



Why use Restorative Practices?

The aim of Restorative Practices is to develop community and to manage conflict and tensions by repairing harm and building relationships. This statement identifies both proactive (building relationships and developing community) and reactive (repairing harm and restoring relationships) approaches. The conference facilitator is an experienced teacher or administrator who has been trained and certified by the International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP).

[What is RP? \(video\)](#)

What is the Purpose of a Restorative Conference for my Student?

A restorative conference provides an opportunity for students to share their feelings, build relationships and solve problems, and when there is wrongdoing, to play an active role in addressing the wrong and making things right.

What Should I Expect from a Restorative Conference?

A restorative conference is a structured meeting that focuses on the harm that occurs as a result of a wrongdoing. It is a straightforward problem-solving method that demonstrates how community members can resolve their own problems when provided with a constructive forum to do so. Conferences provide those affected by a wrongdoing with an opportunity to address those who caused harm, express their feelings, ask questions and have a say in the outcome. Those who have contributed to a wrongdoing hear first-hand how their behavior has affected people. Those who have caused harm may choose to participate in a conference and begin to repair the harm they have caused by apologizing, making amends and agreeing to restitution, personal or community service work. Conferences hold those who have caused harm accountable while providing them with an opportunity to discard the “wrong-doer” label and be reintegrated into their school community.

Is Participation Mandatory?

Participation in Restorative Conferences is voluntary. After it is determined that a conference is appropriate and those who have caused and been affected by harm have agreed to attend, the conference facilitator invites others affected by the incident to attend.

What Will the Conference Be Like?

The conference facilitator will share the time and location of the conference with you. It is important to arrive on time so we can start promptly.

All participants will sit in a circle according to the facilitator's seating chart. The conference facilitator sticks to a simple written script. The facilitator keeps the conference focused but is not an active participant. In the conference the facilitator provides an opportunity to each participant to speak, beginning with asking open-ended and affective restorative questions of those who have caused harm. The facilitator then asks those who have been affected by wrongdoing the questions below to provide those impacted by harm an opportunity to talk about the incident from their perspective and the ways in which it affected them. It is important to focus on the harm that has been caused as opposed to whether someone is "good" or "bad."

Using the conference script, those who have caused harm are asked these restorative questions:

- "What happened?"
- "What were you thinking about at the time?"
- "What have you thought about since?"
- "Who has been affected by what you have done?"
- "What do you think you need to do to make things right?"

Those who have been impacted by the harm are asked these restorative questions:

- "What did you think when you realized what happened?"
- "What impact has the incident had on you and others?"
- "What has been the hardest thing for you?"
- "What do you think needs to happen to make things right?"

Finally, those impacted by the harm are asked what they would like the outcome of the conference to be. The response is discussed with those who have caused harm and everyone else at the conference. When an agreement is reached, a simple contract that includes the details of the agreement is written and signed by all participants. At the conclusion of the contract agreement, everyone will have some informal time together to "break bread" and begin the process of reintegration.

Are Restorative Conferences Always Successful?

Research shows that Restorative Conferences provide very high levels of satisfaction and sense of fairness for all participants (McCold & Wachtel, 2002). Since we are working with human beings, the results of a conference vary. As long as people experience a safe opportunity to have a meaningful discussion that helps them address the emotional and other consequences of a conflict or a wrong, we believe the process is beneficial.

Where Can I Learn More?

Here are some resources that may be helpful:

[https://www.iirp.edu/what-we-do/defining-restorative/Introduction to Conferencing \(Video\)](https://www.iirp.edu/what-we-do/defining-restorative/Introduction%20to%20Conferencing%20(Video))