

Foundations of Restorative Practices

Department of Family & Community
Engagement

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Restorative Practices is all about relationships.

Icebreaker exercise to connect: (mingling pairs, groups, circle share)

- Name, position/school
- When do you feel most energized in your work?
- What gifts do you bring to the students and colleagues that you work with? What makes you a good teacher/colleague?
- Describe your perfect Saturday
- Something you've always wanted to learn how to do



Restorative Justice

- Restorative Justice reflects ancient beliefs and practices of Indigenous peoples on many continents.
- Building community based on shared values and shared humanity.
- People in the community treat each other like relatives, where everyone belongs, and everyone matters.

Restorative *Practices*, as we know it today in schools, grew out of Restorative *Justice*. Restorative *Justice* reflects ancient beliefs and practices of indigenous people on many continents. Restorative Justice is rooted in interdependence and the belief that we are stronger together and that each person brings value to the community (“It takes a village to raise a child.”)

Below is a brief overview of the evolution from restorative justice to the modern criminal justice system we have today. This focuses on our response to conflict and harm.

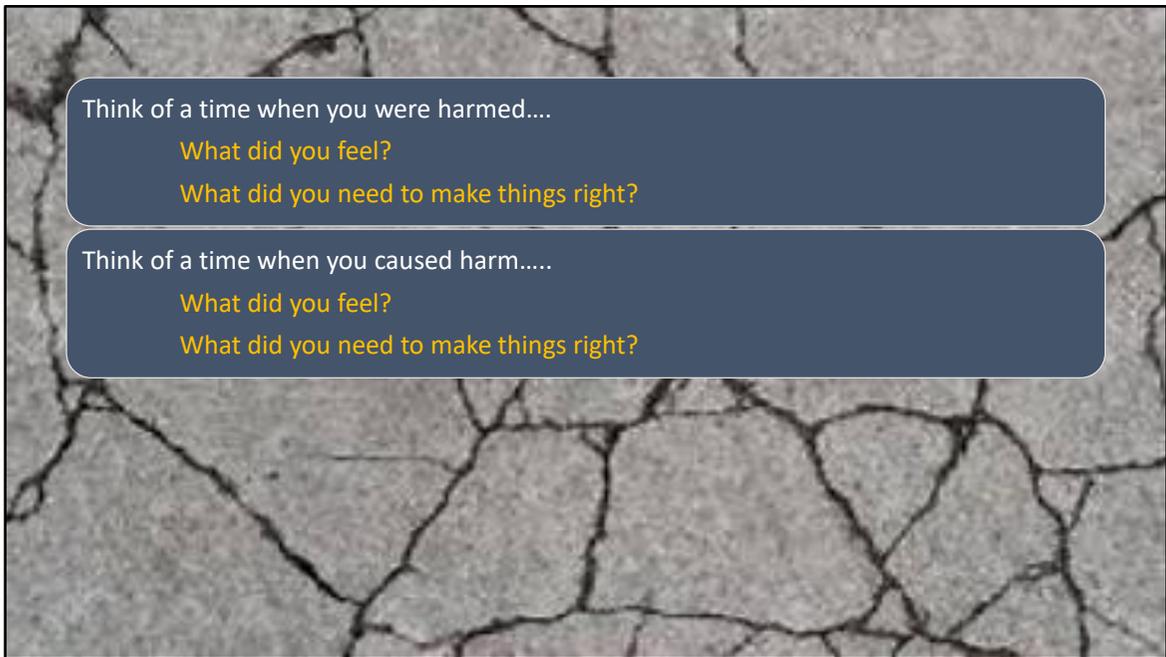
If you think about hunter/gatherer societies, everyone played a critical and unique role to survival. If the strongest hunter committed an offense against a member of the group, the group could not afford to use exclusion as punishment, because they needed that strong hunter for survival. So instead, the people who were most impacted by the offense and others in the community came together to find ways for the person to make things as right as possible. This meant meeting the unique needs of the people harmed and realigning with the group’s values and norms.

