The use of Restorative Justice to resolve conflict in middle schools

Packet documents

This packet for the workshop of Restorative Justice in schools will contain the following information:

- A workshop schedule
- A copy of the power point presentation for you to follow and take notes.
- A Peace Circle Overview from ICEARY – Illinois Coalition for Educating at Risk Youth
- A hand out describing a circle exercise to be performed amongst group
- A handout for a group exercise on peer mediation
- A workshop evaluation form
## Welcome / Introductions (9:00 - 9:10)

- Introduction to Restorative Practices (9:10 - 9:20)
- Why should schools use restorative justice (9:20 - 10:05)

## Using restorative discipline (10:05 - 10:50)

### Break (10:50 - 11:00)

### Reflection from Section 1 (11:00 - 11:20)

## Restorative justice in schools (11:20 - 11:30)

- Video

## Group exercise - Peer medication (11:30 - 12:15)

### Lunch (12:15 - 1:15)

### Reflection from section 2 (1:20 - 1:40)

## Peacemaking circle training (1:40 - 2:25)

- Colorado high school replaces punishment with ‘talking circles’ (2:25 - 2:35) Video

## Group exercise - Bullying (2:35 - 3:10)

### Challenges to implementation (3:10 - 3:35)

### Suggestions for implementing restorative justice (3:35 - 4:00)

### Break (4:00 - 4:10)

## Conclusion / Q & A (4:10 - 4:30)

### Evaluations (4:30 - 4:40)

### Group feedback

### Complete forms
Overview
The intentionality of the Peace Circle extends from many of the Native American and indigenous cultures of the world. By gathering as a whole to address issues related to a tribal member or to plan for potential action with outside threats, the Peace Circle has a long history of being able to bring a large group together to focus on a single cause. Applied within a Restorative Justice framework, the Peace Circle serves the purpose to create a setting where the student, his/her family, friends, stakeholders, teachers, community members, etc. join in a collective, safe, supportive setting to address ways in which the collective can provide support to the student. In more current forms, this process may look like a wraparound meeting or family conference, however, the Peace Circle emphasizes relationship building and support over provision of information and/or services.

Schedule
The Peace Circle will have a pre-determined schedule with in the school week where a student may be referred should a parent, teacher, stakeholder, etc. believe that the student is exhibiting behaviors that place him/her at great risk of being removed from the school setting. During the Circle session, there will be a facilitator who is responsible for scheduling and inviting participants. The Peace Circle Sessions will typically be scheduled on Mondays or Thursdays from 1:11p-1:54p on regular school days. Circle meetings may be scheduled on other days as necessary.

What it looks like...
The Peace Circle meeting will consist of all participants sitting in a circle. The facilitator has the option of playing music softly in the background as members arrive. Music should be appropriate in content and facilitate a peaceful environment. Upon arrival, the facilitator may open the session by reading a poem, quote, story, etc. that prepares the members for the circle session. All members will then introduce themselves, including the facilitator, who will identify
his or her role to the members of the circle. Members will inform the group of their relationship to the student.

The facilitator will designate a talking piece, which can be something of value to the student, or simply a designated object that holds a certain value to the members. This can be a painted rock, a wooden staff, a certain book, etc. The facilitator will review the group norms regarding code of conduct, respectful speech, and the purpose of the talking piece (i.e. the person with the talking piece is the only one allowed to speak).

The facilitator then opens the session with each member making a positive statement about the student given their individual relationship with the student. The student is then allowed an opportunity to respond. Each member then will discuss how the student’s behavior is damaging the relationship that exists between the two and any concerns the member has with the direction of the student’s behavior. The student will have an opportunity to respond after each member’s comments. After all members who are willing to comment have done so, the student will then be allowed to comment on what it was like to hear all of the comments and be accountable to his/her behavior. The format follows that of the Peacemaking Process (see attached) however on a larger scale.

This process continues until all members including the student agree that the injustices and hurts have been recognized. At this time an agreement is created as to how the student will be accountable in the future and what the team is willing to do to ensure that the student continues to be supported. The team then creates a physical agreement, offering the opportunity for future meetings, and then drawing the circle to a close with a ritual. The ritual may be simply going around the circle and offering a word to describe how each member feels the success of the process. Or, the members may wish to end with a group hug or formal acknowledgement of the student’s courage and honesty. It is up to the facilitator to ensure that space is created for drawing the meeting to a close and that the integrity of the agreement is upheld.

**Agreements**

One final word on agreements – If they cannot be upheld, do not make them. Too often our students agree to flippant expectations such as “I will just stay away from him/her.” These do
nothing to restore relationships. Remember, we are not attempting to make the students/teachers best friends, but rather respect each other’s role in the other person’s life. Agreements should foster that relationship. The agreement should be outline how each person wishes to be respected as an individual given their role in the other’s life. A teacher may request that the student not ask others for assistance unless involved in a group activity. There should not be an onslaught of agreements in the follow-up plan, but there should be enough that all parties feel like the other is being accountable.

Follow-up Plan

If a student has been referred for a Peace Circle, there should always be a follow-up plan. The follow-up plan begins with scheduling a date and time for the team to meet once again to verify that the agreements are being upheld. If time has been designated throughout the week for Peace Circle meetings, the follow-up should be scheduled during those times.

At the follow-up meeting, the format is the same, however the bulk of the conversation is feedback regarding the previously made agreements. If agreements are being kept, members should join in celebrating the student/teacher success. If agreements are not being kept, the student/teacher and members discuss reasons why and the impact it has had on all members. If the agreement needs to be modified or further consequences provided given the circumstances of the conflict, then it is up to school administration to make that decision.

