

Connecting Restorative School Practices to Brain Research and Bullying Prevention

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By
Chuck Saufler M.Ed.
www.safeschoolsforall.com
csaufler@safeschoolsforall.com

Research presented at the conference of the Association for Psychological Science in 2010 found that today's college students (n=14,000) are far less empathic than their counterparts 30 years ago with the sharpest drop in empathy occurring in the last nine years.

Konrath, S., O'Brien, E., Hsing, C., Changes in dispositional empathy in American college students over time: A meta-analysis. *Pers Soc Psychol Rev*, 2011 May;15(2):180-98. E pub 2010 Aug 5

What is the Problem?

A lack of **Connectedness...**

- close connections to other people
- deep connections to moral and spiritual meaning

...is a pervasive problem for today's youth.

Hardwired to Connect - <http://www.americanvalues.org/html/hardwired.html>
The New Scientific Case for Authoritative Communities

Findings from the Research on Climate and Connectedness

- School connectedness has a direct positive effect on academic achievement.
- As school climate improves relational aggression (bullying, harassment, fighting) decreases.
- The larger a student's social network the stronger the connection to school.

For more research on school bonding, climate, and connectedness go to:
<http://www.jhsph.edu/wingspread/Septemberissue.pdf>

Wingspread Declaration on School Connections

The most effective strategies for increasing the likelihood that students will be connected to school include:

- Implementing high standards and expectations and providing academic support to all students.
- Applying fair and consistent disciplinary policies that are collectively agreed upon and fairly enforced.
- Creating trusting relationships among students, teachers, staff, administrators, and families.

<http://www.jhsph.edu/wingspread/Septemberissue.pdf>

Wingspread (continued)

- Hiring and supporting capable teachers skilled in content, teaching techniques, and classroom management to meet each learner's needs.
- Fostering high parent/family expectations for school performance and school completion.
- Insuring that every student feels close to at least one supportive adult at school.

<http://www.jhsph.edu/wingspread/Septemberissue.pdf>

The Restorative Approach

Is a philosophy or guiding principle (not a program or specific activity) that sees all relationships as central to learning, growth and a healthy school climate for students and adults.

The Restorative Approach is about the context of your school or classroom.

Restorative practices create a relational context that will support and improve the implementation of any other program be it academic, or socially oriented, by creating a whole school environment of naturally occurring, supportive, recursive processes .

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What are we restoring?

- A sense of empowerment and self-efficacy to those involved in a conflict or incident.
(Changing Mindsets and/or Self-Theories – Carol Dweck)
- The well-being and health of a class/school/ community.
- Relationships that have been hurt, damaged or broken.
- The right and responsibility to make important decisions and resolve conflicts to those most involved in them and impacted by them.

What are we restoring?

(Continued)

- Those who do harm or wrong are restored within the community/classroom.
- Harmony, equilibrium, balance. (For us and our students.)
- Experience with fair process and equity.
- Self-respect, positive self-image, pride (in those who are harmed and those who harm).
- We are restoring "a sense of community in an increasingly disconnected world." (Restorative Practices Handbook, page 7)

Three Principles of Fair Process

- Engagement - Involving individuals in decisions that affect them prior to the decision being made
- Explanation - Explaining to everyone involved or affected by a decision the reason why/how the decision was made
- Expectation Clarity - making sure that everyone clearly understands the decision and what is expected of them in the future