But as societies developed and modernized, people created systems of governing that, in the words of Nils Christie, essentially took conflicts away from the people. In these

state-centered systems, when a law is broken, the State (prosecutor) steps in on behalf of the victim and essentially says, we'll take it from here. For example, if Anna stole Nicole's computer, instead of the conflict being *Nicole v. Anna*, it becomes *State v. Anna*. Nicole, as the victim, is moved to the side and the legal system tells Nicole and Anna not to communicate or to have any contact. Anna's attorney advises her to stay silent and to not apologize or take any accountability. The system generally offers the following responses - financial restitution and/or incarceration. But does this meet the unique needs of victims? Maybe Nicole wants to ask Anna why she stole her computer, or maybe Nicole wants to tell her how that impacted her, or maybe she wants to know if she's going to target her again. And does this response address the unique relationship between Anna and Nicole?

There are certainly legitimate reasons for the current state-controlled system – Efficiency, consistency, a sense of fairness/neutrality, safety for victims in certain situations. But what was lost in this shift is the opportunity for the impacted people to determine for themselves how to make things right, based on their individual needs. And for the person who caused harm to participate in a process where they can understand the impact of their behavior, take accountability, and be responsible for the repair. And ultimately rejoin the community as a contributing member.

Is there a way for the state-centered system and a restorative approach to coexist? What are the benefits of each? What does this look like in practice? How does this relate to our response to conflict and harm in our schools?



Each person and situation is unique in terms of what needs to happen to make things as right as possible. A restorative process is designed to meet the individual needs of the people who are impacted.

The child who is not embraced by the village will burn it down to feel its warmth

-African Proverb

What does this quote mean to you?

When we exclude or shame a person, we actually increase the harm for everyone and we all suffer. Perhaps you can recall a time when you saw this play out with a student, or maybe you can recall a time when you felt like the excluded one. How does it feel to be pushed out and how does that impact our behavior towards the group? Are we likely to act with kindness and generosity towards the group, or are we more likely to act out of shame, anger, fear, in a way that might harm members of the group?

Psychiatrist William Glasser identified our basic human needs: belonging, power, freedom, and fun. When these needs are not met, conflict generally arises. When we are excluded, our need for belonging is not met.

Restorative *Practices*

- Strategies and processes that proactively build healthy relationships and that respond to conflict through a relational lens.
- At SPS, the standard approach to student behavior is to utilize Restorative Practices.



Schools everywhere are using a Restorative Justice approach to conflict, (many are calling it Restorative Practices). Restorative Practices means that we view conflict through the lens of relationships. It is both proactive and responsive.

A spider web analogy is helpful....Think of the spider web as our school or classroom community. Each point of connection represents a relationship between people. The web is strong because we are all connected. When there is a conflict or harm between people, that creates a tear in the web. That relationship is broken. Does this tear make our community stronger or weaker? Weaker.....we all suffer, we're all affected. And what happens if our response is to simply remove that broken link in the web (exclude those people)? Does this make the web stronger or weaker? Weaker. The goal of restorative practices is to 1) proactively create strong relationships (strong links in the web); and 2) use processes that repair harm and rebuild relationships after harm or conflict occur (repair the tear in the web). By doing this, our whole community is stronger.

A restorative culture is created in our schools through strategies and processes that:

- build healthy relationships and belonging to *prevent* conflict, and that
- repair harm and strengthen relationships *after* conflict occurs.

The common theme of all restorative processes are that they are dialogical (so verbal connection/face-to-face communication), which create emotional bonds and stronger relationships.

At Spokane Public Schools, we strive to create a **safe** and **supportive** learning environment for all students and staff. We want all SPS families to feel **connected** to their schools and to feel **understood, heard, and respected**.



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Conflicts are a part of daily life and making mistakes is a part of growing and learning. With this in mind, **SPS embraces a restorative approach to conflict**, meaning that we see conflicts and harmful behavior as an opportunity for students and staff to:

- Learn about themselves and each other
- Take accountability
- Develop empathy
- Repair harm and restore relationships
- Identify supports that meet the individual needs for each of our students.

