

Session 40 – Restorative Practices Throughout the School Day

Materials

- Agenda charted on the board or chart paper, or provided as a handout
- Chart paper containing Community Agreements from Session 7
 - AV equipment and access to the 9:25 min video: [Restorative Practices in Crew at Brooklyn Collaborative](#)
 - Handout: “Quotes from Restorative Practices in Crew at BCS”

Opening Ceremony

In our session on bias, in the “Growing Fairness” video, Tyrone Sinclair, Organizer of the Youth Justice Coalition, said:

“Where are our priorities at? What are we giving back to the youth? Where are we looking out for their safety, where are we looking out to better people and not to lock them up? We’re not animals. We’re the next generation.”

Invite participants to consider this quote in the context of implicit bias as it relates to our school, classrooms and practices. *Where are our priorities at? Where are we looking to better people—staff as well as students? Today we’ll focus not just on where we’re looking to better people but how to do so as well.*



Talk Participants Through Today’s Agenda

- Opening Ceremony: Tyrone Sinclair on Bettering People
- Check Agenda
- Define Restorative Practices
- The Pyramid of Restorative Practices
- Restorative Practices Throughout the School Day
- Closing Ceremony: Bryan Stevenson on Bettering Our Schools and Ourselves

Define Restorative Practices

Invite participants to share what they've learned so far in our sessions about restorative practices.

Invite them to think back to Sessions 6-8, when restorative circles were introduced and we watched a video that presented restorative circles as both proactive and responsive. In Session 7, we developed our own circle values and guidelines. Encourage participants to think about the circle practice they've experienced so far, drawing on core elements of circles, throughout their time together.

Based on all this, as well as the "Growing Fairness" video shown in the previous session, ask if anyone can define "restorative practices."

Compare and contrast what participants share with MSC's definition:

"Restorative practices are a set of processes and tools that help us create a caring school community and keep that community whole. The premise is that people and relationships are valued first and foremost. When people make mistakes or cause harm, restorative practices can help them to understand the impact of their actions, heal the harm, and restore the community."

Pyramid of Restorative Practices*

Distribute the "Pyramid of Restorative Practices" handout at the end of this session. Invite people to review the pyramid independently before the group reviews together with your input, emphasizing that restorative practices in schools are more successful when they are seen as not simply a reactive response to extreme and/or harmful behavior, but rather as principles and practices in place and regularly implemented throughout the school day.

All this starts with, as we've been discussing throughout our time together, the foundation of the pyramid. **It is what we've been focused on so far in our sessions – the building of a strong, supportive, caring, equitable school community where students feel seen, and experience a sense of belonging.** This is where most of our effort and attention throughout the school year should be. Touch on how the practices further up the pyramid need the foundation of healthy relationships to lean and draw on to be effective. Explain that the next video will show what that the pyramid fully implemented can look like at a school.

*** Note:** There is a pyramid for elementary school and one for secondary school. Pick the one that's suitable for your group.

Restorative Practices at BCS

Introduce Brooklyn School for Collaborative Studies, a.k.a. Brooklyn Collaborative or BCS for short. Explain that BCS was an early adopter of Restorative Practices in New York City. The school was one of the original Morningside Center i3 schools and has been implementing Restorative Practices for over a decade. The school started by getting their staff trained in circles practice and having everyone in the school participate in weekly circles during Crew (advisory) and during staff Crew several times a year. Circles were used during school tours for prospective parents and students, and counseling staff used circles for some of their groups as well. The school made sure the foundation of the pyramid was in place while building the mindset, practices and procedures needed for the kind of responsive practices that wouldn't feed the school-to-prison pipeline.

Explain that, in this next video, we'll hear from BCS staff and students about whole school implementation of Restorative Practices at their school, according to the Pyramid of Restorative Practices we just reviewed. Note that the deans at BCS are known as Restorative Practice Coordinators (or RPCs).

Play the video [Restorative Practices in Crew at Brooklyn Collaborative](#) (9:25 min).

In the video, staff and students talk about the three different levels of the pyramid. Ask participants to pay attention to how the people featured in the video talk about the interconnected nature of the different levels of the pyramid.

Pair Share

Invite participants to share their IFETs (Impressions, Feelings, Experiences, and/or Thoughts) about the video, taking turns sharing and listening.

Large Group Discussion

Ask a few volunteers to share out their IFET with the large group. Next, review some of the quotes from the video, connecting them back to our earlier sessions:

RPC, Jose Rivera: “Restorative Practices to me is a lifestyle. Restorative Practices means community, it means building relationships, it means healing, receiving the support and having the high expectations. It means managing, fostering and building relationships that are constructive and then the healing process, understanding everyone’s differences and the impact and the choices that they make.”

Ask the group:

- What do you think Jose is trying to convey about the nature of Restorative Practices? What are your thoughts and feelings about this?
- How does this relate back to our earlier sessions and the pyramid of Restorative Practices introduced at the start of this session?

