

## Tiers for Restorative Practices in Schools

### Tier One

Tier One is the beginning of a wide range of restorative practices focused on establishing a whole-school restorative approach to education and discipline in a school. The primary goal of Tier One is building positive relationships and creating a sense of community and trust. A key component of Tier One is Community Building Circles that include social and emotional skill building including communication and conflict resolution skills. By discussing shared values, peers develop deeper bonds. Schools develop a structure for using circles (such as advisory sessions, home room and/or town halls) in Tier One. The creation of safe environments, shared ideas, and strong relationships in the classroom significantly helps prevent conflict throughout the school.

By the end of the first year it is helpful to have a Restorative Practice Committee (also known as Restorative Justice Action Team or Restorative Justice Committee) which usually includes a Restorative Justice or Restorative Practices Coordinator, Guidance Counselor, Dean, Teacher and Assistant Principal.

### Tier Two

Tier Two usually begins in year two. Schools begin to incorporate restorative problem solving and discipline and begin to integrate restorative practices into all aspects of the school. This will include training and circles with all staff (including school safety and cafeteria workers, secretaries, and paraprofessionals) as well as parents. Disciplinary measures shift from punitive to restorative, starting with restorative chats, aimed at understanding what is behind problematic behavior. When harm is done within the community, individuals involved and impacted by the harm are given the opportunity to retell their stories, express their feelings and find a solution together. The community comes together and collaboratively supports the people involved.

Tier Two also might include:

- Staff and Student Mediation
- Peer-Mediation
- Harm or Conflict Circles
- Looking at the Discipline Code & How to Emphasize Restorative Disciplinary Processes
- Student Circle-Keepers
- Family Conferencing

## Tier Three

To support difficult-to-reach students and deal with complex conflicts, Tier Three uses reentry circles and other processes such as No XQZz (No Excuses) Mediation to gather information, address issues, and develop a plan that can best address the needs of parties involved. These tools are inclusive, build resiliency, and allow students to feel respected and included in the process, as well as compelled to own the consequences of their behavior in a dignified manner.

In Tier Three the majority of staff are onboard with the philosophy and usage of restorative practices. Most of the staff has had 5 to 10 days of staff development, and some use content circles as part of their teaching practice. The Principal, AP, and Dean are onboard. A participatory, school-wide set of expectations such as 100% Respect is developed. When students are suspended, they are welcomed back into the community with the support of a reentry circle. New staff will need circle workshops, and ongoing support is still needed.

The Restorative Practice Committee (also known as Restorative Justice Action Team or Restorative Justice Committee) meets regularly and reviews progress and goals. Peer-mediation is well integrated into the school and training for peer-mediators continues. Restorative practices are fully integrated into how conflict is handled at all levels of the school. Everyone in the school community understands and has ownership of behavioral expectations and knows what the process will be when problems arise, for example peer-mediation or a restorative circle.

Other possible developments include:

- Healing Circles
- Parent Circle-Keepers
- Attending & Presenting at Conferences
- Self-Reflection & Individualizing the Approach to Meet the Needs of Your School
- Becoming a Model School

Each school will develop its own plan and priorities and might use different language (i.e. harm circles or conflict circles). Schools may not have all elements of restorative practices but have chosen directions that meet the needs of their school.



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