*Excerpt from
SPS webpage on
Restorative Practices*

Here is the language from the SPS website.

1. The first paragraph describes a restorative school. This is an environment that we want to create for our students, their families, and our staff. This environment meets our need for belonging.
2. The second paragraph talks about how we view conflicts at SPS – conflicts are a part of daily life and a natural part of being in community together. Instead of viewing conflict as bad and a reason to exclude or punish, we choose to see conflicts as an opportunity to grow and learn and strengthen our relationships with one another.
3. When conflict arises, a restorative process gives students, families and staff an opportunity to:
 - Learn about themselves and each other
 - Take accountability
 - Develop empathy
 - Repair harm and restore relationships
 - Identify supports that meet the individual needs for each of our students.

See SPS Policy and Procedure 3240: Student Behavior, Rules of Conduct, Restorative

Practices and Corrective Action (Adopted August 2016)

An
opportunity
to learn and
grow...

If a child doesn't know how to read, we teach.

If a child doesn't know how to swim, we teach.

If a child doesn't know how to add or subtract, we teach.

If a child doesn't know how to drive, we teach.

If a child doesn't know how to behave, we....?



Restorative Processes are an opportunity for staff to teach and model social and emotional skills. Research shows that social and emotional skills are highly correlated with academic success and overall life success.

“The Future of Education Depends on Social Emotional Learning: Here’s Why” By Biancarlo Brott, June 4, 2018. Excerpt:

Social and emotional abilities are said to be indicators of how well a person adjusts to his or her environment, adapts to change and, ultimately, how successful she or he will be in life. In fact, core development abilities such as conscientiousness, emotional stability, openness and agreeableness can be as or even more important than cognitive intelligence in determining future employment. Despite these competencies being related to consequential life outcomes, it can be challenging for educators to find effective ways to prioritize, teach and assess social and emotional skills.

Developing these core life abilities through social and emotional learning (SEL) is critical to a child’s development, as it directly correlates to success and happiness as an adult. For many children, school is the only place where any deficiencies in these

abilities can be addressed before they become active members of society.

Combining these skills with academic development creates high-quality learning experiences and environments that empower students to be more effective contributors in their classrooms today and in their workplaces and communities tomorrow.



“The Why” of Restorative Practices at SPS (Video) <https://youtu.be/nUIRkuOftw0>

Optional Activity: Pause video after the following sections to allow for discussion.

First Section: Building Relationships and Creating a Sense of Belonging. Trusting relationships help students feel safe and respected so they can learn. A sense of belonging is a basic need of being connected and cared for.

How was this demonstrated in the video?

What does this look like in your classroom/school?

Second Section: Being Accountable and Making Agreements. Accountability happens when students fix the harm and find a solution to the conflict. Making agreements teaches problem solving and offers intrinsic motivation for change.

How was this demonstrated in the video?

What does this look like in your classroom/school?

Third Section: Positive Outcomes. Schools where restorative practices are fully implemented develop a positive climate for learning with greater trust, stronger

relationships with students and families, and fewer suspensions.

How was this shown in the video?

What positive outcomes do you experience by using Restorative Practices?



Restorative Practice Assumptions

1. The world is profoundly interconnected
2. All human beings have a deep desire to be in good relationship
3. All human beings have inherent dignity
4. All human beings have gifts and everyone is needed for what they bring
5. The people most affected by a conflict should drive the process for repair
6. Harmful behavior often comes from unmet needs; A response that *pushes away* generally increases harm and a response that *pulls in closer* helps reduce future harm.
7. People will make positive changes when those in authority do things *with* them, rather than *to* or *for* them.

Derived from and build on indigenous teachings and other wisdom traditions. Excerpted from Heart of Hope and Circle Forward by Carolyn Boyes-Watson and Kay Pranis, as well as Boston Public Schools.

Restorative Practices means that you view conflict through a relational lens and it is grounded in core assumptions. If these assumptions are present, the strategies often come naturally.

