsible accepts his/her role in causing harm. Both conditions are essential before a restorative circle is possible. Since its purpose is to heal harm, it makes sense that we cannot force the affected to participate against her/his will and we will not engage the responsible in a discussion about healing harm if s/he denies causing it.	Restorative justice practices are used across the US because they provide lasting resolution and developmental lessons for those who engage in them. Restorative school employees and students report higher sense of safety and community than those who work in and attend punitive-based security-focused schools. When used for discipline, restorative circles keep students in school, rather than suspending or expelling them from school, so they protect students’ ability to learn and maintain healthy connections with educators and peers who can support their good behavior.