Frequently Asked Questions on Restorative Practices in Schools June Trainings

I’m new to restorative practices (RP). Should I go to the Monday Foundations on RP training and then attend the four-day circle training? Or is foundations material covered in the four-day day circle training?

The foundations training is its own session. Most of the material covered is not reviewed in circle training. In foundations we talk about needs, principles, practices, the brain and shame, the history of RP in schools and evaluation and research. We also provide an implementation overview. The day starts and ends in small values and reflection circles. The trainers of all the other practices recommend that participants attend foundations.

We are sending a team. Should everyone go to the same session?

When everyone is new to restorative practices, it can be a good team-building experience for everyone on the team to attend a circle training. The common experience plus the opportunity to get to know each other is a new way to strengthen bonds between each other. However, if team members have different levels of knowledge or lived experience, consider sending some team members to more advanced trainings.

Teams should consider attending different trainings, so that when the team returns to the school, they can draw upon their collective wisdom. Some sessions are scheduled so that team members can attend practices training such as using Restorative Language and Chats, Circle to Teach, or Circle Equity Discussion as well as a two-day Ways of Exploring: Implementation session.

I have been to a circle training and my school wants me to be a trainer. What should I attend?

A good trainer has attended trainings such as Circle, Circle or Conferencing to Repair Harm, Restorative Language and Chats and has experience using restorative practices in many different situations and can teach. People with experience may want to attend a training to learn how the trainers teach it. Likewise, a good trainer deepens their experience. Attending the Circle Keeper Training can give you the opportunity to ask other circle keepers and the trainers how you might introduce circle to your peers.

Are there pre-requisites for attending the advanced trainings?

You will have a more satisfying experience with the advanced trainings if you have had training, practice or cultural experience with the circle process. Understanding the underlying principles to restorative practices, which is covered in RP Foundations, helps support learning the practices themselves—listening and speaking empathetically, circle or conferencing to repair harm, the restorative questions, and building community.
**Why is there a session for administrators?**

Administrators who are working to implement restorative practices in their schools have identified the need to be able to talk with other administrators about several topics, including approaching discipline differently, working with staff, considering policy changes and the paradigm shift needed to fully implement restorative practices.

**Why is there a session on equity?**

Restorative practices offer a way to create a more equitable school by welcoming all voices, addressing needs of all members of the school community, and giving the people most affected by harm the collective decision-making ability to repair that harm and support each other. Equity initiatives provide strong reasons for doing discipline differently. Restorative practices—and the circle process—provide a way to not only address issues of inequity but also a respectful way to engage in conversation about equity.

*I have been to a circle training and a repair of harm training. I conduct repair of harm conferences or circles in my school. What should I attend next?*

Consider attending *Circle Keeper Training*, which gives you an opportunity to reflect with and tell stories to other keepers. If you work with students with special needs, consider attending *Restorative Practices and Special Education*. If you are a classroom teacher, consider attending *Using Circle to Teach* or *Equity Circle Discussions*.

**What is the difference between Conferencing to Repair Harm, Circle to Repair Harm and Family Group Conferencing?**

Conferencing is an incident-based process where the facilitator directs when people speak, and ensures that everyone is able to tell their story and develop agreement. Agreements in any restorative process are made by consensus.

Circle can be used for a one-time session to address an incident as well as an on-going process of support to address underlying needs. The facilitator, called a keeper, uses a talking piece to direct when people speak. When you have the piece, you get to talk. When you do not have the piece, you get to listen.

Family Group Conferencing is a model developed to address the needs of a student, their family and the school when the school is considering extended suspension, administrative transfer or expulsion. The facilitator directs the discussion and two sessions are usually held.

All repair of harm processes have three main parts, which include pre-meetings to invite and prepare participants, the face-to-face meeting or meetings, and follow-up for agreement completion. If you are doing repair of harm regularly, it is helpful to have training in all three models as different models can be useful in different situations.

**Where can I find more information?**

Contact Nancy Riestenberg, Restorative Practices Specialist, 651-582-8433.