

Restorative Practices

A USC Well-being Collective Toolkit



Parkside International
Residential College

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USC Well-being Collective

The USC Well-being Collective harnesses the power of Collective Impact for a variety of distinct and often siloed academic departments, administrative units, recognized student organizations and local non-profits to come together and work with the whole student community towards our common agenda: **strengthening a campus culture driven by student wellbeing.**

This goal is supported by four interrelated strategic goals:

Equity and Inclusion – enhancing the culture of equity and inclusion

Resilience and Thriving – creating a culture where individuals and communities thrive

Alcohol and Other Substance Use – disrupting the culture of at-risk substance use

Consent and Healthy Relationships — fostering a culture of consent and healthy relationships

Introduction

Students with diverse backgrounds and experiences enter into institutions of higher education expecting the ability to equitably pursue their academic goals and to be welcomed into a supportive student community. Nonetheless, the student experience is not the same for each individual, and not every student is treated or accommodated equitably in the classroom or on campus. In addressing disparities students may face while attending institutions of higher education, campus leaders can enhance the culture of equity and inclusion by implementing fair treatment, equality of opportunity, and open access to information, resources and campus spaces. Inclusive practices build a culture of belonging by actively inviting and fostering participation from all students. Such practices consider a person's voice, add value to the university and the student experience, and create balance in the face of power differences.

Factors which shape the culture of equity and inclusion include individual attitudes/beliefs about other identities and ability to problem-solve, interpersonal group norms regarding relationships, and conflict resolution, community support and public policies. By equipping all university members with the tools and skills needed for fair and equitable problem solving and relationship building, institutions can enhance the culture of equity and inclusion within their student population and the campus community. Building relationships and developing community provide proactive ways to foster equity and inclusion. Further, repairing harm and restoring relationships are reactive approaches which also contribute to fostering equity and inclusion.

The justice system focuses on crime as a violation of the law or a rule, rather than a violation against a person and against peace in the community. Since the late 1990s, restorative practitioners and educators have been adapting Restorative Justice for use in schools in response to the inefficacy of traditional punitive discipline, and to provide a protective practice for equitable treatment. The well-being of a community and its members is preserved through communication, emotional connection, understanding and meaningful relationships. The key to Restorative Justice is the repairing of relationships when harm is done, a process which results in social and emotional learning, meaningful relationships.

Restorative Practices

Toolkit Description:

Utilizing restorative practices in academic spaces

Strategic Goals:

Equity + Inclusion

Thrive + Mental Health

At-Risk Substance Abuse

Consent + Healthy Relationships

Strategies:

Building healthy public policy

Creating supportive environments

Strengthening community action

Developing personal skills

Re-orienting all sectors towards prevention

A Toolkit For:

Faculty

Staff

Student

Parent/Guardian

Administrator

Goal

Restorative practices build positive school climates and healthy relationships based on students' abilities to understand other perspectives, be aware of their own thoughts and feelings, and communicate effectively, for problem solving. Restorative practices related to building a sense of community include fulfillment of needs; sense of belonging and interpersonal relatedness; a sense that one matters (has "influence") and shared emotional connection (McMillan & Chavis, 1986). This toolkit is about utilizing restorative practices to develop community and to manage conflict and tensions by repairing harm and building relationships. The toolkit aims to bolster equity, support positive mental health and create supportive environments.

Intended Outcomes

Key Performance Indicators:

- Increase positive mental health
- Increase sense of belonging

Evidence of Effectiveness

There is limited evaluation data on the benefits of restorative practices. A majority of studies draw from interviews and do not utilize rigorous evaluation design. These descriptive studies show promising efforts, but further research is needed to tie use of restorative practices to student well-being outcomes.

Expert Opinion - Strategies with this rating are recommended by credible, impartial experts but have limited research documenting effects; further research, often with stronger designs, is needed to confirm effects.

Implementation Ideas

For Faculty

Offer students the option to choose their “best two out of three” for assignments or quizzes.

Offer opportunities for students to receive feedback on writing assignments before the deadline or allow for revisions of graded writing.

Offer students choice in assignments and opportunities to set their own deadlines or percentage of final grade for assignments.

Seek feedback from students throughout the semester. This could be done through web-survey or an anonymous in class comment card.

Use interactive tools to promote class input and participation.

Reward students for demonstrating consistent investment in the course (asking questions, being timely, and being a positive, productive member of the class.)

Have students introduce themselves during the first class or use icebreaker activities as part of the curriculum.

Make it clear that the quality of teamwork in group assignments is important by including marks for the group process in grading rubrics.

Work with your teaching assistants to create opportunities for social connection and teamwork in tutorials or labs.

In your syllabus, offer a variety of ways for students to contact you with questions or concerns.

Consider providing students with lecture notes or powerpoint slides ahead of class, and providing lecture recordings (particularly helpful for ESL students whereby they have more opportunities to work through the rate of speech during lectures.)

Offer mini breaks in class and encourage students to take this time to get to know one another.

For Students/Staff

Student leaders can utilize restorative practices in daily communication, in organization meetings and events, and also intrapersonally. Examples of restorative practice include

Circles

Circles are an easy, accessible tool to build relationships in small group settings. Two common uses of circles include an icebreaker exercise for a new group and a short check in prior to a meeting or activity. An impartial facilitator can set the tone for the group by role modelling an appropriate answer. One of the most important aspects of circle practice is the guarantee that each person is provided an opportunity to speak. This can be accomplished by moving in sequential order around the circle.

Example 1: Icebreaker

Purpose/Goal of Circle: Help participants get acquainted with one another

Question Options: Where are you from and what is something the place is known for? If you could change your name, what would it be and why? Share one activity you enjoy doing in your free time. Share three things that fill you up personally or professionally.