1. The world is profoundly interconnected: Every action we take impacts others and impacts our environment.
2. All human beings have a deep desire to be in good relationship: Connection/belonging is a basic human need and when this is not met, conflict can arise.
3. All human beings have inherent dignity
4. All human beings have gifts and everyone is needed for what they bring. We must appreciate and value our differences.
5. The people most affected by a conflict should drive the process for repair. The people most impacted know what they need to heal and repair. A response to conflict and harm should not be one-size-fits all.

6. Harmful behavior often comes from unmet needs; A response that *pushes away* generally increases harm and a response that *pulls in closer* helps reduce future harm.
7. People will make positive changes when those in authority do things *with* them, rather than *to* or *for* them. Restorative practices believes that behavior change from internal motivation, not coercion or punishment.

Two Different Views of Misbehaviors -a paradigm shift-

Punitive View

1. What rule was broken?
2. Who did it?
3. System assigns consequence or punishment

Restorative View

1. What relationships were broken? Who was harmed?
2. Why did this happen? Whose needs were not met?
3. The impacted parties control how harm is repaired and needs are met

This slide compares a punitive response and a restorative response

First Question:

Punitive: When a person's behavior causes harm, the punitive view focuses on what rule or law was broken. The behavior is seen as a violation of the system, school, or whatever body created the law or rule.

Restorative: Conversely, when a person's behavior causes harm in a restorative culture, we want to know what relationships were broken by this behavior. Who was impacted? Who was harmed? Remember, a restorative approach operates from the belief that we are all interconnected through a web of relationships. So when conflict occurs, it means that there is a tear in the web. This tear impacts not only the individual people who are directly involved, but the community as a whole.

Second Question:

Punitive: The next question in a punitive system is “who did it?” The inquiry is focused on the person who caused harm and determining guilt/fault.

Restorative: If we apply a restorative lens, we are interested in understanding why the person behaved this way. What needs of theirs were not being met and why?

Third Question:

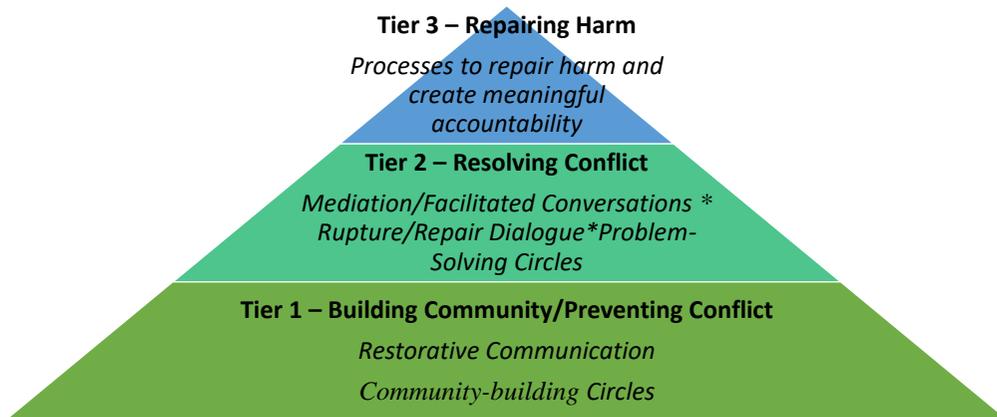
Punitive: Finally, in a punitive system, the system assigns a punishment or consequence.

- So - you broke X rule, so you get Y consequence.
- It is often one-sized-fits all, rather than tailored to the individual person.
- Often the punishment includes exclusion from the community and a degree of shaming.
- Also, the person receiving the punishment simply receives it. They have a passive role.

Restorative: Conversely, in a restorative system, we facilitate a process of reflection and dialogue that asks - what needs to happen to repair the tear in the web of relationships, and whose obligations are those?

- The person who caused the harm takes an active role in meeting the needs of those harmed, takes accountability, and is supported by the community in changing their behavior.
- The person who was harmed has an opportunity to share their perspective, to ask questions, and to identify their individual needs for repair. Their input helps determine what happens as a result of the misbehavior.

Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Framework



This shows how restorative processes fit within the MTSS framework.

Tier 1 – Proactive strategies and processes for everyone, to help build strong relationships and a sense of belonging.

Tier 2 – Processes to resolve conflict (mutual conflict)

Tier 3 – Processes to repair harm and create meaningful accountability (victim / offender)

Tier 1 Restorative Practices

Purpose: To create strong relationships and a sense of belonging for all

Community-Building Circles:

A regular practice where everyone has an equal opportunity to share. Circles follow a structure that include a facilitator, group agreements, a talking piece, and prompts. Circles are a great way for students to practice social emotional skills and to develop empathy.

For more resources on Circles, visit [Family Engagement / Resources for Schools \(spokaneschools.org\)](https://spokaneschools.org/family-engagement/resources-for-schools)

Tier 1 Restorative Practices

Purpose: To create strong relationships and a sense of belonging for all

Restorative Communication:

Affective Statements: to demonstrate understanding and empathy

“I observeI feel I need.... my request....”

Restorative Questions: for clarification, reflection and problem solving

What happened? Thoughts, feelings, harm done?

What do you need? How do we fix the problem?

What’s the plan? An agreement for the future

Making Affective Statements

Typical Response	Affective Statement
Sit down and be quiet	I see you walking around the room and talking while I am teaching. I feel upset because I really value (need) cooperation and respect. Could I ask you how that sounds to you?
I don't want to see you fighting with James	When I saw you put your hands on James, I was concerned because I really want everyone to feel safe in our classroom. Would you be willing to tell me what happened between you two?
I don't want to hear you arguing with him anymore. Just walk away.	When I hear major arguments, I feel sad that you are not resolving your conflict in a positive way. Would you be willing to talk it out in a calm manner after practice?

Here are more examples of Affective statements vs. Typical Responses. Affective statements gives adults an opportunity to share their feelings which helps to humanize and build the relationships.

Restorative Questions

1. What happened?

How were you feeling? What were you thinking?
Who was hurt by what happened?

2. What do you need?

How do you want things to change?
How do we fix the problem together?

3. What's the plan?

What needs to be done to make things right?
What is our agreement for the future?

Preparing for a Restorative Talk

1. Be calm
2. Be curious about the student's culture and perspective - Open Mind
3. Suspend judgement - Open Heart
4. Use active listening and supportive language
5. Offer time and personal space

Tier 2 Restorative Practices

Purpose: To resolve conflicts in a way that repairs harm and strengthens relationships

Facilitated Dialogue (sometimes called a Mediation): Can be an effective strategy when the people involved in the conflict each have roles and responsibilities in its resolution.

The facilitator must be neutral and the participants must be willing to listen with an open-mind, to share honestly, and to work together towards an agreement that repairs harm and resolves the conflict.

The facilitator uses clarifying questions to help participants identify needs and explore options for mutual gain.

For more resources on facilitated dialogues to resolve conflict, visit: [Family Engagement / Resources for Schools \(spokaneschools.org\)](https://spokaneschools.org/family-engagement/resources-for-schools)

Steps to a Facilitated Dialogue to Resolve Conflict

Step 1: Pre-conferences

The facilitator meets individually with each person to hear their perspective on the conflict and to determine whether they are good candidates for a facilitated dialogue.

Step 2: Agree to Participate

Participants understand and sign the groundrules for participation.

Step 3: Share Point of View

The facilitator gives each person an equal opportunity to share their perspective on what happened and how they feel about the conflict/situation.

- *What happened?*
- *What were you thinking/feeling at the time?*
- *Who else was affected by what happened?*

- *How has the conflict changed your relationship?*
- *What do you feel is the major problem to be resolved?*

Step 4: Identify Needs and Interests

The facilitator gives each person an equal opportunity to share their needs and interests.

