

INTRODUCTION

Clarke is a new student who is very excited and a bit nervous about the new school. Clarke attended a rural, or as they say, "country school," for several years. You find out Clarke's father is a well-known farmer who is taking a role at the corporate office in the city. Clarke has worked on the farm for years and has lots of stories about equipment, animals, and crops. Clarke is especially fond of milk cows and wrote about the taste of fresh milk during a quick write. On the second day of attending the new school, someone realizes Clarke has a knife on the back of their belt.

Given your current school or district rules, what are you required to do? What course of action is required of you? Clearly, a rule has been broken and Clarke created an unsafe environment. As we will explore throughout this book, a punitive approach focused on the following questions:

- What law or rule was broken?
- Who broke it?
- What punishment is deserved?

In this case, Clarke clearly violated an important rule related to school safety. The question then is, what is the punishment? In many places, Clarke would be suspended. In some places, Clarke might even be expelled. After all, there was a knife on campus that created an unsafe place to learn. Some will argue that Clarke will only learn if there are exclusionary consequences for this action.

Do you agree with this course of action, given what you know about Clarke? What do you wish would happen differently? We shared this example because we hope you are thinking that there is a much simpler solution and one that will likely ensure that Clarke learns not to bring a knife to school. But the situations you encounter are often much more complex than this. And they deserve the same type of investigation as to the *why* before considering a course of action.

Before we continue, let's consider another example. Nancy is at the airport and security pulls her bag from the line. They ask if there was anything sharp in her bag and Nancy replies, "No," not remembering that she had been helping a friend over the weekend and has a utility knife in her bag. Of course, security finds it and shows it to her. She apologizes profusely and then is suspended from flying ever again. Okay, the suspension part's not true. But they do ask if she wants to check the utility knife or throw it away. Once the problem is solved, they let her go on her way.

We are not advocating for weapons on campus (or airplanes) any more than we support students being disrespectful to teachers. But there are ways to ensure that students learn from the mistakes that they make. We are educators and our primary role is to teach. When students have unfinished learning, educators create opportunities for students to learn. Unfortunately, too often that role seems to stop when it comes to behavior:

If a student doesn't know how to read,

We teach that student how to read.

If a student doesn't know how to do math problems,

We teach that student to do math.

If a student doesn't know how to behave,

We punish that student.

Where is the teachable moment? Isn't that why we entered this most noble profession? To teach. That's what restorative practices are about. In this book, we focus on a set of practices that are designed to teach. That must include teaching prosocial behaviors based on strong relationships and a commitment to the well-being of others.



Before we continue, it's important to clear up a confusion. We have been asked far too many times, *What about consequences? Are there ever consequences for the actions that students take? What if they hurt someone? What if they destroy property?*

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Restorative practices are about healing. They are about re-establishing the learning environment. Of course, there are consequences. That may even include time away from school for calming down and making plans. We just understand that some of the traditional consequences that schools use do not result in any new learning.

Doug's high school English teacher was frustrated with one of Doug's writing assignments. In front of the whole class, the teacher told Doug that he would spend the rest of his life "flipping burgers." Frustrated and hurt, Doug threw a pencil at the wall and walked out of class.

He was then sent to the principal, who asked if Doug had done what was written on the referral, which he admitted. Doug was suspended for three days. No one at school asked Doug why he did it. What did Doug learn from this suspension? Well, one thing he learned was to never trust that teacher. Doug missed that class a lot after that day but made up the grade in the summer. The hurt and lack of belief that the teacher showed were never addressed. Perhaps the teacher intended something else and a quick conversation could have resolved the feelings. Perhaps the teacher had not considered the impact of a statement made in frustration and a conversation could have enlightened that

A Dilemma

Tony Hall is a new staff member in a high school. The school is in an urban neighborhood, and there is a convenience store across the street where students often go to get food or drinks before school. Each day, a different staff member is assigned to stand outside before school to remind students to use the crosswalk instead of jaywalking.

Mr. Hall is standing outside on duty one morning when a student he didn't know jaywalks across the street to the convenience store. As the student comes back across the street, Mr. Hall calls to him to use the crosswalk. When the student ignores him, Mr. Hall approaches the student: "Hey! I asked you to use the crosswalk. You can't jaywalk across the street."

The student, who is already having a hard day due to an argument at home, failing a test during first period, and seeing some negative social media posts, replies, "Who are you?" Mr. Hall explains that he is new to the school and that the student needs to listen to what he says.

Annoyed and preoccupied with his own challenges from the day, the student replies, "You're nobody. Get out of my f***ing way!" and keeps walking toward class.

Shocked and offended by the student's disrespectful behavior and language, Mr. Hall immediately takes the student to the principal's office. Heated and upset, Mr. Hall explains the situation to the principal.

How should the principal handle the situation?

Figure 1.1 Restorative Practices Logic Model

Goal: Create a healthy school ecosystem that addresses the needs of each child and inspires joy for all.

