

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES IN THE CLASSROOM



RESTORATIVE PRACTICES IN THE CLASSROOM

As Restorative Practices become a more fundamental and integrated aspect of your school culture, it must also become a part of the way teachers interact with students and manage their classrooms. While Peace Circles and Peer Conferences require trained facilitation, there are things all teachers can do to build restorative environments in their classrooms and help students practice the skills they need to participate meaningfully in both Restorative Practices and academic instruction.



GOALS OF A RESTORATIVE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

On the first day of school, few students already bear the confidence and focus they need to engage deeply and meaningfully with academic content. Before students can participate authentically in a classroom discussion, they first need to feel good about the way others perceive them, and know that their contributions to the discussion will not hurt their status within the group (Ladd, Herald-Brown, & Reiser, 2008). A strong, trusting classroom community is a pre-requisite for both academic engagement and meaningful participation in restorative practices.

All members of a classroom community have three basic social needs: to feel respected, to feel accepted, and to feel significant. Think back on a conflict that has come up in a classroom in your past. Can you imagine how the root of the conflict may have stemmed from a need for one of those three elements? In order to meet these needs, teachers can institute class rituals and activities that emphasize for all students that they are noticed, valued, and cared about by the group. This resource contains examples of activities that can be used to develop relationships and community, and also to practice skills students may call upon later to repair harm done to the community.

The overarching goal of the restorative classroom—meeting the needs for respect, acceptance, and significance for all members—are supported by four practicable objectives. Members of the classroom must gain the skills and the confidence to **communicate openly and authentically**. They also must practice showing **empathy** for one another and **seek to understand** those with different perspectives. They must have opportunities to work together to develop **shared agreements** about how they will interact with one another both inside and outside of the classroom, and must **share accountability** for following those agreements. Finally, all members of the classroom must learn the skills to **recognize when their words or actions have caused harm, and to participate in a process to repair that harm**.

These are lifelong skills that are challenging for us just as they will be a challenge for our students. Building a restorative classroom environment is a process—it will not be achieved through a week of lessons or a set of guidelines. **We can't restore a community if we haven't taken the time to build community; we can't skip ahead to the end of the process and expect our students to understand the impact of their actions, take responsibility, and work to repair the harm that was done. We must build those skills over time, just as we build math or reading skills.**



As you read through this resource, consider how you can take each step with your class over the course of the school year. While these steps take time, teachers who use them often find that they spend less time managing behavior, and students are better able to focus and engage during instructional time. As an end result, you can expect that students will feel more connected to you and to each other, they will be able to show more patience and compassion for others, and the class community will begin to share responsibility for positive behavior and restoring community when it is disrupted.

- STEP 1: BUILD CONNECTIONS AND COMMUNITY**
- STEP 2: DEVELOP SHARED AGREEMENTS TO GUIDE INTERACTIONS**
- STEP 3: TEACH STUDENTS TO REFLECT ON EXPERIENCES AND INTERACTIONS**
- STEP 4: ADDRESS PROBLEMS AND QUESTIONS COLLABORATIVELY**
- STEP 5: RESTORATIVE CONVERSATIONS ABOUT THE CLASS COMMUNITY**

Step 1:

Build Connections and Community

Featured Lesson: How to Elaborate and Actively Listen

Teacher Interactions

The process of building connections and community begins with the way we, as teachers, interact with individual students. An older body of research has shown that peer interactions within a classroom tend to reflect the teacher's disposition toward students (Johnson, 1970; Gouldner, 1978), so it is essential that we communicate to all students that we believe in their potential and care about their well-being. In any given year, we are bound to gather background information about some of our students before the first day of school. We might know their older siblings, or their parent who is on the LSC, or their impressive performance in the school play last year, or their frequent stays in the In-School Suspension room. We may have heard our colleagues talk about their skills or the challenges they have posed.

Contingent (Related to What They Are Doing)	Non-Contingent (Just Because)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Letting them know they did well on an assignment• Appreciating their specific positive behavior• Telling how they're meeting/exceeding expectations• "That's a really interesting question"• "Thank you for sharing that comment"• Privately acknowledging their improvement• Noticing the kind things they do for others• Asking them to share a strong answer with the class• Acknowledging when they comply with your redirect	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Greetings• Asking them questions about their lives• Remembering details about their lives• Going to their events• Ask their opinion on class activities• Letting them know you're interested in their work• Inviting them to ask for help• Encouraging them to join school club/sports• Checking in about a concern they mentioned before

As a restorative educator, you must recognize the negative preconceptions you may have about your students, and then consciously reject those preconceptions. Begin your year by showing each student that you regard him positively and you are

eager to get to know him. Surprise your student who is expecting her new teacher to dread her presence by acting as though you believe she is going to be a polite, friendly, high achieving student. If she doesn't meet that expectation, treat her mistake as a learning opportunity.

Dr. Randy Sprick, author of CHAMPS and Discipline in the Secondary Classroom, recommends that teachers aim for a minimum 3:1 ratio of positive interactions. That is, a teacher should try to interact positively with every student 3 times more often than they interact with the student to correct misbehavior. Click this [link](#) to see Dr. Sprick speak more about the 3:1 ratio.

Positive interactions can be either contingent or non-contingent to students' behavior. Appreciating a student's social behavior, work, curiosity, and participation shows the student that her effort is noticed and valued, and that positive behavior results in a positive outcome. Non-contingent attention is given to all students regardless of their behavior or effort, to show that they are noticed and cared about at school.

A negative interaction is defined as any time a teacher interacts with a student BECAUSE they are not behaving appropriately. Even if the correction is given in a subtle, calm way, it is considered a negative interaction because in essence the student is getting attention for a negative behavior. The goal is not to eliminate negative interactions, because that is not feasible, but rather to outweigh negative interactions, at a ratio of at least 3:1, to ensure the overall tone of the classroom is positive and each student has a positive sense of self in the classroom setting.

Talking Circles

A Talking Circle is a Restorative Practice that helps to build trusting relationships between all members of the classroom and creates the opportunity for each student to feel accepted and significant within the group. If you have a full day with your students, this can be a daily practice. If you have them for only a period, you might prefer to hold Talking Circles weekly or every other week. A Talking Circle can last 10 minutes or up to a full period, depending on the goal.

Before your first Talking Circle, explain to your students that the purpose is to get to know each other, share experiences and ideas, take care of each other, and support each other to reach goals. When we participate in a Talking Circle, we are taking the time to pay attention to what's going on in our own head and in the heads of our

classmates, and this helps us know each other, focus, and learn better for the rest of the day or week.

WHAT MAKES A CIRCLE?—A few key elements differentiate Circle time from other class activities. While this is a flexible practice that you can shape to meet your students' needs, be sure to incorporate these elements.

- **Forming the Circle:** Do make the effort to form a true circle or oval. If it is not possible to rearrange chairs or desks in your classroom, you might move the class to an alternative space in the building, stand in a circle or oval surrounding the desks, or ask students to move their chairs so they are facing the center of the room. A circle sets a different tone and encourages participation and interaction. It is important that students are comfortable, that they are able to be attentive to each other (each faces the center of the circle and has set personal items aside), and that everyone participates by sitting in the circle. Verbal participation is always optional.
- **Center Piece:** In the middle of the circle is a center piece, which participants can look at to focus. The center piece might consist of items that are meaningful to the facilitator or the culture of the student body, or it may be artwork or a collage that the class has created together. Often, the centerpiece includes the written shared values that the group has created.
- **Talking Piece:** A talking piece (any object that can be peacefully held and passed around the circle) is used to ensure that only one voice speaks at a time and that all focus is on that voice. Students are always permitted to pass if they don't want to speak. The talking piece is passed around the circle to ensure equality of voice. Occasionally, it may be passed in other ways, such as passing "popcorn-style" to students who request to speak using a silent signal. Do take the time to explicitly teach participants how to use and pass the talking piece, even if it is already a familiar concept. To manage the impulse to speak, identify silent signals for common needs. For example, pointing up can mean a request that the speaker speaks louder, wiggling fingers can signal agreement, and placing 3 fingers on lips can be a request to speak.
- **Facilitator as Participant:** As facilitator, you will also be sitting in the Circle at the same level as the students, as an equal participant. You are not there to