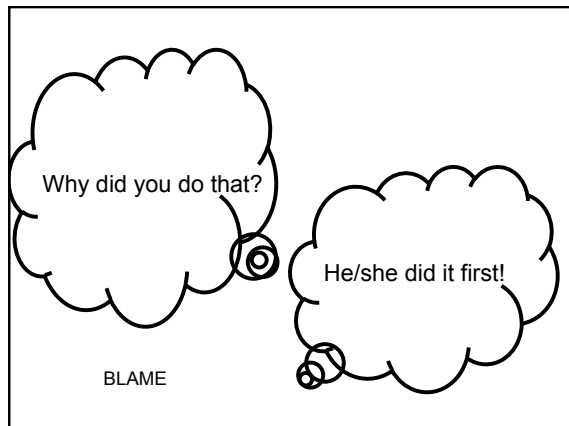
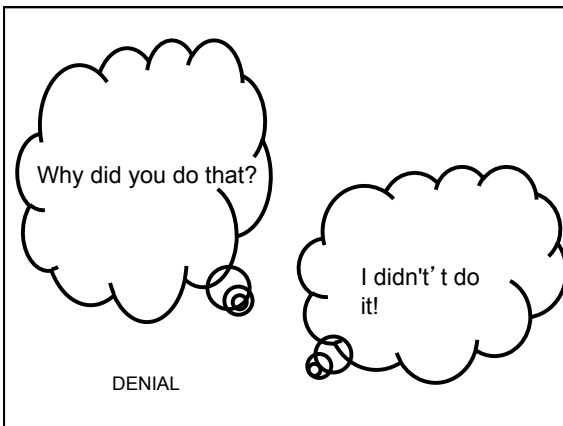
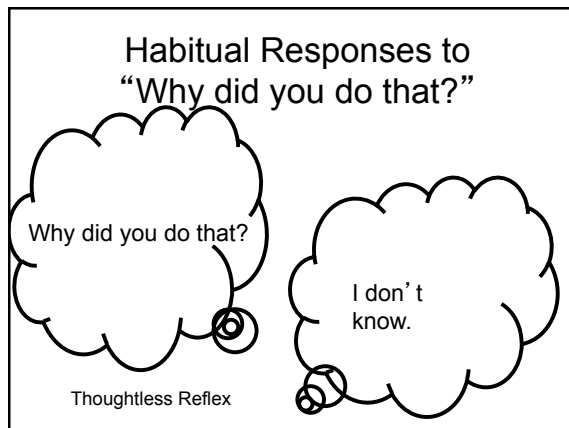
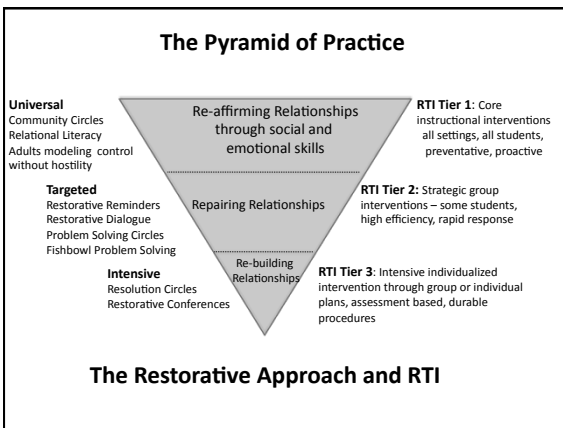
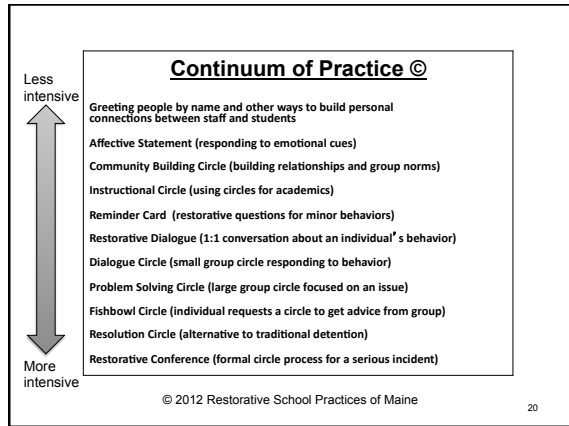
Leading theories of aggression contend that negative feelings resulting from peer conflict are especially likely to result in retaliation when they are accompanied by the belief that one is unlikely to be re-included (Williams, 2009).