- *What do you need in order to fix the problem?*
- *How do you want things to change?*
- *What might happen if this doesn't get resolved?*
- *What do you want the other person to understand about where you are coming from?*
- *What questions do you have for the other person?*

Step 5: Brainstorm Solutions: Create Win-Win Options

The facilitator asks the participants to brainstorm possible solutions. The facilitator guides the process, but lets the participants “do the work.” The facilitator takes notes to capture all ideas.

- *What ideas do you have that would help resolve the conflict?*
- *What possible solutions would fix the harm?*
- *What options can you think of to prevent the situation from happening in the future?*

Step 6: Evaluate Options

Evaluate which option would work best and what people are willing to do.

- *Which idea will resolve the problem?*
- *Do you think it will work for both of you?*
- *Does it fix the harm? Is it fair?*

Step 6: Write the Agreement

The final step is to write and sign an agreement. The agreement should be balanced, mutually satisfying, specific, realistic, and fair. The agreement should address what, if anything, can be shared with others (confidentiality), and should address the plan if the agreement is broken.

- *What are you willing to do?*
- *Is the problem resolved?*
- *What have you agreed to?*

Tier 2 Restorative Practices

Purpose: To resolve conflicts in a way that repairs harm and strengthens relationships

Rupture/Repair Dialogue: When an adult is in conflict with a student, it is the adult's responsibility to initiate repair. A repair conversation can occur after everyone is calm. The adult must have a restorative mindset and can follow restorative questions to guide the conversation (share perspectives, identify needs, and create an agreement).

Tier 2 Restorative Practices

Purpose: To resolve conflicts in a way that repairs harm and strengthens relationships

Problem-Solving Circles: (Responsive Circles) Can be used to process and respond to a conflict, oftentimes a violation of a class agreement or school expectation.

The circle follows a structure, including a facilitator, circle agreements, a talking piece, and prompts.

In a classroom, 80% of circles should be proactive and 20% should be responsive.

For more resources on Circles, visit: [Family Engagement / Resources for Schools \(spokaneschools.org\)](https://spokaneschools.org)

Tier 3 Restorative Practices

Purpose: To repair harm and create an opportunity for meaningful accountability

Process to Repair Harm:

When behavior causes harm in our schools, a restorative process empowers the people who were harmed by creating a safe space to share their experiences, ask questions, and identify what they need to feel whole again. For the person who caused harm, the process provides an opportunity to take accountability, understand the impact of their behavior, and create a plan to prevent future harm.

This process can occur in lieu of other discipline, alongside other discipline, or upon re-entry to school after exclusionary discipline.

For more resources on processes to repair harm, visit: [Family Engagement / Resources for Schools \(spokaneschools.org\)](https://spokaneschools.org/family-engagement-resources)



If we want young people to be accountable for their actions and to repair damage to relationships in the event of a conflict, then we need to develop relationships in the first place. There needs to be something there to repair.

*~Belinda Hopkins
Director, Transforming Conflict*

Restorative strategies that proactively build relationships (Tier 1) create a critical foundation for resolving conflicts restoratively.

We can't restore until we *Regulate* *The brain and conflict*

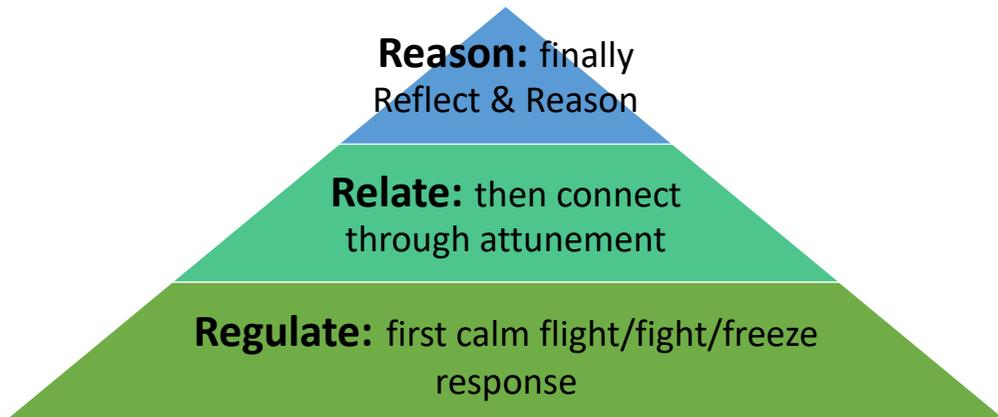
- Conflict situations can bring on strong emotions and feelings.
- Neuroscience tells us that the brain needs to be regulated in order to think and problem solve.
- Trauma or Adverse Childhood Experiences can affect students' ability to handle stress and the brain becomes dysregulated
- Students who experience trauma live in a chronic state of fear, they can become rude and disrespectful when asked restorative questions. Create a safe place and give them time to regulate.