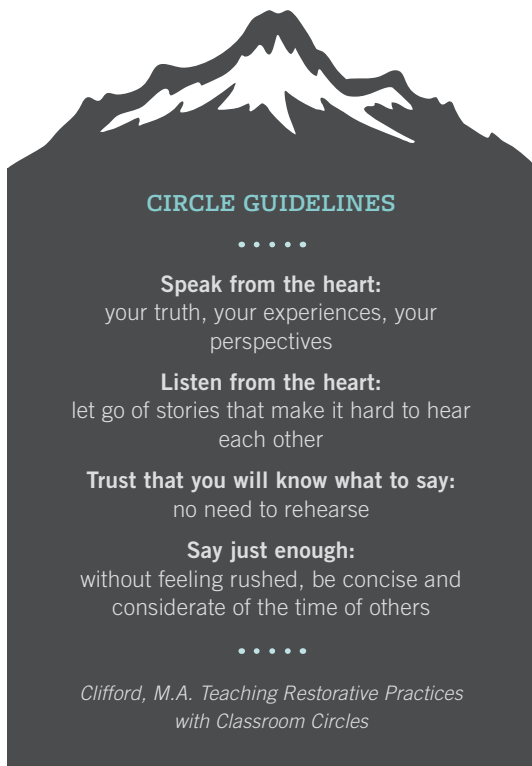
teach a lesson or moral. A Circle facilitator follows the principle of non-interference: welcoming what is said without trying to influence or give advice.

- **Consistent Ceremony:** A Circle should be predictable. Once a pattern has been established it is best to follow the same pattern each time the Circle is convened. The use of a familiar ceremony sets the tone and helps students know what to expect. It normalizes a practice that at first may feel unusual. Typically, the Circle ceremony consists of an opening ritual, a reminder of norms and values, topics or questions that participants are invited to respond to, and a closing ritual.

OPENING RITUAL—Begin the Talking Circle with a brief introductory activity every time. This separates the Circle from the rest of the class period, and eases students into a different mode after the interruption of moving to form a circle. You might read a quote or poem, lead students in a relaxation exercise, play music, or ring a chime.

REMINDER OF VALUES AND NORMS—When introducing Talking Circles to the class, create a shared list of values that you will uphold during Circle time. Passing the talking piece, ask students what values they bring to the circle. Connect these values to school-wide expectations when possible. Ask all students to agree to respect and uphold these values whenever the class is in Circle together, and post them in the classroom or include them in the Circle centerpiece to serve as a reminder

It is also important to articulate the behavioral norms that will allow students to express their values. Even if this is not the first Talking Circle, remind the group of norms regarding speaking, listening, and demonstrating respect and caring. Reinforce these norms with positive feedback.



Here is an example of Circle norms (above) that were developed by a group in San Francisco, which they referenced at the beginning of every Talking Circle. The first is that all participants say what is true for them, based on their own experiences, even if their truth may be different than that of others in the circle. The second guideline about listening emphasizes that we set aside any assumptions or preconceptions we hold about the speaker so that we're better able to hear what they are truly saying. The third guideline reminds participants that they should listen without allowing themselves to be distracted by thoughts

of what they will say when it is their turn. The final guideline is about making room for others to speak, and ensuring that while we say what we need to say, we step back after contributing our piece so that we can listen to others.

Stop the Circle if it isn't going well. Share what you are noticing and ask the group to reflect with you on what is happening. Take advantage of teachable moments, re-teach expectations, and start again if you judge that it is appropriate to do so.

Tips for Successful Facilitation

Transitioning from Teacher to Participant

Validate and acknowledge feelings and problems expressed in the Circle, even if you don't agree with what is expressed. Don't discount or minimize what is shared.

When a student shares a problem, don't try to give an answer or wrap up neatly—instead, ask what they need.

As a member of the Circle, share your experiences and responses as appropriate without dominating time or attention.

Managing Sharing

Set ground rules as to what type of sharing is appropriate — students should not share news that another person would consider private or would be uncomfortable sharing, whether that person is in the room or not.

Addressing Behavior During the Circle

Notice good behavior! The best way to support positive behavior is to reinforce it by noticing and complimenting students for behaving appropriately and demonstrating social and emotional skills.

If you decide that you need to stop or redirect a member of the Circle, always explain why you are doing so. Remind students of expectations and redirect consistently and calmly before resorting to a negative consequence. Once students have been reprimanded and punished for their behavior, it can be very difficult to recapture the positive and supportive tone of the Circle.

Greet latecomers pleasantly without disrupting what is happening, and address their tardiness later.

If students are critical about the Circle practice, don't take it personally or get frustrated. Use it as an opportunity to explore why it isn't going well. This is an opening for progress to occur, moving from superficial or hypothetical questions and answers to 'real talk.'

CIRCLE TOPICS AND QUESTIONS—A Talking Circle can serve many purposes. It can be used to strengthen connections and familiarity, it can address social and academic challenges, and it can help students clarify their goals. When you have your objective in mind, write out questions in advance that will prompt students to form ideas and opinions. A typical Talking Circle includes 2-3 rounds of questions. Pose these questions or topics and give think time before passing the talking piece. If this is early in the year, be sure to start with low-risk, fun questions (e.g. If you could transform yourself into an animal at will, what would it be?), and later graduate to deeper content (e.g. Who inspires you to be your best self, and what kind of person do they make you want to become?) The sample questions below are organized by several common Talking Circle objectives.

- **Getting to Know One Another:** Tell about the origins of your name. If you could have lunch with a famous person, who would it be? If you could only listen to one song/watch one movie/read one book for the rest of your life, what would it be? Tell about a book/movie/TV show character who reminds you of one of your family members, and explain why. If you could go back in time, what would you do? What do you want people to remember about you when we come back for our 10 year reunion? If you could live anywhere in the world, where would it be?
- **Catalyze Creativity:** If you were a superhero, what would your power be? If you were hired to paint a mural, what would you paint? What would you do if you won \$1M in the lottery? If you open your own business one day, what kind of business will it be? If you could have a theme song start playing whenever you walked in the room, what would it be? What book/movie/TV show would you like to be a character in? If you could have any animal for a pet, what would it be? If you could instantly be incredibly skilled at one thing, what would you choose?
- **Goal Setting:** What is your goal for the day? What would you like your life to be like 10 years from now? When you feel discouraged or frustrated, what do you say to yourself to keep going? What is one difficult thing that you are going to get better at? What have you done this week to get closer to your goal? What have you accomplished this week? What are you going to do this weekend to prepare for a great week next week?
- **Academic Check Up:** Who do you go to for extra help when you need it? What's one thing you can do to make our school a better place to be? What's your best tip for staying organized? What's

your best tip for keeping up with homework and projects? What is one thing that helps you concentrate and learn? Who was your favorite teacher so far and how did that person help you learn? What's your toughest subject, and how are you meeting the challenge? What subject is easiest for you, and why has it been going well?

- **Social Check Up:** What was the best thing that happened this week? What's one thing you're looking forward to? What makes you happy? Finish the sentence—A friendship is equal when both people _____. What makes someone a good friend? What friendly message can you text to someone who needs a boost today? What do you wish people would say to you more often? What's the nicest thing that someone has done for you today? What words best describe your mood today? Give a shout-out to someone in this class who you have appreciated this week.
- **Anticipation:** Today we are going to _____—What questions or thoughts does that bring up for you? What do you already know about this topic? What have we already done this year that has prepared you to do this? How will you feel if you are really successful? What problems might come up? If _____ happens, how will you handle it?
- **Reflection:** How are you feeling about _____? What was your favorite part of class today? What do you do to relax when you're feeling stressed out? How do you like to express your thoughts: in writing, talking to friends, creating art, or something else? What kind of _____ do you feel like today? (fill in the blank: color, weather, music, etc.) On a scale of 1 to 5, how well do you think we're doing at being respectful with one another? How are you different now than you were when you were ____ years old? Whose values do you admire and why?