OUR INTENDED WORK		OUR INTENDED RESULTS	
RESOURCES	ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS DIRECT BENEFITS	OUTCOMES INDIRECT BENEFITS
<i>If we have access to these resources, then these activities can be completed.</i>			
<i>If we successfully complete these activities, then these changes will occur as a direct result of the actions.</i>			
		<i>If the activities are carried out as designed, then these changes will result.</i>	
		<i>If participants benefit from our efforts, then other systems, organizations, or communities will change.</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership team comprising key stakeholders • School-based mental health professionals with appropriate caseloads • Assessment tools • Restorative practices training materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compile assessment information • Analyze assessment results • Evaluate discipline policies • Invest in creating and maintaining a restorative culture • Create a plan to infuse restorative practices into core programs and initiatives • Educate staff on restorative practices, including affective statements and impromptu conversations • Define behaviors that are addressed via restorative conversations • Define behaviors that are addressed via restorative conferences • Provide ongoing training on best practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased social-emotional and academic attainment • Decreased discipline referrals • Reduced exclusionary discipline (suspension and expulsion) • Greater equity in disciplinary decisions • Increased sense of belonging by students • Circles are regularly used to address a range of topics, including academic, social, and behavioral issues • Decreased dropout rates • Increased school attendance of students and staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved school climate • Improved mental and physical health outcomes • Fewer health-risk behaviors • Fewer students involved in the juvenile criminal justice system • Improved job satisfaction for staff • Decreased disability labeling and diagnoses

Those mental shortcuts are called heuristics—think of these as “rules of thumb.” Our brains are hard-wired to seek out patterns and associations to help us make sense of our surroundings. We exercise this cognitive process at an early age. We use these patterns to establish shortcuts that become increasingly complex as we age. These cognitive shortcuts help us make rapid decisions, which can be a very good thing. A long time ago, our ancestors used bias to make split-second decisions as to who is friend and who is foe. As our society, living conditions, and brains matured, contemporary humans co-opted the use of bias(es) as cognitive shortcuts to simplify our workloads. We create “mental scales” to weigh, disproportionately, in favor of or against certain ideas, opinions, purchases, interactions, friends, etc. (the list could go on forever). The point is that not all these cognitive shortcuts are bad. Oftentimes, we use them to help navigate the ever-busy day we experience as teachers (and humans). Unfortunately, our shortcuts can lead to a deficit mindset and overgeneralizations that can have a negative impact on the students and communities we serve. To complicate this topic even more, consider that these mental processes can happen unconsciously within the complex and hidden mechanics of our brains.



WHEN THERE IS
NO OPPORTUNITY
TO MAKE AMENDS
AND COMMITMENTS,
THE EXPERIENCE
STAYS WITH US.

We can bring these cognitive shortcuts to our interactions with students. We invite you to reflect on your patterns when it comes to interacting with a student with whom you have a conflict. We’re not talking about a serious conflict that has reached the point where others are involved. Instead, consider the pattern of interactions in those garden-variety annoying situations. This type of conflict has occurred when the usual redirection hasn’t worked. Instead, the problem has persisted—a student is on her cell phone too much, a child continues to talk to his peers at his table even though you’ve instructed him to be quiet, or a student is just not doing the task you asked of them. Now complete the self-assessment below to reflect on your interactions.

SELF-ASSESSMENT: HOW RESTORATIVE AM I?

Directions: Reflect on how, in your role, you deal with students (or staff) when an incident or issue has arisen. Answer the questions below by marking a check in the column choices of *No*, *Not Often*, *Usually*, or *Always*.



	NO	NOT OFTEN	USUALLY	ALWAYS
1. Do I remain calm during the conversation?				
2. Do I really listen, without interrupting?				

(Continued)

(Continued)

	NO	NOT OFTEN	USUALLY	ALWAYS
3. Does the student understand why they are having this conversation?				
4. Would the student say I am a good listener?				
5. Do we explore how the school values apply to the issue?				
6. Does the student understand the harm they've caused, who has been affected, and how?				
7. Do I talk about how the incident affects me?				
8. Do I take responsibility for any part I might have played when things went wrong, acknowledge it, and apologize?				
9. Do I consider the extent to which I have a relationship with this student and how that affects my expectations for our interaction?				
10. If the student apologizes to me, do I accept the apology respectfully?				
11. Do I collaborate with the student to formulate a plan?				
12. Have I, at any stage, asked someone I trust to observe my practice and give me honest feedback?				
13. Do I try to handle most issues or incidents myself?				
14. Do I seek support when issues get tricky for me?				
15. Do I follow the school's systems when looking for more support?				
16. Is the relationship with the student repaired?				

Source: Positive Behaviour for Learning (2014a, p. 15). Adapted from "How restorative am I?" © Margaret Thorsborne and Associates, 2009.

Now that you have reflected on your experiences, what does this mean? Take a few minutes to analyze your responses and consider the questions that follow.

<p>What patterns have you noticed?</p>	
<p>What strengths do you have?</p>	
<p>What areas of growth do you foresee?</p>	

A DILEMMA: TAKE TWO

Let's revisit Mr. Hall's interaction with the jaywalking student before school to see how the principal helped build a restorative school climate. Recall that both Mr. Hall and the student are in the principal's office.