RPC, Taron Williams: Concerning the foundation of the pyramid: “to me, that’s ... the heart [of BCS], where we build this relationship with each other, where we can have those conversations. ... Because you can’t restore what you haven’t built.”

Ask the group:

- What conversations do you think Taron is referencing here? What are your thoughts and feelings about this?
- How does this relate back to our earlier sessions and the conversations we’ve had? How does it relate back to the pyramid of Restorative Practices introduced at the start of this session?

Junior Kyah: “It gives us more of a second chance, cause ... detention is just like you’re being punished, you don’t really have time to reflect on what you did and how we can move forward.” Restorative Practices “gives us a chance to reflect, see where we went wrong, know where we went wrong and know how to fix it and what relationships can be built to fix the thing we did wrong.”

Ask the group:

- What is Kyah trying to convey about the impact of punitive versus restorative practices? How does this relate back to our earlier sessions and the pyramid of Restorative Practices introduced at the start of this session?

Closing Ceremony

Bryan Stevenson is an American lawyer, social justice activist, and the founder and Executive Director of the Equal Justice Initiative. He implores us to:

"I believe that each person is more than the worst thing they've ever done." That's my mission. I really want to get in the heads and hearts of kids and persuade them that they can believe things they haven't seen, they can do things that maybe others haven't done before them, that they are more than their worst acts."

Invite participants to consider Bryan Stevenson's mission in the context of the U.S. education system and all of us who are part of it: administrators, staff, students, their families and communities. Invite them to think back to our opening ceremony:

- "Where *are* our priorities at?"
- "Where *are* we looking to better people, staff as well as students?"

Additional Resources: Session 40

Video Resources:

[Learning Module 4: Reducing Punishment Practical Tools](#)

Handout: Quotes from Restorative Practices in Crew at BCS

Jose Rivera, BCS Restorative Practice Coordinator (RPC): “Restorative Practices to me is a lifestyle. Restorative Practices means community, it means building relationships, it means healing. Receiving the support and having the high expectations. It means managing, fostering and building relationships that are constructive and then the healing process, understanding everyone’s differences and the impact and the choices that they make.”

Taron Williams BCS Restorative Practice Coordinator (RPC): The foundation of the pyramid “to me, that’s ... that’s the heart [of BCS], where we build this relationship with each other, where we can have those conversations.” “Because you can’t restore what you haven’t built.”

Level 1/Foundation of the Pyramid:

Jose Rivera: “Crew is a group of students with an advisor that meets daily for about 30 minutes and they do a lot of the foundational work of the community building aspect of Restorative Practices so they are learning who they are.” “Students who feel safe will take on more risk and that’s where the area of growth really tends to happen when student feel more vulnerable and have that support behind them in case they need an extra crutch.”

Students: Crew is a place where we learn a lot about each other. ... With that you also learn what not to say to them and what gets them mad.” “Empathy just goes a long way in general.” “People say for boys that they need to be tough, that they can’t really talk about their feelings. I feel like I’m allowed to at this school, cause they encourage during crew to talk about your feelings, like during circle. So I think that makes it a peaceful school.”

Taron Williams: “When you see students talking and using a talking piece or having a center piece, they are building relationships, they are building empathy for the person that is next to them. They are listening from their heart That’s what makes Restorative Practices so important and key is that it builds the whole student.”

Level 1 & 2 of the Pyramid:

Taron Williams: "That middle layer is key ... because it really can like change the trajectory of where a conflict can go. If you are doing the work at those two levels, we'll have very little moments where there are larger like conflict circles where there may be a fight." "There are moments where we move into the second level of our Restorative Practices like in the event that something happens, where there's a little tiff or issue."

Jose Rivera: "As adults as we can model that kind of behavior. Now that student will take some of that modeling and apply it to their own lifestyle and it will then have a resonating effect in their immediate circle and ultimately an impact on the larger community."

Student: "It gives us more of a second chance, cause ... detention is just like you're being punished, you don't really have time to reflect on what you did and how we can move forward." Restorative Practices "gives us a chance to reflect, see where we went wrong, know where we went wrong and know how to fix it and what relationships can be built to fix the thing we did wrong."

Level 3, Top of the Pyramid:

Taron Williams: "At any school that's practicing Restorative Practices, it should be a very small percentage of that (level 3 interventions) happening, if you are really trying to institute this culture into your school." "If we were in a school where we used a punitive lens, all four of those boys would have received suspensions."

Students: "We barely get suspended. If anything, that would get us more mad at each other." "If anything, we'll probably have more conflict." "You might think it's the other person's fault and the other person might think it's your fault, so, you just get more made at each other." "And then more conflict will happen but because of this [Restorative Practices] now everything is good." "We just talk about it and then solve it"

Jose: "I think as students learn to value the principles of Restorative Practices which is again building the positive relationships, which is healing, now we start to grow, as a unit as a collective, as a building, as a community."

Taron: "It's a shift in culture, almost like a wonderful song, like everything just works well."