Example 2: Check In

Purpose/Goal of Circle: Provide opportunity for conversation prior to meeting/activity; establish goals for meeting/activity

Question Options: What's something you're looking forward to this week? What steps have you made in working on your project? What is one thing you hope to accomplish today?

Student leaders and staff may offer organization members personality assessments to help individuals and groups understand how to best work as a team based on their comforts and skills.

In student organization bylaws, student leaders can offer a variety of ways for students to join the organization.

Student leaders may consider alternative forms of meeting hours (for example skype, web conferencing, group office hours.)

Student leaders and staff may create community guidelines as a group to create a safe place for interaction and discussion (ie: "appreciate all perspectives," "listen for understanding," "be empathetic.")

Implementation Resources

[Restorative Practice Resource Project](#)

[Fix School Discipline](#)

References

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Produced Examples

RESTORATIVE JUSTICE: A TOOL FOR PEACE AND RESPECT IN CHICAGO AND BEYOND

FRAMEWORK FOR THE GROUNDING PRINCIPLES OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

For more than 40 years, our criminal justice system has over-relied on punishment, policing, incarceration and detention.

This has ushered in an age of mass incarceration marked by harsh and racially biased sentencing policies, internationally disproportionate incarceration rates and a variety of collateral consequences that have harmed our communities and schools.

In light of its negative impact, many across the political spectrum have begun to call for the reform of these policies. Government officials, policymakers, judges, principals and other leaders are all looking for alternatives to current punitive policies. This shift has been responsible for increasing interest in the concept of restorative justice among governmental institutions and nonprofit entities that previously supported harmful and oppressive criminal justice and school discipline policies.

We celebrate and are encouraged by the growth of interest in restorative justice. As this interest grows, questions as to what constitutes restorative justice and restorative practices will naturally emerge. Moreover, questions as to what restorative justice is from the outside have led us to take stock of its principles and values. In this process we found there were similar principles framing our motivation for practicing restorative justice. These are:

- A collective commitment to end our nation's overreliance on policing and punishment
- An awareness that Black, Brown and First Nation communities are most impacted by the harm of mass incarceration

- A conviction that the current criminal justice system creates instability and harms our communities
- An awareness that the entrance of criminal justice into our schools has harmed youth, altered teaching and learning, and damaged opportunities for community in schools
- An understanding and belief in the ability of people to change
- A commitment to empower people most impacted by harmful systems as leaders and change agents
- A belief that dignity and humanity should ground all our personal and institutional practices

The appended document declares the values we find essential to the practice of restorative justice. These principles are not intended to be universal, exhaustive or fixed. Rather, they intend to document what people committed to ending the overreliance on punishment and policing across the city of Chicago identify as key principles in building restorative justice in their work, community and educational sites.

We envision that the audience for this document will be diverse and will include restorative justice practitioners, those who are novices to the concept, stakeholders who are considering this approach, and the communities in which restorative justice is emerging.

THE GROUNDING PRINCIPLES OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

WE ENVISION RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

- as a relationship-building process that is responsive to needs
- will create safe environments that foster dignity, humanity, respect, agency, empathy and mutual well-being
- as preventative when the values of restorative justice are embraced by a community; restorative justice is not always reactionary or contingent on the existence of conflict
- recognizes the capability of those most impacted by conflict, especially youth, to lead the change
- as voluntary for all participants
- when addressing conflict, will acknowledge, learn from and repair harm and promote healing for all
- as inclusive, valuing that everyone has a story and a voice
- as grounded in "power with" not "power over"
- as a process focused on the community taking responsibility when harm occurs, rather than government and systematic responsibility
- centered by an understanding of and a commitment to practices and contexts that are anti-oppressive, including struggles to end racism, sexism, ableism, adultism, ageism, transphobia, heterosexism and other forms of privilege and domination
- with an understanding that interpersonal acts of violence are connected to structural violence and with the responsibility to boldly expose and address structural violence
- supported by adequate institutional resources to enable creation and sustainability of positive, supportive, non-punitive environments
- takes time and commitment from all community members in order to make long-standing, structural change
- as focused on carrying out and living the philosophy
- results in a paradigm shift in the ways in which we treat one another, but also in how we think about conflict and punishment, from a retributive to a restorative mindset

When these principles are followed, restorative justice can be dynamic, reflecting communities' unique needs, cultures and creativity.

This document was created by Erica Meiners and Marlene Kaba, Logan Square Neighborhood Association, and the **Embrace Restorative Justice in Schools Collaborative**. The Institute on PUBLIC Safety and Social Justice at the Adler School of Professional Psychology, Alternatives, Inc., Andrew Torzachi, Austin Peace Center, COPPE POWER PAC, Community for Justice Youth Institute, Illinois Balance and Restorative Justice (IBARJ), Justice and Child Protection Resource Section of the Circuit Court of Cook County, Harfield Institute for Social Justice and Transformation at Roosevelt University, Nehemiah Project, Brian Galanz, Pamela Purdie, Sandra Mann, Strengthening Chicago's Youth (convened by Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago), Governors State University and Umoja Student Development Corporation.

USC Student Health

Office for Health Promotion Strategy
Backbone for the USC Well-being Collective

The Office for Health Promotion Strategy, backbone for the USC Well-being Collective, is embedded in USC Student Health and serves as the administrative core to support campus partners in aligning their strategic objectives with student wellbeing. The Office for Health Promotion Strategy works with participating partners, the Steering Committee, and most importantly, students to activate change at USC.

For additional questions, please contact: USC Student Health, Office for Health Promotion Strategy, Backbone for USC Well-being Collective at wellbeingcollective@usc.edu

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