First, the principal asks the student to step outside her office and take a seat; she would come to talk to him in a few minutes. Then she asks Mr. Smith to do the same in her office. She asks Mr. Hall how he was feeling in that moment and how he felt now. The principal explains that many of the students have difficult situations outside of the classroom and that at this school, they practice restorative conversations to help build and repair relationships. She notes that this did not excuse the student's choice of language or disrespect and promises to address that as part of the conversation.

ONE'S ABILITY TO EMBODY A RESTORATIVE MINDSET IS NOT STATIC. WE ARE HUMANS BEFORE WE ARE EDUCATORS.

She then allows the student to come back into her office and facilitates a conversation between him and Mr. Hall. During

the conversation, the student shares that he hadn't eaten the previous night or that morning and was just trying to get something to eat before school. He also explains that he had had a difficult interaction with someone before even getting to school, and Mr. Hall just happened to be the next person "in line." Mr. Hall also has the opportunity to explain his perspective and how he felt disrespected in the way that the student approached the interaction, and together the three of them work to repair the situation.

Throughout that year, as Mr. Hall encounters that student around campus, their interactions are different because they came from a place of mutual understanding.

PROCEDURES

As you read this book, you will find support for creating restorative practices around the following key concepts, as illustrated in Figure 1.5:

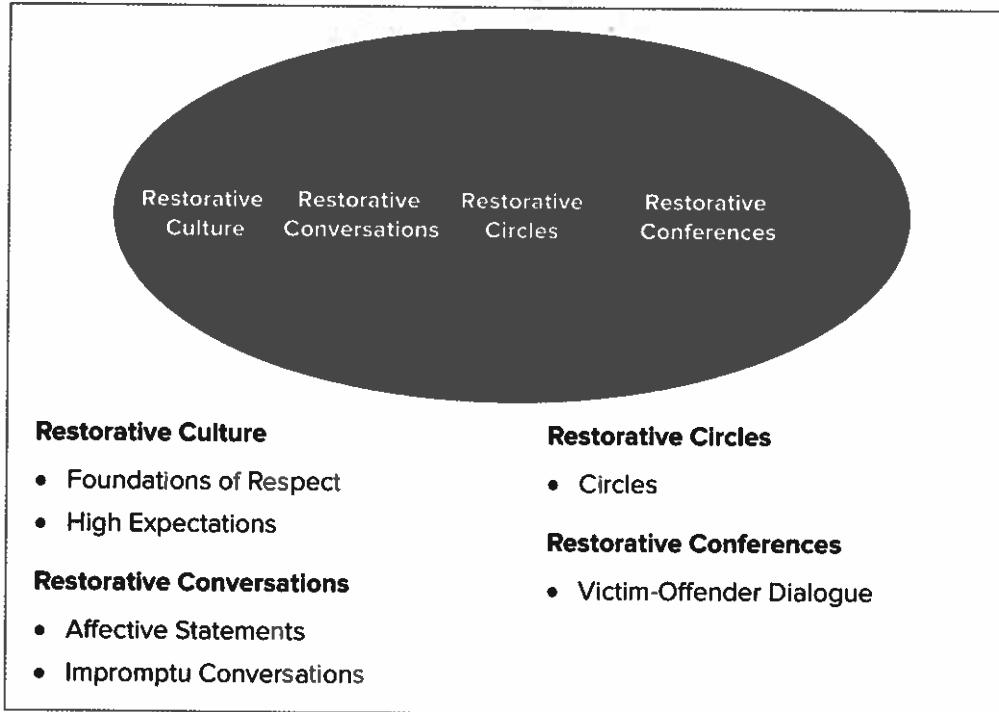


WE STRIVE TO
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- A **restorative culture** informs the language we use to build agency and identity. We strive to create an academic environment that allows young people to pursue goals and aspirations. To create a restorative culture, we attend to the ways we build teacher credibility, set high expectations, and foster positive relationships with each member of the school community.
- **Restorative conversations** equip adults and students with the capacity to resolve problems, make decisions, and arrive at solutions in ways that are satisfactory and growth-producing for all. This requires cognitive reframing to deepen understanding of perspectives, using affective statements and impromptu conversations.
- **Restorative circles** are tools for prompting academic learning through dialogue, building community, making class decisions, and reaching resolution through healing. Each type of circle has its own set of protocols that are aligned to the purpose.
- **Restorative conferences** include formal meetings meant to foster guided dialogue between the victim(s) and offender(s). These conferences include plans for re-entry into the school community and involve other adults and students affected by the conflict.

Restorative practices encompass large and small interactions between educators, students, and families. Read the following scenario and consider what advice you have for the teacher and the school.

Figure 1.5 Restorative Practices



CASE IN POINT

Jacob is a student in Mr. Abram's sixth-grade class. Jacob tends to be late to school, which often leads to him not having enough time to complete his morning bell ringer practice activities. This week has been a hard week. Jacob showed up 10 minutes late on Monday, 15 minutes late on Tuesday, and 8 minutes late on Wednesday. The school policy is that after a third tardy, the student loses lunch recess privileges for a day. Jacob pleads and says it's his mom making him late.

What do you think Mr. Abram should do?