OPTIONAL: Follow-up Comments and Questions—Time permitting, you may decide to allow students to respond with questions or supportive comments (see the lesson plan on pages 9-10 as a way to teach this practice). When the talking piece comes back to you after a round of questions, ask students if anyone would like to use the talking piece to follow up with anyone about what was shared. Pass the talking piece “popcorn style.” Comments should show interest or concern about what was shared; in essence, they should communicate that students are listening and they care about how the person feels. Questions can be about something they didn’t understand or something they would like to know more about. Offer your own questions and empathetic comments to model this practice.

CLOSING RITUAL—After everyone has shared, summarize and name the themes that came up, and invite others to add to the themes that were identified. The closing serves as a transition and also ensures that every student has contributed to the circle. You might ask a final, synthesizing question for students to answer to the whole group or to a partner, depending on time. The closing can also be a silent moment of reflection, a ritual action that involves everyone in the circle, or inspiring words for students to reflect upon as they start their day. Think ahead about any procedures you want students to follow to transition to work time, such as cleaning the circle area or moving chairs, and teach and practice these procedures.

SYNTHESIZING QUESTIONS: What do you think went well during our Talking Circle today? What would you like to change for next time? What are you going to take with you for the rest of your day? How can we move forward in a positive direction? In order for this group to feel like a community, what do you need? How has your opinion changed since we began talking? How have you felt supported by this group? How will you support others in this group today? How are you going to make today a good day for someone else?

When students are accustomed to the Talking Circle routine, ask for their feedback about how to improve using a [post-Circle questionnaire](#). Share the results with the class, and explain how you will incorporate their feedback.

Check-in Rituals

While Talking Circles are a Restorative Practice that allows students to interact positively with each other and be noticed and heard by classmates, A simple check-in ritual, used daily or weekly, can also be a lever to strengthen the sense of community in the classroom. During a check-in,

a talking piece is passed around the room so all students have an opportunity to have the attention of the class and speak if they choose to do so. When students begin class with a check-in ritual, they feel welcomed and recognized for making a positive contribution to the group, and they see that it matters to others that they have come to school today. This boosts confidence, reinforces positive behavior, and sets the tone for learning. Here are a few brief, adaptable check-in activities:

HIGH-LOWS—Students take turns sharing the high point and the low point of their day. This can be done as a full class with a talking piece or in smaller rotating groups if time is short. It may be necessary to pre-teach what kind of information is appropriate to share—a good rule of thumb is that students should not share information that anyone else would consider a secret, embarrassing, or feel uncomfortable to know it had been shared.

GUT CHECK—Project a slide or make a poster showing a range of emotions. Ask students to pick two different emotions that describe their emotions today—one emotion for the morning and another for the afternoon, or one emotion they show on the surface and another on the inside, or their best emotion of the day and their worst emotion of the day.

LIST OF EMOTIONS/FEELINGS

Angry	Confident	Helpful	Respectful
Accepting	Shy	Honest	Safe
Adventurous	Cooperative	Interested	Insecure
Appreciative	Creative	Loyal	Scared
Brave	Curious	Mature	Frustrated
Calm	Encouraged	Hurt	Strong
Caring	Energetic	Optimistic	Supportive
Cheerful	Enthusiastic	Peaceful	Trusting
Comfortable	Forgiving	Polite	Trustworthy
Uncomfortable	Friendly	Proud	Sensitive
Guilty	Generous	Punctual	Embarrassed
Cranky	Jealous	Disappointed	Sorry

WHAT'S GOING ON?—Pass out a handout like the one pictured below. Give students time to write in any, all or none of the quadrants. Pass a talking piece around the room to give each student an opportunity to share anything they have written on their page, without the need to work up the courage to raise their hand. Students may also choose not to share aloud, and instead pass their paper to you if they would like you to see it.

<p><i>News!</i></p>	<p><i>Concerns</i></p> <p>I am concerned about:</p> <p>Because:</p>
<p><i>Shout-outs</i></p> <p>I would like to give a shout-out to:</p> <p>For:</p>	<p><i>Apologies</i></p> <p>I would like to apologize to:</p> <p>Because my words or actions may have hurt their feelings and I am sorry.</p>

METAPHORS—Project a slide or make a poster showing 15-40 pieces of clip art. Any pictures will do! Ask students to pick one picture from the display and explain how that picture is a metaphor for how they are feeling today.

Affirmations

As you increase your ratio of positive interactions with students, you may see students interacting more positively with each other. To support this behavior, teach students a specific way to offer written affirmations and support to their classmates and build in a few minutes each day for students to practice. This structure can take place independently any time a student has a spare moment in class.

Show students how to write affirmations to each other through explicit modeling—write affirmations for each student in your class, or if you have more than one class of students, write a few each week and read them aloud or post them on a bulletin board. Then give students a

chance to write their own. Supply index cards and ask students to write an affirmation for each member of their group after a small group activity. Collect these, and choose a few to read aloud (without naming the affirmer). Place these in student “mailboxes” or distribute them during a quiet activity later in the day.

Continue to supply index cards, and once you are confident that students will only write positive things, teach students when and how they can deliver their affirmations directly to their classmates. Continue to prompt students to write affirmations for designated people (e.g. “write an affirmation for the person sitting one row over and two seats down”) as well as to write affirmations to people they have noticed and appreciated to ensure that all students receive affirmations. Fade prompts over time—if students finish an activity early, include “write affirmations” on a list of things they may do while they wait for others to finish.

<p>Hi Hillary,</p> <p>I liked your question about life on other planets. It made me curious and to want to pay attention.</p> <p>-Ken</p>	<p>← A greeting using their name</p> <p>← Reference a specific thing that you noticed they did or said and why you appreciate it</p>
<p>Dear Edgar,</p> <p>Thanks for encouraging me to add to the conversation during group work today. You're good at making people feel included.</p> <p>-Joe</p>	<p>← Sign it!</p>



Common Core Connection

The lesson plan that follows, as well as other lesson plans in this resource, strengthen student skills in two key Common Core anchor standards for English Language Arts: **Comprehension & Collaboration** and **Knowledge of Language**

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.SL.1

Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA.L3

Apply knowledge of language to understand how language functions in different contexts, to make effective choices for meaning or style, and to comprehend more fully when reading or listening.

Step 1 Lesson Plan:

How to Elaborate and Actively Listen

OBJECTIVE: Students will recognize and formulate open-ended questions, practice elaborating on their answers, and describe 3-5 techniques to actively listen.

TIMING: Lasts approximately 40 minutes. This lesson fits in well near the beginning of your school year, when students are getting used to the idea of having meaningful dialogue and expressing themselves in front of people they are still getting to know.

IL SEL STANDARDS:

2A.1B. Use listening skills to identify the feelings and perspectives of others.

2A.4B. Use conversation skills to understand others' feelings and perspectives.

2C.5A. Evaluate the application of communication and social skills in daily interactions with peers, teachers, and families.

1. (5 MINUTES) Begin with a hook activity called “One -Minute Discussions”. Divide students into pairs so that each person has a partner who they do not typically spend a lot of time with. Explain that they will talk about a given topic for one minute without stopping. They may tell their partner anything that crosses their mind that is connected to the given topic. For low-risk conversations to get students to feel more comfortable with each other, silly or abstract topics work well, e.g. toothbrushes, clouds, summer, pets, sandwiches, the CTA, etc. Medium risk topics might include school, college, or friends; and higher-risk, more revealing topics might include family, neighborhood, hope, trust, or disappointment.

When a minute has passed, ask listeners to summarize what the speaker said in a sentence or two. To debrief, pose the following questions: What did it feel like to be the speaker? The listener? Why do you think we did this activity? How often do you talk about any topic for an entire minute? How is this different from the way you usually communicate?

2. (15 MINUTES) Summarize student responses and transition by explaining how, as a teacher, you notice that sometimes when you ask a question and call on a student, they answer in as few words as possible—but when you really want to hear someone and get to know them, you’d like them to give a more detailed answer. Today the class will be practicing two skills: how to elaborate when we give an answer, and how to be such an active listener that people will want to talk more.

