

Restorative Practice



Return of the Prodigal Son by Rembrandt

A Primer for Catholic School Communities

June 2010

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Restorative Practice: What is it?

It is:

- A philosophy and practice that strengthens relationships and fosters a healthy school community
- A framework that involves all staff, students, and parents, engaging them in a collaborative approach
- A process that promotes respect, responsibility and accountability, encouraging students to “make things right” and teaching them how to “fix their own problems”

It is not:

- A program
- A set of techniques or strategies
- Simply about behaviour management or discipline
- Just for teachers

Acknowledgement

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The Roots of Restorative Practice

The roots of restorative practice can be traced back to:

- the Aboriginal Peoples of North America
- the Maori of New Zealand
- the peoples of Japan and Africa

Restorative Practices are grounded in the belief that:

- That each and every person has God-given worth
- That no one is disposable
- That human conflict and harm can be most effectively addressed by attending to the healing of all those persons affected

Restorative Practice in schools:

- Has its roots in “restorative justice” which originated in the 1970’s as a mediation between victims and offenders in the criminal justice field
- Was broadened in the 1990’s to include communities of care, with families and friends, participating in collaborative conferences or circles
- Was expanded in the last decade by the Institute for Restorative Practices beyond the criminal justice system and into the field of education (The Canadian International Institute for Restorative Practice was established during the summer of 2008)
- Is currently being used in schools in the United Kingdom, USA, Canada, Australia, Sweden, Hong Kong, Hungary and the Netherlands

Restorative Practice From Our Faith Tradition

Restorative Practice is an excellent fit with the Sacrament of Reconciliation:

- The Sacrament of Reconciliation is one of the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church
- Along with the Anointing of the Sick, they are called Sacraments of Healing
- There are three parts to the Sacrament of Reconciliation:
 - conversion
 - confession
 - celebration
- **Conversion:**
 - begins when one realizes that all is not right with one's values and decisions
 - requires a turnaround that is revealed in one's actions
 - this conversion is a response to being loved by God
 - contrition is the second part of conversion:
 - this involves examining our relationships in light of love and to take the necessary steps to change a behaviour that has caused us to do wrong
 - to repair those relationships that were damaged by our actions
- **Confession:**
 - is the external expression of the interior transformation that conversion has brought about in us
 - Why confession? We need to see, hear and feel forgiveness - not just think about it
 - We need community to help us to externalize what is within

- **Celebration:**

- Not often associated with the Sacrament of Reconciliation (but it should be)
- Our sinfulness disrupts our relationship in community as well as our relationship with God
- When the relationship is repaired, it is very appropriate to celebrate with a communal expression of love and forgiveness that embodies the love and forgiveness of God

(Sandra DeGidio, O.S.M., Catholic Update)

The Aim of Restorative Practice in Our Catholic School Communities:

- To strengthen relationships and to manage conflict and tensions by repairing harm as a way of building community and responding to God's call

Scriptural Links

**The Scriptural Connections to Restorative Practice are numerous.
Some examples are:**

- The concept of “Shalom” (from the Old Testament) which is a way of peace and justice...a way of being
- God is just and seeks justice for all of us as seen in Psalms 11:7, 33:4, Isaiah 61:8 and Jeremiah 9:24
- The faithful are called to restoration of community and the establishment of justice in Isaiah 42: 1-7
- The woman caught in adultery in John 8:1-11
- Paul strongly reminds Christians in 2 Corinthians 5:18, that ours is a ministry of reconciliation, *“All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation”*
- The parable of the Prodigal Son in Luke 15: 11-13
- The rejection of Jesus of Nazareth in Luke 4:16-21
- The rich man & Lazarus in Luke 16:19-31

The Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations

Restorative Practice will help students to become:

- **A Discerning Believer Formed in the Catholic Faith Community Who:**
 - Develops attitudes and values founded on the Catholic social teaching and acts to promote social responsibility, human solidarity and the common good
 - Speaks the language of life...“recognizing that life is an unearned gift and that person entrusted with life does not own it but that one is called to protect and cherish it” (Witnesses to Faith.)
 - Recognizes that “sin, human weakness, conflict and forgiveness are part of the human journey and the cross, the ultimate sign of forgiveness is at the heart of redemption” (Witnesses to Faith)
- **An Effective Communicator Who:**
 - Listens actively and critically to understand and learn in the light of gospel values
- **A Reflective, Creative and Holistic Thinker Who:**
 - Recognizes there is more grace in our world than sin and that hope is essential in facing all challenges
 - Makes decisions in light of gospel values with an informed moral conscience
- **A Self-Directed, Responsible, Lifelong Learner Who:**
 - Demonstrates a confident and positive sense of self and respect for the dignity and welfare of others
 - Applies effective communication decision-making, problem-solving, time and resource management skills
- **A Caring Family Member Who:**
 - Relates to family members in a loving, compassionate and respectful manner
 - Ministers to the family, school, parish and wider community through service
- **A Responsible Citizen Who:**
 - Accepts accountability for one’s own actions
 - Seeks and grants forgiveness

(Institute for Catholic Education, 2003)