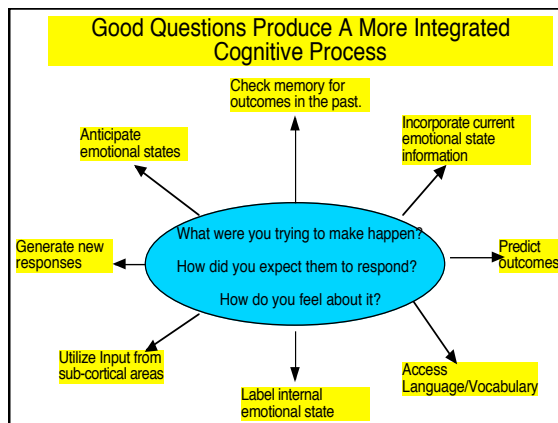
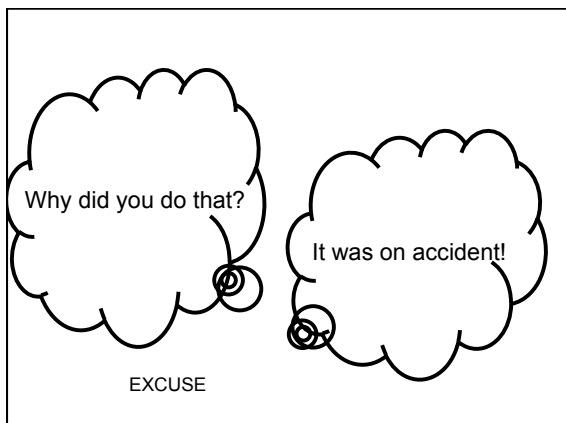
From : Adolescents' Implicit Theories Predict Desire for Vengeance After Remembered and Hypothetical Peer Conflicts: Correlational and Experimental Evidence 2010
David S. Yeager -Stanford University
Kali H. Trzesniewski -University of California, Davis
Kirsi Tirri and Petri Nokelainen- University of Helsinki
Carol S. Dweck- Stanford University

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Thinking Restoratively (or "being restorative") means responding ...

- With composure, empathy, balance, care, non-judgment,, humility...
- With curiosity, openness , acceptance
- Not taking things personally, seeing the value in everyone, not giving up on anyone, separating the actor from their actions, avoiding labels, working "with" others rather than doing "to" or "for" them...
- Recognizing the essential nature of relationships... shifting our thinking from "blame and punishment" to "harm and repair".





- Some examples of questions that teach reflective a reflective thought process:
- What are you doing ?
(responsibility)
 - Who is it affecting?
(empathy, cause/effect)
 - How is it affecting them?
(empathy)
 - How do you know it is affecting them that way?
(empathy,attunement,vocabulary)
 - What are you trying to make happen?
(cause /effect)
 - How else could you make that happen?
(problem solving, predicting)
 - What would that look/sound like?
(practice of assertiveness, self - control, vocabulary, attunement)
 - What should you do to make it right?
(compassion, problem solving, anticipating outcomes, social understanding)
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Processing Inappropriate Language

What did you say? or "I heard what you said."

What did you mean by that ?

What makes you think that what you said is an acceptable thing to say?

How did that affect the person you said it to?

How do you know? What did their face and body tell you?

How do you think it affected other people who heard it?

Can you think of more appropriate language to express what you meant? (suggest language if necessary, model tone and affect) Then have them practice it.

What should you do to correct the harm done?

- Cultural Change**
- The introduction of restorative practice challenges deeply held beliefs (premature cognitive commitments, mindsets) around notions of discipline and authority.
 - Most of us grew up with tradition of punitive discipline and have practiced our teaching and behavior management in ways which reflect these beliefs, despite holding values about people and relationships which are often in conflict with these practices.
 - Restorative practices focus our attention on the quality of relationships between all members of the school community
 - This challenging of mindsets is where true culture change begins – "blame and punishment" to "harm and repair"

Restorative School Practices of Maine

Wordpress Site

Handouts

Information

Articles

<http://rspm.rjpmidcoast.org>

See Also

www.lirp.edu