Explain that an open-ended question is one that is phrased in a way that encourages someone to answer with a full sentence or more. A closed question is one that we can answer with single word. Project or write these questions on the board:

- Do you have any brothers or sisters? (closed)
- What bothers you most about your brother? (open)
- Are you going to a party this weekend? (closed)
- What kind of job would you like to have when you are older? (open)
- What’s your favorite subject? (closed)
- What do you like about your science class? (open)
- Who do you talk to when you feel stressed out? (closed, but could be answered more openly)
- What’s your favorite movie about? (open)
- Do you like this song? (closed)
- Where are some places you like to go on the weekends? (open)

Ask students to identify which questions on the list are open-ended and closed, and address any confusion. As a second check for understanding, ask students if they can change one of the closed questions so that it becomes an open-ended question.

Ask students to choose one of the open-ended questions from the list, and take a full 30 seconds to answer it for their partner. After 30 seconds, the partners should switch roles and the other partner will answer the question of their choice for a full 30 seconds. Ask students what techniques they used to add detail when they saw they had time left.

3. (10 MINUTES) Explain that while it isn't always important to take 30 seconds or more to answer a question, when we're participating in a Talking Circle, we want to try to give more than the simplest answer. There may be exceptions when the Facilitator specifically asks everyone to give a one word response, but most often we want you to elaborate so we can hear more about your thinking and your experiences. When one person is sharing, we can help them elaborate by being active listeners. This matching activity is an interactive way to teach five techniques for active listening.

Print copies of the chart below so that each pair or small group will have one. Cut apart the chart so that students must match column 1 (gray) to its matching purpose and example from columns 2 and 3 (white). For younger students, just use Encouraging, Clarifying, and Empathizing.

Techniques for Active Listening	Purpose	Example
Encouraging	Using words or actions to show that you're interested and keep the person talking	Nodding, making eye contact, "Hmmm", "Uh-huh", "that's interesting", "tell me more about that"
Restating	Saying in your own words what you thought you heard the other person say, to let the person know you're listening closely and trying to understand	"Would it be correct to say that...", "So what I hear you saying is...", "If I'm understanding you, the way you see it is...", "In other words, you've concluded..."
Clarifying	Getting more information by asking nonjudgmental questions, to better understand any statements that were unclear or incomplete	"I'm not sure what you meant by...", "Could you explain more about...", "What leads you to believe that...", "Could you explain that in a different way?"
Empathizing	Appreciating others' experiences even if you don't agree with everything they say, showing that you respect their point of view and understand their feelings	"I can see why you feel that...", "That must have been hard for you", "Now I understand your point of view", "I didn't realize you felt that way—thanks for telling me that"
Reframing	Moving the conversation to problem-solving or goal-setting, encouraging others to consider whether they misinterpreted something, or redirecting a negative statement into something more productive	"That's an interesting point-to go further I would suggest...", "Since we both care about ... would it make sense to...?", "I'm sorry you feel that way, but I'm glad you said so. Let's see how we can work together to address that"

4. (10 MINUTES) Go over the answers to the matching exercise in the manner of your choice (e.g. have groups compare answers, make a poster on chart paper, award points for correct answers, etc.). For the last 2 minutes, pose this question:

What do you need to feel comfortable sharing your feelings and opinions with the people in this class? Ask students to write out their response and turn it in to you. The following day, read a representative and anonymous sample of these, and reflect on how the class community can act on the responses.

5. OPTIONAL FOLLOW-UP: Continue to practice using these skills and techniques by bringing back a classic activity—Show and Tell. Choose a different student each week to bring in an object to show. Before they share, verbally and visually remind students of the 5 techniques, and let them know that there will be time after sharing for remarks that are encouraging, clarifying, empathetic, or used to restate or re-frame. The selected student should then tell a short story about their experience with the object and answer classmates' follow up questions.

Norm	Looks Like...	Sounds Like...
Respect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen to the person who has the floor • Be open minded to other perspectives • Leave others' property alone • Keep others' stories private • Only using phones when appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive attitude • Monitor airtime • Talk honestly, calmly, and privately when you have a problem with someone • Speak like you would in a college class (no profanity)
Reinforcement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be genuine and empathetic • Positive/attentive body language • Showcase good student work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Affirm others when they do something positive • Build off others' ideas • You can argue with an idea without attacking the person • Ask others for their opinion
Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do your best to do your part when working with others • Participate so you can get the most out of the class • Turn in work on time/turn back graded work on time 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address and work to resolve conflict within a day • Ask questions and give extra help to make sure all understand

Step 2:

Develop Shared Agreements to Guide Interactions

Featured Lesson: Co-constructing a Social Contract

Most likely you have heard others speak about the familiar practice of co-creating classroom rules with students so that they will be more likely to buy into them. This certainly is one way to incorporate student voice, but it does not necessarily make our classroom environment more restorative.

Teachers can create a restorative environment and still set the rules. For example, a teacher may have a clear rule about cell phone use, not speaking or whispering during tests, following the dress code, arriving on time to class—all perfectly reasonable rules that exist for a purpose. While there is nothing wrong with seeking student input about these procedural details, it is not necessary and may not be useful to do so. Instead, involve students in the development of social mores—the ways of interacting that embody the fundamental values of the group.

The second step in laying the foundation for a restorative classroom is to work together as a class to develop shared agreements about how all members of the class will treat each other. It is not enough to say we will be respectful toward one another, because the word “respect” can have a wide range of definitions for different people, and it can be unclear how one should show respect when they are angry, confused, disappointed, curious, bored, distracted, or upset. Before your class will be ready to

engage in Restorative Conversations, they must feel secure and trust that their teacher and classmates will continue to care about and respect them even when they make mistakes or aren't getting along.

It is essential that adults and young people participate as equals during the process of developing shared agreements, and everyone is held accountable to them on a daily basis. This process should not feel like a lesson, or like the teacher is fishing for certain responses. It must be clear that the teacher is committing to the agreements in the same way as students, and that it will be acceptable for a student to point out when a teacher violates an agreement, just as they would expect a teacher to reference agreements that a student has violated.

Above is an example of norms that were developed by a high school class. They began by describing characteristics of their favorite and least favorite classes in the past. Then they re-framed negative characteristics to describe the opposite, desired characteristic. Finally, they grouped similar characteristics into three main categories: Respect, Reinforcement, and Accountability. While the norms can be summarized and easily referenced with these three words, the group took the time to operationalize what each word would look like and sound like in the classroom. Notice that the descriptions of each norm include details that could be applied to the teacher or to the students.

Next, you will find an example lesson plan for having a class conversation about shared agreements. It can be used in any classroom from approximately 3rd-12 grade, or modified for younger students.

Step 2 Lesson Plan:

Co-constructing a Social Contract

OBJECTIVE: Students will come to a shared agreement about what principles should guide all interactions in the class: teacher to student, student to teacher, between peers, and when there is a conflict.

TIMING: Lasts approximately 50 minutes. It is best to introduce this lesson plan early in the year, but after students are comfortable participating in a class discussion and brainstorming with a small group.

IL SEL STANDARDS:

2B.4B. Demonstrate respect for individuals from different social and cultural groups.

2D.3A. Evaluate strategies for preventing and resolving interpersonal problems.

3A. 1B. Identify social norms and safety considerations that guide behavior.

1. (5 MINUTES) Tell students they will be doing an activity to show how well they can follow instructions (in reality, this is a hook to launch a conversation about the importance of coming to a shared understanding).

Give each student a sheet of paper, and give the

following instructions, pausing after each to give the group time to comply.

- Pick up your sheet of paper and hold it in front of you. Close your eyes and listen carefully to my directions. The rules are 1) NO PEEKING and 2) NO QUESTIONS.
- The first thing I want you to do is to fold your sheet of paper in half.
- Now, tear off the left corner.
- Fold the paper in half again and tear off the bottom corner of the sheet.
- Fold it in half again.
- Now tear off the lower right-hand corner of the sheet.

SAY TO STUDENTS:

- “If I did a good job of communicating and you did a good job of listening, all of our sheets should look exactly the same! Right?”
- “Let’s see. Unfold your paper and hold it up.” [Look around the room to see if all sheets are identical. They won’t be!]
- “These don’t look too great. Why do your sheets look so different from mine? Why is everyone’s sheet a little different?” [You should get responses such as “You didn’t let us ask any questions!” or “The way you gave us directions wasn’t clear!”]