Safe Schools & Restorative Practice

On June 4, 2007, the Ontario Government gave royal assent to Bill 212, The Education Amendment Act, Progressive Discipline and School Safety 2007:

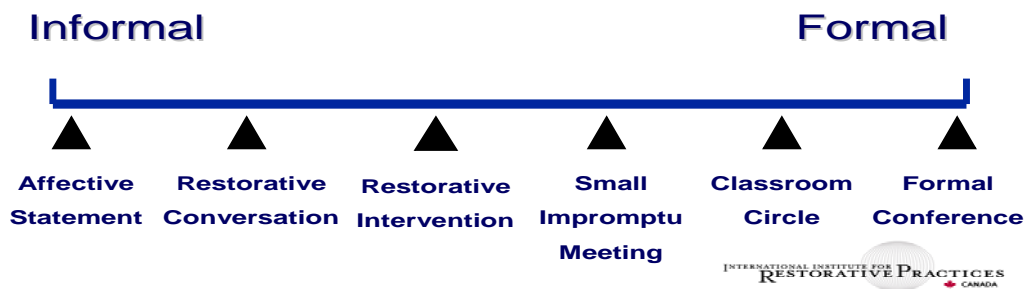
- This transformed the “safe schools” provisions of the Education Act
- Mandated a number of significant changes which had to be in effect on February 1, 2008

Mandated in Bill 212

Potential in Restorative Practice

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| • Progressive discipline must be used | Yes |
| • Parental awareness and involvement must occur | Yes |
| • There must be greater transparency | Yes |
| • All school communities must strive for a positive school climate where healthy & positive relationships are promoted | Yes |
| • Prevention strategies must be in place | Yes |
| • Inappropriate behaviour must be addressed | Yes |
| • Early and ongoing interventions must be present | Yes |
| • Mitigating factors must be considered | Yes |
| • Careful planning for re-entry must occur | Yes |
| • Discipline measures must be corrective and supportive | Yes |
| • Opportunities for the student to learn from the choices they made must be present | Yes |

To utilize Restorative Practices means to utilize a continuum of intervention and support:



IIRP.org

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A school community is aligning school practice with Restorative Practice when they:

- Focus primarily on relationships and secondarily on rules
- Give voice to the person(s) harmed
- Give voice to the person who caused the harm
- Engage in collaborative problem-solving
- Enhance responsibility
- Empower change and growth
- Plan for restoration

Restorative Practices: A Whole School Approach

1. Getting Started

This comprises of:

- An administrator's perspective on existing practice
- Teacher reflection sheet
- Pre-reading material
- Awareness PowerPoint

2. Whole Staff Retreat Day 5 hours

All staff is introduced to the Restorative Practice Framework within the context of our Catholic faith. Explicit links are made to our Catholic Graduate Expectations, virtues and our Christian story.

3. Parent Workshop 1-2 hours

Parents are introduced to the same framework as school staff. Parents also receive a parent's booklet, which has background information and discussion, questions as well as graphics, from the key slides in the presentation.

4. Student – Introductory Workshops 30-90 minutes

These workshops provide a foundational understanding on Restorative Practice for all students K-12. Teachers need to be present at the student workshop(s) in order to build upon this experience when integrating restorative processes into classroom practice. Teachers and support staff are expected to attend a 30 minute debriefing session at the end of the day.

5. Capacity Building

Growing and sustaining Restorative Practice requires schools to develop their own capacity to make this happen. This will assist them acquire a sound understanding of Restorative Practice in order to educate others

- Two day conference facilitator training for principals to facilitate formal restorative conferences for more serious incidents
- Classroom meetings for teachers that can be utilized for community building, teaching and learning and addressing classroom management. Resources/training opportunities are provided by contacting your Crisis Worker
- Conducting ongoing training for new teachers and parents, as well as new students
- Promoting Restorative Practice with agencies and other providers
- Refer often to Restorative Questions (posted in classrooms/hallways)

Key Resources & Contacts

- <http://www.iirp.org/>
- <http://www.realjustice.org/>
- <http://www.safersanerschools.org/>
- Amstutz & Mullet, The Little Book of Restorative Discipline for Schools, Good Books: Intercourse, PA, 2005.
- Hopkins, Belinda. Just Schools: A Whole School Approach to Restorative Justice, Kingsley Publishers, 2004.
- Nouwen, Henri J.M. The Return of the Prodigal Son: A Story of Homecoming, Doubleday, 1992.
- Styles, Donna. Class Meetings: Building Leadership, Problem-Solving and Decision Making Skills in the Respectful Classroom, Pembroke Publishers, 2001.
- Shapiro, Stan & Skinulis, Karen. Classrooms that Work: A Teacher's Guide to Discipline Without Stress, Practical Parenting, 1996,
- Morrison, Brenda. Restoring Safe School Communities: A Whole School Response to Bullying, Violence and Alienation, Federation Press, 2007
- Huthcison, Katy Walking After Midnight: One Woman's Journey Through Murder, Justice and Forgiveness
- **Beyond Zero Tolerance:** Restorative Practices in Schools (video)
- **Building Our Community:** Collingwood Primary School (video)
- **Burning Bridges:** documentary about the arson of Mood's Bridge and the restorative conference held in its wake

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