The participating members are able to determine if additional follow-up meetings are necessary and schedule accordingly. There is no minimum/maximum for scheduled follow-ups. If the student/teacher and members determine that the agreement has been kept and no additional follow-up meetings are required, the facilitator should bring the circle to a close and celebrate the accomplishments of everyone participating.
The Peacemaking Process

1. Invitation/Safety.
   a. “Is everyone willing to search for a constructive, fair, and just agreement?
      Can we agree to use option #4 or #3? (If no, should we use option #2 or #1?)

2. Ground rules. (Ask for agreement to each)
   a. “Follow the Process”
   b. “If process seems unfair, say so”
   c. “No interrupting”
   d. “Be willing to summarize”

3. Celebrate
   a. Single Sentence – Members celebrate a positive trait of student/teacher involved in the conflict in a single sentence.

4. Describe, Summarize, and Recognize.
   a. Person A – “Describe how you experienced the problem, conflict, or injustice.”
      Person B – “Summarize.”
   b. Person B – “Describe how you experienced the problem, conflict, or injustice.”
      Person A – “Summarize.”
      Have experiences been recognized? If no, repeat 3.

5. Search for Agreements that will:
   a. Restore Equity. “How can you make things as right as possible now?”
      And
   b. Clarify Future Intentions. “How can you prevent this from happening again?”

   a. Write agreement (when possible). Set follow-up meeting. Congratulate for being cooperative. (If no agreement, return to 1 above.)

7. Conclude
   a. Ritual closing of meeting with celebration, action-oriented conclusion, etc.

8. Follow-up. Are all agreements being kept? If yes, celebrate. If problems are reported, repeat process.
   “Trust grows when agreements are made and kept.”
Circle Activity

Conduct a community circle in the classroom to discuss peacemaking. Everyone can sit on the floor or in chairs in a circle. A talking piece - a stone, a feather, a stick: is used to direct the conversation. The circle keeper passes the talking piece in a clockwise direction. Whoever has the object has the floor, and everyone else listens. He or she may speak or pass the talking object to the next person in the circle. The talking piece may be passed around the circle several times. All opinions are honored in the circle. There is no right or wrong answers.

When holding the talking piece you show respect to the circle and to each other by:

- Speaking from the heart;
- Speaking with respect (no name calling or put downs);
- Speaking briefly so that everyone will have time to speak;
- Speaking on the topic.

KEEPER’S ROLE

The keeper of the circle may summarize ideas that have been expressed, and pose other questions to be discussed. The keeper may write ideas on poster paper so that all can keep track of the discussion. The keeper may open or close the circle session with a reading or poem about peace, about community or about hope.

Group Exercise

Choose a group member to be a circle keeper and another to be a victim of bullying.

Let’s assume the victim is being bullied by the other members of the group because she is very shy and very reserved.

Using the peace circle technique, how would a resolution be reached to help stop the bullying.

Be ready to discuss the outcome in 20 minutes.
Resolving Conflict
with a
Peer Mediation Program

Group exercise

A Manual for Grades 4-8

By Maureen F. Block and Barbara Blazej

2005

A collaborative project of the Peace Studies Program, University of Maine, and
Maine Law & Civics Education, University of Southern Maine,
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Sample Scenarios, Role-Plays, and Scripts
(For peer mediation training and practice)

1. The disputants, Jimmy and Kate, have been arguing over kickball teams out on the playground and have been referred for mediation. Jimmy wants it to be boys against girls. Kate thinks mixed teams would be fairer.

2. Sally lends Peter her new box of colored pencils. When he returns them, there are several that are broken. Peter says they were like that, Sally says they weren’t. They have been referred for mediation.

3. Leslie brings a new CD player to school and finds that at recess time it is missing. Later, she sees that Ben has it in his backpack. He claims it is his. They have been referred for mediation.

4. Kyle doesn’t want to have any younger students be allowed to play soccer. Andrea, a fourth grader, wants to play. They haven’t been able to work it out and have been referred to mediation.
Implementing RJ in Schools
Workshop evaluation

Your feedback is critical to ensure I am meeting your educational needs. I would appreciate if you could take a few minutes to share your opinions with me so I can serve you better.

Please return this form to the instructor or organizer at the end of the workshop. Thank you.

Workshop title: __________________________________________________________________________

Date: ____________________        Instructor: _________________________________

1. The content was as described in an effective manner
   1 2 3 4 5

2. The workshop was applicable to my job
   1 2 3 4 5

3. I will recommend this workshop to other administrators
   1 2 3 4 5

4. The workshop was well paced within the allotted time
   1 2 3 4 5

5. The instructor was a good communicator
   1 2 3 4 5

6. The material was presented in an organized manner
   1 2 3 4 5

7. The instructor was knowledgeable on the topic
   1 2 3 4 5

8. I would be interested in attending a follow-up, more advanced workshop on this same subject
   1 2 3 4 5

9. Given the topic, was this workshop: □ a. Too short □ b. Right length □ c. Too long

10. In your opinion, was this workshop: □ a. Introductory □ b. Intermediate □ c. Advanced

11. Please rate the following:

   a. Visuals
      Excellent □ Very Good □ Good □ Fair □ Poor □
   b. Acoustics
      □ □ □ □ □
   c. Meeting space
      □ □ □ □ □
   d. Handouts
      □ □ □ □ □
   e. The program overall
      □ □ □ □ □

12. What did you most appreciate/enjoy/think was best about the course? Any suggestions for improvement?