2. (5 MINUTES) Transition by explaining that this activity is a metaphor—in order to understand each other and be successful as a class, we need to both see and hear each other. We need to be willing to take the time to explain what we mean and hear others out.

Present the idea that “Respect” is a word that we define subjectively. What a teacher thinks of as a respectful way for a student to speak to a teacher may not match what students think. What a teacher might personally interpret as a disrespectful phrase or gesture (model a few common ones—eye rolling, tongue clicking, etc.) might seem like no big deal to a student. On the other hand, a teacher might speak to a student in a way that the student feels is disrespectful, while the teacher feels like he or she is simply acting with authority.

Say something like, “So many of the conflicts that arise center around the idea of respect, so it’s important to spend some time as a class coming to a shared understanding of how we show respect to each other. We’re going to do an activity together to arrive at a shared understanding.”

3. (10 MINUTES) Divide students into four groups, give each group a piece of chart paper and a marker, and assign each group one of the questions below:

- How do you want to be treated by me?
- How do you want to be treated by each other?
- How do you think I want to be treated by you?
- How do you want to treat each other when there is a conflict?

Ask students to discuss and answer the question they are assigned on their chart paper. To increase participation, have groups begin their discussion by assigning a role to each group member:

- Spokesperson will share conclusions with the larger group
- Scribe will write on the chart paper
- Includer will make sure that all voices contribute
- On-task Person will make sure that the group completes the task in the allotted time without getting off topic
- Affirmer will thank people for sharing and give positive feedback (i.e. “that’s a good suggestion”, “thanks for adding that”, “that helped make it clear”)

4. (15 MINUTES) After each group has had time to discuss and list answers on chart paper, have each small group share their list with the larger group. If students say non-specific words like “respect”, challenge them to clarify what they mean by that --- what does respect look like and sound like?

Categories and coding system

Kindly ☆
 Patience ☆
 Help us but w/o embarrassing anyone •
 Trust ☆
Speak to us like you speak to adults
 Be available (help + support) ☆
 Don't give up on us ☆
 Do fair share •
No put-downs
Listen to other opinions
 Work out disagreements peacefully ☆
 Include everyone ☆

Language + Listening
Support each other ☆
 Give effort •

Listen when someone speaks
 Do best work, give effort •
Be "professional" -- don't use language you wouldn't use at a job interview
 Be interested! Participate + ask questions •
Calm down before talking about problems.
Have an open mind, listen to all perspectives
Don't hold grudges--talk it out w/ help if necessary
 Make a plan for next time ☆

Groups will most likely report similar answers, even though their questions were different. Ask students if they recognize any categories emerging from the lists. In the example to the right, the group recognized that many of the statements were about language and listening, others were about providing emotional support for one another, and others were about putting forth effort. Use a coding system to categorize each statement.

SOCIAL CONTRACT
 As students, peers, and teachers we will...
 SPEAK to one another calmly and professionally, and LISTEN to one another with open minds, to fully understand.
 BE THERE for one another to provide support for social, emotional, and academic needs
 GIVE EFFORT each day by doing our share, helping one another succeed and participating as we are able.

5. (15+ MINUTES) Finalize the social contract on a fifth sheet of chart paper. At the top, write “As students, peers, and teacher we will...” or something similar that includes all members of the classroom community. Ask students to shape sentences that summarize the various statements that fall into each category, as in the example below. Set aside time in future class periods to revisit the contract and reflect on how well it is being kept.

Step 3:

Teach Students to Reflect on Experiences and Interactions

Featured Lesson: Empathetic Listening and “I” Statements

Steps 1 and 2 build connection, trust, and authenticity. The next step in preparing your students to engage in restorative processes is to create experiences where students can practice reflection. These experiences are easily built into the way you communicate and the learning activities you already have planned. This section will provide specific strategies for teaching your students to identify their own feelings, re-tell their experiences, and thoughtfully consider the feelings and experiences of others.

Teacher Modeling

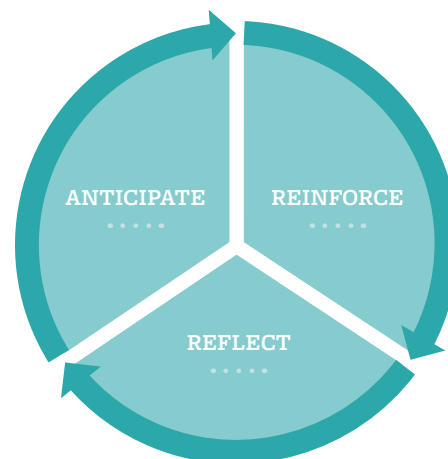
Plan ahead for when and how you will tell your class an anecdote to model your own process of reflection and demonstrate the power of open communication. This strengthens your connection with students and also provides them with a framework for how to process a difficult or confusing experience. Here are a few ideas to begin:

- Tell students about a time you made an assumption about someone, and it turned out not to be true. Explain why you made the assumption, when you realized it was inaccurate, what you thought about after that, and how the assumption impacted your interactions with the person.
- Tell students about a time you realized you offended someone. Explain how you realized that you offended the person, what you thought about after that, and how it impacted your relationship.
- Tell students about a time a friend hurt you, and you had a difficult time telling the friend how he/she made you feel. Explain why it was so difficult to talk to your friend about the problem, and what you did or were tempted to do to feel better.
- Tell students about a time you expected a family member to understand how you felt, but because you didn't speak openly about your feelings, things just got worse. Explain what ways, besides words, you showed how you were feeling. Explain how the lack of open conversation impacted your relationship.

Look for opportunities to model reflection in context as well. If you are having a hard day, you might consider sharing that information with your students (omitting personal details) and explaining how it might impact your teaching. Then ask students if they have ever had a hard day that impacted their learning. If a student says something or behaves in a way that is hurtful to you, wait until a private moment when you are both feeling calm, and, using “I” statements, explain how you interpreted the student's behavior and how it impacted you. Then ask the student for his/her interpretation and feelings. If class goes really well and you feel energized as you see the light bulbs turn on, tell students that you are noticing their engagement and how it makes you feel. Then ask them what it is about this lesson that seems to be working.

Integrate into Classroom Activities

In addition to being an essential skill for Restorative Practices, reflection is an important part of social, emotional, and academic learning, and pairs well with Common Core standards that require students to apply learning to broader contexts, see links between current and prior learning, clarify ideas, think analytically, and solve problems. The following activities are examples of ways students can practice the skill of reflecting on and analyzing their feelings.



ANTICIPATE, REINFORCE, AND REFLECT—Before any new or challenging experience, anticipate with your students what skills they may need to use, what they can do if a problem arises, and how success would look. During the experience, reinforce this by reminding students to use their skills to overcome difficulty and give positive feedback to students as they use skills. After the experience, ask students to reflect on how well they met

the challenge. Reflect on what you saw and experienced as well, especially the positive but also what needs to improve (This strategy is a core part of the Second Step curriculum, Committee for Children, 2011).

REFLECT ON GROUP DYNAMICS—After students have worked together on a project, get the group accustomed to reflecting on the experience. Share something similar to the form below before a group activity begins, so everyone can see how group members will evaluate them later. This will also lead students to reflect on their own contributions as a group member, and will think about how their behavior impacts others as they wonder how they will be rated. Consider how you will use the form below—it could be part of their grade, but you might also ask students to discuss their reflections with each other, and set goals for the next time they work together.

Self and Group Evaluation			
When we work together...			
We talk to each other, on topic, and use kind language even when we disagree			
Me	Person 1	Person 2	Person 3
Yes Neutral No	Yes Neutral No	Yes Neutral No	Yes Neutral No
We work efficiently and don't waste much time			
Me	Person 1	Person 2	Person 3
Yes Neutral No	Yes Neutral No	Yes Neutral No	Yes Neutral No
We stay in our work area unless we had a work-related reason to move			
Me	Person 1	Person 2	Person 3
Yes Neutral No	Yes Neutral No	Yes Neutral No	Yes Neutral No
We take turns during discussion, and everyone adds to the conversation			
Me	Person 1	Person 2	Person 3
Yes Neutral No	Yes Neutral No	Yes Neutral No	Yes Neutral No

HIT THE PAUSE BUTTON WHEN CLASS ISN'T GOING WELL—Stop a class activity if it isn't going well. Share what you are noticing and ask the group to reflect with you on what is happening. This is not the same as stopping class to tell students that you are unhappy with their poor behavior—instead, you are seeking their input as to why they are not engaged or participating, and what should be done differently next time.

