

Restorative Practices



BOTH Formal Conference and Problem Solving Circle

- Sit in a circle
- All are given voice
- Provide high accountability
- Seek to repair the harm to the community
- Focus on the problem not the person
- Foster awareness of how others are affected and that forgiveness and healing can happen

Problem Solving Circle

- A number of rounds of questions are used
- Clear Circle Expectations upheld
- The responsibility of the problem is shared by the community
- The community shares in the repairing of the problem

Formal Conference

- Held for very serious behaviors
- Pre Conference for each participant
- All participants agree to participate in the formal conference session
- Specific seating arrangement
- Questions go to the person who created the harm then to those affected
- The person who created harm and those affected have supporters with them
- Others in the community that were harmed may be invited
- All participants create an agreement detailing how the person who created the harm will actively repair it

How is a Problem Solving Circle different from a Formal Restorative Conference?

There are several important similarities and shared practices. Both are intended to address and repair harm and restore community. Problem Solving Circles may focus on common behaviors that disrupt the work of a class, address tardiness or absenteeism, or confront challenges that happen when substitute teachers lead the class. Restorative Problem Solving Circles engage the capacity of the community itself to solve the issues at hand. Similarly, formal Restorative Conferences engage those affected by an incident to restore and repair relationships so that participants can return to working, learning and playing together.

Formal Restorative Conferencing is used for more serious situations, such as theft, substance use, violence, property damage, etc. and involves a great deal of advance preparation. Conference facilitators prepare each person taking part in the conference beforehand to work through the Restorative Questions of "What happened?" "What were you thinking of at the time?" "What are you thinking of now?" "Who or how have you been affected?" and "How can this be made right?" This pre-conference gives each participant an understanding of how the Restorative Conference works, and allows the facilitator to assess participants' readiness to engage in the process. Each pre-conference participant is asked if they are willing to commit to attend and participate in the conference.

For more resources and information on Restorative Practices see our website www.wishschools.org.