It is important to consider our response to conflict Did it escalate or de-escalate the situation?

Staying regulated is the key for everyone involved. When students or staff feel fearful, unsafe, disrespected, or challenged, their brain goes off-line and its impossible to be restorative. In the heat of the moment, mirror neurons are firing...escalating conflict. Take time to breath, make space to reflect, and offer support to communicate the importance of the relationship and the resolution of the conflict. Trauma-Informed practices and de-escalation skills are critical to facilitating successful restorative practices.

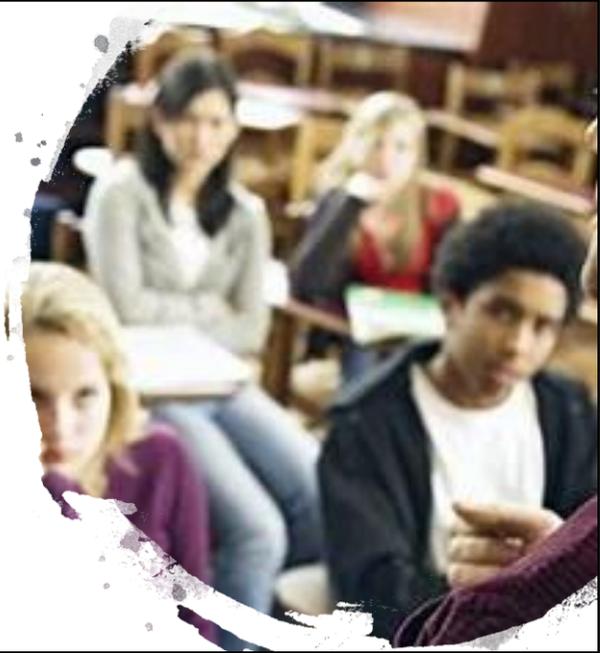
<https://youtu.be/KoqaUANGvpA>

Approach others from a bottom-up perspective



“Children cannot develop healthy self regulatory skills unless they see adults consistently addressing their own emotions in healthy ways.”

- Dr. Becky Bailey (Conscious Discipline)



We need to model this for our students.

How do you calm yourself down? What are your triggers? What systems are in place in your school to support you and your colleagues in wellness and regulation?

"Imagine you are walking in the woods and you see a small dog sitting by a tree. As you approach it, it suddenly lunges at you, teeth bared.

You are frightened and angry. But then you notice that one of its legs is caught in a trap.

Immediately your mood shifts from anger to concern: You see that the dog's aggression is coming from a place of vulnerability and pain.

This applies to all of us. When we behave in hurtful ways, it is because we are caught in some kind of trap.

The more we look through the eyes of wisdom at ourselves and one another, the more we cultivate a compassionate heart."
Tara Brach



This is a call for empathy: Understanding of another's situation, feelings and motivations. A restorative mindset is curious, open, non-judgmental.

Additional Resources

SPS Restorative Practices Webpage

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You can find powerpoints, videos, handouts, etc on each of the restorative strategies highlighted in this training on the Department of Family and Community Engagement webpage at: [Family Engagement / Restorative Practices \(spokaneschools.org\)](https://spokaneschools.org/family-engagement/restorative-practices)