HELP STUDENTS UNDERSTAND HOW THEY THINK—

You may be familiar with activities that help students determine their learning style. Here's a short and engaging activity in which students interact with a partner and reflect on how their styles of thinking complement one another:

1. Collect 20 objects and set them on a table in a way that all students can see them. Cover them with a sheet before students come in the room.
2. Explain that this is an experiment to see how we are similar and different in the way that we remember and learn things. After you lift the sheet, students will have 2 minutes to silently look at the objects, using whatever strategy they want to memorize what is there (they may not write anything down).
3. After two minutes, cover the objects again and give students 2 minutes to write down as many objects as they can remember without talking.
4. After working alone, have students compare with a partner to see if they can add any more things to their lists. Ask them to discuss their strategies for remembering. Uncover the objects again, and ask students which objects were easiest and most difficult to remember, and why.
5. To debrief, ask students whether they were more successful when they worked with a partner. Have a few students share their memorization strategies, and compare how different students think in different ways.

FOCUS ON REFLECTION IN YOUR LESSONS—

Throughout the day, students engage in reflection as part of their academic work. When this happens, explicitly make the connection between their academic learning and their social lives. Here are some sample reflection questions that can strengthen this skill:

- Which character do you identify with and why? If you don't identify with any of the characters, which characters remind you of someone you know, and why? Choose any character and describe how he or she has changed during the story.
- What careers are connected to the learning you did today? Can you imagine yourself in any of those careers? What skills are you building now that will put you on the path to that career?
- What do you understand now that you didn't know at the beginning of this class period? If a student was absent today and came tomorrow, how would you explain what we did today?

- I'm about to pass back your graded tests, but before I do, think about how it feels to get a higher grade than your friends, and then how it feels to get a lower grade than your friends. What is the best thing to do if you see that your grade was low? If your grade is high, how can you show empathy to others who might have a low grade?
- As you plan lessons for your class, think about where opportunities exist to ask students to form and share an opinion. If there are no points of controversy in what you are teaching, ask students for their opinion about the quality or usefulness of an assignment.

RETURN TO CLASS AGREEMENTS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR—If you used a process like that from the Step 2 lesson plan, be sure to allocate 10 minutes or so to revisit them at least quarterly.

The example to the right allows students to reflect on the behavior of the class as a whole, of the teacher, and of themselves. After students have completed the reflection individually, the teacher can collect them, then compile major trends and a few quotes to share with the class the next time they are together.

Reflective Talking Circles

Convene the class as a Talking Circle when you can budget more than a few minutes for reflection. At this point, students are still building the skills they will need to participate in a Peace Circle where class conflicts may be discussed, but you can prepare them for that experience with any of these Talking Circle ideas.

COLLECTIVELY REFLECT ON SHARED EXPERIENCES—After a field trip, special presentation, class guest, or other out-of-the-ordinary experience, form a Talking Circle to re-tell the story of the event. Set the expectation that each student in the circle will add a detail about the day. The first person to speak will tell about the beginning of the experience, and each student in the Circle will continue the story with the phrase “And then..” The last person in the circle will tell the end of the story. This exercise requires students to remember small details that may not seem significant at first glance. Wrap up by asking students if any details were shared that they didn't notice during the experience, or if there's any special detail that they will remember for a long time.

CELEBRATE THE COMPLETION OF A UNIT OR MAJOR ASSIGNMENT—To culminate a significant assignment, bring the group together as a Talking Circle to share their work. Ask each student to speak briefly about what was difficult about the assignment, what they liked most about it, and share a few unique details from their work. As time

allows, pass the talking piece around a second time to give students an opportunity to ask questions or express appreciation of others.

Social Contract Reflection Questions			
On a scale of 1-4, how well are we doing as a class on keeping our social contract? Put a check below to show your choice.			
1	2	3	4
NOT KEEPING IT AT ALL	NOT REALLY KEEPING IT	MOSTLY KEEPING IT	DEFINITELY KEEPING IT
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Explain Your Choice:			
<input type="text"/>			
On a scale of 1-4, how well am I doing as a teacher on keeping our social contract? Put a check below to show your choice.			
1	2	3	4
NOT KEEPING IT AT ALL	NOT REALLY KEEPING IT	MOSTLY KEEPING IT	DEFINITELY KEEPING IT
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Explain Your Choice:			
<input type="text"/>			
On a scale of 1-4, how well are you doing on keeping our social contract? Put a check below to show your choice.			
1	2	3	4
NOT KEEPING IT AT ALL	NOT REALLY KEEPING IT	MOSTLY KEEPING IT	DEFINITELY KEEPING IT
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Explain Your Choice:			
<input type="text"/>			

Step 3 Lesson Plan:

Empathetic Listening and “I” Statements

OBJECTIVE: Students will practice empathetic listening in the context of a disagreement and will rehearse how to state their own feelings and reactions using “I” statements.

TIMING: Lasts approximately 40 minutes. This lesson should be introduced after students have practiced and are comfortable reflecting on and sharing their feelings.

ILLINOIS SEL STANDARDS:

2A.4B. Use conversation skills to understand others’ feelings and perspectives.

2A.5B. Demonstrate ways to express empathy for others.

2A.5A. Demonstrate how to express understanding of those who hold different opinions.

1. (10 MINUTES) Divide the class into groups of 3-5, and provide one of the scenarios below to each group (or create your own, if these aren’t a good match for your students).

- Your best friend’s grandfather passes away over the weekend, and he’s very quiet at school on Monday.
- At recess, two captains are picking teams. Everyone knows which student will be picked last, because she is always picked last.
- A student in your class really struggles in reading, and your teacher asked you to be her partner to do a reading assignment. It is her turn to read aloud and she starts to goof off instead.
- A new student is eating lunch alone in the cafeteria.
- Your teacher has just referred two students to the office for fighting. When you ask him a question, he doesn’t answer but snaps at you to sit down and get to work.
- A student who is a little overweight sits on a chair and it breaks. The chair was partly broken already, but most students start joking about her weight and laughing anyway.

Post these three questions on the board, and give groups about 5 minutes to discuss the answers and select spokespeople.

- How do you think the person is feeling? Use at least 3 words to describe.
- How do you know the person is feeling that way?
- If you could see this person rather than just read about what happened, what facial expressions or body language would help you understand what she or he is feeling?

Ask each group to read their scenario aloud and answer the three questions. Then, ask students to reflect silently on whether or not they cared about the feelings of the people in the scenario, or whether they would like to help or support them in some way. Conclude by defining empathy—We feel empathy when we understand and care about the feelings of others.

2. (10 MINUTES) Explain that when we feel really strongly about something, it can be difficult to talk peacefully with people who disagree with us. Tell your students about a time you experienced this.

Sometimes we react by using angry words or blaming language, other times we might react by not saying anything at all. We want to be able to work out disagreements peacefully, and to do that we need to:

A. FEEL EMPATHY FOR THE OTHER PERSON AND

B. EXPLAIN OUR POINT OF VIEW, OR FEELINGS, AND OUR NEEDS IN A PEACEFUL WAY.

We do this with empathetic listening and “I” statements.

First, practice this skill with a fun, decontextualized activity. Google the term “inkblots” and choose 2 or 3 images to share with the class. Ask them to use these sentence starters to talk with their partner about what they see:

“I can understand how you see that, and I also see...”

“I can’t see that right now, but what I see is...”

Commend students’ ability to both respect the opinion of their partner, but also communicate their own opinion.

3. (10 MINUTES) Next, you’ll add more context. Tell students it is one thing to disagree peacefully about inkblots, and it’s entirely different when you are trying to talk to someone who has done something that hurt you or someone you care about. Share this sentence structure with the class:

WHEN I SEE/HEAR [state what happened], I FEEL [state your feeling] BECAUSE I [state the effect the incident had on you].

Ask students to write out how they would make an “I” statement in response to the following:

- You told your friend a secret, and she told at least 4 other people.
- Someone who was a good friend last year has been ignoring you this school year.
- Your parent won’t let you stay out past ____ p.m., when you know your brother was allowed to stay out later when he was your age.
- Your teacher is giving you a lot of attention and asking if you need help, and other students are starting to tease you about it.

EXAMPLE: “When I heard that you told my secret, I felt really embarrassed and betrayed because it was humiliating and now I feel I can’t trust you.”

Call on students to share their “I” statements for each prompt.

4. (10 MINUTES) Transition by explaining that once you gather the courage to communicate the way you feel, the “I” statement is a good formula to do it in a way that is respectful, non-blaming, and invites open discussion. When you use an “I” statement, the other person is more likely to respond with empathy. To demonstrate, pass out the “I Statements vs. Blaming Statements” worksheet on the next page, and ask students to guess how Mike or Stacey would respond to Option A (blaming statements) versus Option B (I statements):

Synthesize student responses by emphasizing that when we explain ourselves with “I” statements, we let others know how their actions impact us in a way that is less likely to make them feel angry or defensive. Instead, we create an opportunity for them to respond and explain their perspective.

OPTIONAL FOLLOW-UP: For homework, assign students to use an “I” statement in real life, and reflect about it the next day in class through writing or a Talking Circle.

If you already have space set aside in your classroom for resolving conflicts or cooling down, print up half sheets of paper with the “I” statement structure, and place them in that space for students to complete.

“I” STATEMENTS VS. BLAMING STATEMENTS

Maurice is a mechanic and owns his own shop. He arrives one morning to find that the shop is a mess—he had left his employee Mike in charge from 3:00 until closing at 7:00 p.m. When Mike comes in for work the next day, Maurice needs to talk to him about it.

OPTION A:

MAURICE: This place was a disaster when I got here. You always leave tools lying all over the garage! You don't have any respect for my shop or my property!

HOW WOULD MIKE REACT? _____

OPTION B:

MAURICE: I have a problem. I feel disrespected and frustrated when I see tools laying around the garage when I get here in the morning, because I paid a lot for them and this shop is important to me.

HOW WOULD MIKE REACT? _____

Stacey is a student in Ms. James' history class. Stacey isn't working on the assignment, and instead is drawing pictures or laying her head down on the desk.

OPTION A:

MS. JAMES: What's your problem? You need to start putting more effort into this class; you never do any work in here!

HOW WOULD STACEY REACT? _____

OPTION B:

MS. JAMES: When I see that you're not participating, I feel concerned that you might not be learning, and I can't tell what you know if you don't try to do this assignment.

HOW WOULD STACEY REACT? _____

Step 4:

Address Problems and Questions Collaboratively

Featured Lesson: Making Things Right

After a few months of consistently using the practices in Steps 1-3, you will likely observe that students are socially comfortable with each other, they are willing to share more personal thoughts and feelings, and they are starting to ask each other meaningful questions and offer feedback without your close guidance. Soon they will be well-prepared to participate fully in a Restorative Conversation or Peace Circle. However, before students can be expected to engage in a difficult personal conversation where they must take responsibility for their actions and how they have impacted others, an important stepping stone is to create experiences where students can participate in collaborative problem-solving around issues that are not so closely tied to personal emotions and real social relationships.

The goal is to pose a problem that the entire group must work together to resolve—that is, while some students may end up taking a lead role, no one will immediately have the right answer. In this section, you'll see several ideas for creating these experiences, followed by a full lesson plan to help transition students from addressing hypothetical and de-personalized scenarios to step 5, in which they will use restorative processes to address events in their lives.

Group Puzzles

These 3 collaborative activities are good “hook” activities, and are great for practicing and reinforcing the positive interactions and behaviors you want to see when addressing more authentic challenges.

EVERYBODY UP—This movement-rich activity requires students to cooperate, strategize, and communicate to accomplish a goal.

1. Begin with pairs of students sitting on the ground, hands clasped, and feet touching. Their job is to work together to raise themselves from sitting to standing.
2. When pairs are successful, have students regroup so they are in threes. Then move onto fours, fives, and even higher numbers until students can no longer stand successfully.
3. Debrief by sharing your observations about how students cooperated to be successful, comparing their strategies with ways they can work with others to accomplish academic or personal goals.

LOGIC PROBLEMS—Choose an appropriately challenging logic problem from www.mysterymaster.com/puzzles/ or a similar website. Either print copies so students can work on the problem in a group of 4, or cut out the individual clues so every student can hold onto one and read it aloud. Here are some questions to debrief:

- What strategies did you use to solve the problem?
- Did you work together or did one person take the lead?
- What did others do that was helpful to solve the problem?
- What kind of behavior was unhelpful?
- What prevented you from giving up?
- What was the turning point when you figured out a process to solve the problem?
- How was this logic problem different from solving a problem between you and a friend, family member, or someone you don't get along with?

COLLABORATIVE ART—This activity requires students to communicate and cooperate to complete a picture (you may tell them what to draw or leave it up to them). Before you begin, clarify expectations for how students should work together. For example: Students should listen to each other's ideas, ask follow up questions to get more information, compromise on an idea, encourage everyone to participate, and express any disagreements with respect.

1. Divide students into small groups. Give each student in the group a different color crayon.
2. Ask them to draw one picture as a group. Each color must be included and each student can only use one color.
3. Watch and comment on their use of clarifying statements and respectful disagreement.
4. Debrief by having them show their artwork and explain how they worked together. Ask what happened that made the task easier or more difficult.

Overcoming Academic Challenges

Teach students to take a problem-solving approach when they face academic challenges. Pose a few of the following scenarios (or adjust them to better fit your students' circumstances) and write students' responses on the board. Ask the students to star 1 or 3 ideas that are most likely to result in a good outcome.

- Your teacher gave an assignment today to write a five page story, and you have to turn it in one week from now. How will you break the assignment up into smaller chunks of work so you don't end up writing it all the night before it is due?
- For your final project in history, you and your friends decided to make a video about the life of Roberto Clemente. How are you going to make sure each of your friends share the workload to get the video done on time?
- You were absent for 3 days and asked a friend if you could borrow her notes from class. You start to copy her notes, but realize they don't make any sense to you, since you weren't in class to hear what the teacher was saying. What can you do?
- You had a take-home exam and had a full week to do it, but you had some serious family issues going on and you have only answered one of the six questions. It's due tomorrow and you definitely won't be done in time. What can you do?
- Your teacher says that you have 6 zeros for assignments that you never turned in, but you disagree—you remember doing the assignments and believe you did turn them in. What can you do?

Debrief by evaluating the value of taking time to generate multiple solutions and choosing the best option. Create contrast by asking students what happens if we DON'T think through our challenges using this process.

Class as a Focus Group

This is an important activity to begin the transition from the creative, inventive types of collaboration in the activities above to a more contextualized process that asks students to reflect on real experiences. Prepare a real question or dilemma you are facing as a school or in your classroom. For example, maybe you are concerned about the growing number of students who aren't turning in homework on time, and you would like to consult with your class about possible solutions. Maybe you are getting close to your unit on plays, but you are thinking about trying out a new play or teaching it in a different way, and you would like student input about what would be most engaging. Maybe there have been some bullying incidents in the school as a whole, and you would like to hear students' perspectives about what type of anti-bullying campaign is actually effective. Maybe the school's goal is to increase attendance, and you want to ask your students for their opinions about why attendance is low and brainstorm an attendance plan to match.

It is helpful to do this activity in a Talking Circle to encourage focus and equality. This also sets a different

tone than regular class activities, and emphasizes that you value their voices and are genuinely asking for their input. While most questions should be answered with the talking piece moving in one direction around the circle, for some questions it may make more sense to pass the talking piece "popcorn-style".

When you frame your question for the class, describe it in an objective way that does not reveal your assumptions about the cause or solution to the problem. Explain that you are convening the class as a focus group since they are the most important stakeholders and they have firsthand knowledge as students in this class and school. Prepare your questions ahead of time and take notes to show your students that all their comments are valuable and will be taken into consideration. Strong focus group questions will get at what students believe are the root causes of the issue, their perspectives and opinions about what has happened so far, and a range of possibilities they believe will be an effective course of action. Ask follow up questions, but resist the temptation to add your own thinking to the conversation.

Processing Current Events

At this stage, students will likely have the skills to participate in a Talking Circle about current events. The news cycle is typically full of stories that have touched our students' lives. From international news about refugees, war, and natural disasters to local news about the school district, community violence, elections, or even events that have occurred in your school, students will benefit from the opportunity to process their reactions in a safe, restorative Talking Circle. Similar to a Restorative Conversation, here are questions that will allow students to share what they know, what they are thinking, and choose a path to move forward.

- How do you feel about what happened?
- How were you impacted by what happened?
- Why do you think _____ happened?
- How do you think _____ feels about what happened?
- How can you support _____?
- What do you need to feel heard and respected?
- What can we do to make things better?

Plan and Execute a Service Project

This is a longer term activity that you would most likely return to for a designated block of time on a weekly basis. For 6th-12th grades, this works well as part of an Advisory period, or for lower elementary it's best for a

time of the day or week when students need an activity that is highly engaging but lower on structure.

A successful, student-directed service project will call upon students to apply many of the skills they have built over the course of the year. Use the Anticipate, Reinforce, and Reflect process (page 14) to prepare and reinforce students for demonstrating active listening, seeking other perspectives, elaborating on their thinking, coming to shared agreements, and demonstrating empathy.

Explain that over the next 4 to 8 weeks, they will get to take the lead on making and executing a plan to make a real difference in something that they care about. Everyone in the class will have an active role and be an important part of a smaller committee to make sure the project is a success.

1. Begin by brainstorming as a class about social issues that are on their minds. These can be international, national, state, or local issues, but do encourage students to suggest local issues—often local projects can be the most impactful and meaningful.
2. If the brainstormed list is long, narrow it down to no more than 5 issues through a democratic voting process. It works well to give each student 2 or 3 votes, and choose the 5 issues that had the most votes.
3. From the list of 5, talk as a group about different ways your class could address the issue. For example, they might raise funds, organize a demonstration, build or repair something, plan an assembly, or volunteer. You may make some suggestions here, but your role is mostly to serve as a reality check—while it's good to dream big, you also want students to think realistically about what they could accomplish with the work time and resources you are able to provide.

The RP Connection

Students can choose to do a project to make the school or community more restorative—for example, leading a community-building activity with younger students, organizing a Talking Circle that engages community members, school staff, and students, presenting a proposal to school administrators to implement more restorative school policies, or creating visuals to post around the school to teach restorative mindsets and restorative responses.

4. Narrow down the list of 5 issues to one that the class can agree on. From there, make a list of tasks that will need to be accomplished for the project to be successful. This should be a long, detailed list. Group similar items on the list, and form 4-8 “committees” to be in charge of a smaller group of tasks.
5. Discuss the types of skills that will be most important for each committee, and ask each student to rank their top 3 committee choices and submit them to you. It is important that each student work with a small committee so they will feel greater accountability for the project's success, and also a committee that they have expressed interest in so that they are more likely to invest effort.
6. During the next class period, remind students of their committee assignments and their tasks lists. Check in with each group as they work to ensure they have the materials they need and that they are sharing responsibility and making progress, but leave the decisions and the work to the students. If it's not going well, guide the committees through a problem-solving conversation rather than make suggestions.

The RP Connection

Each day you will be giving students time to work, begin the period by anticipating what kinds of communication skills they will need to make sure that everyone's input is heard and considered respectfully, and to resolve any disagreements that arise.

As you monitor student work, ask students questions and provide feedback (mostly positive) about the skills they are using to actively listen, affirm each other, and come to shared agreements.

7. Service projects are most impactful when they end with an event that provides some closure, where students can see the results of their efforts. For example, if they are raising money, you might try to take a field trip to the organization they are supporting, or at least walk as a class to mail a check. If building something, students might plan a revealing ceremony and invite parents and school staff to attend. Recognize each committee's contribution, and meet as a Talking Circle to reflect on the process and what made the project successful.

If you like this idea but would like more support from a great community partner, visit the [Mikva Challenge website](#).

Step 4 Lesson Plan:

MAKING THINGS RIGHT

OBJECTIVE: Students will be able to clarify the meaning of forgiveness, suggest logical, restorative consequences in response to social scenarios, and differentiate between consequences that are focused on punishment versus consequences that are focused on making things right.

TIMING: Lasts approximately 50 minutes. Use this lesson after students have gained a clear understanding of empathy, and students have successfully practiced collaborative problem-solving and respectful disagreement.

ILLINOIS SEL STANDARDS:

2A. 3B. Analyze how one's behavior may affect others.

2D.2B. Apply constructive approaches in resolving conflicts.

2D.3A. Evaluate strategies for preventing and resolving interpersonal problems.

- 1. (5 MINUTES)** As a hook, ask students if they have ever been forced to apologize for something they weren't really sorry about. Share your own story, ask a few students to share a story, and/or ask a few students to act out for the class what it might look like to make a "fake apology." Transition to step 2 by asking: How does it feel when someone "fake apologizes" to you? Does it fix the problem?
- 2. (10 MINUTES)** Ask students to free write for 5 minutes about the prompt below. Ask if any students will share a sentence or two from their writing.

Have you ever hurt someone's feelings? How did you know you had hurt their feelings? How does it feel to know that you made someone feel bad? How should you react when you realize you have made a mistake? Is saying you're sorry enough? When is it not enough? What else can you do to make it right?

Say something like, "When someone treats someone badly, they have harmed their relationship, and they need to figure out what they could say or do to restore the relationship. Likewise, the person who was hurt has the option of accepting the apology and forgiving, offering forgiveness but making a request, or holding a grudge."

- 3. (10-15 MINUTES)** Draw a scale on the board that looks something like this:



Ask students to stand up and move to the side of the room that best matches their opinion. (Note: students do not need to be lined up near the board, they can be spread out around the room.) Read each bold statement aloud.

- When I forgive someone, I have to forget about what they did. If there is disagreement, allow students to explain their thinking. Before moving on to the next statement, clarify that forgiving does NOT mean you forget or give in.
 - If I forgive someone, I'm basically saying they didn't do anything wrong. Again, allow students to clarify their thinking, but move students to the understanding that forgiving does NOT mean the other person won, that you were wrong, or that what they did was okay.
 - When I forgive someone, it's because I accept that they are sorry. Allow discussion, but try to summarize by defining forgiveness as a choice to accept that the person is sorry and they will truly try to do better in the future.
 - If someone tells me they're sorry and they really mean it, that's enough for me.
 - There are some situations where just saying sorry doesn't cut it. Use these final statements to transition to the next activity about going beyond saying "sorry."
- 4. (10 MINUTES)** Introduce the idea of "making things right." Sometimes an apology alone is not enough--- things can still feel out of balance. What kinds of actions could restore balance and make things right? Divide the class into 6 groups, and give each group one of the following scenarios:

- A friend borrowed your class notes and then lost them.
- Two friends went to see a movie that they knew you wanted to see, and didn't invite you.
- A girl who sits next to you got a detention because of something you did—the teacher thought it was her, and you didn't come forward.
- Someone spread a rumor about you. You borrowed your friend's bike and damaged it. You don't have enough money to fix it, and he doesn't either.
- A family member was asking you to do a chore, and you were so annoyed that you yelled and ran out of the room.

Ask each group to read the scenario together, then talk about what the person in the scenario could do in addition to saying they are sorry, to make things right. Have each group share with the rest of the class.

5. (10 MINUTES) Explain that this is the kind of approach you want everyone to take in this classroom when anyone feels hurt, bothered, mistreated, or disrespected. This is also the way the school as a whole is working with students who have broken school rules. Share the chart below with the class.

What Happened?	The Punishment-Only Way "You're In Trouble!"	The Restorative Way "Making Things Right!"
Marcia and Felicia get into a fight.	They are suspended for 3 days.	They meet in the Peace Room, and a Circle Keeper helps them talk about why they were angry and what they need from the other person to feel right again. They sign an agreement that "this is where it ends."
Phillip is running down the hallway at full speed. A teacher tells him to slow down and walk, but Phillip ignores him and bumps into him as he runs past.	Phillip gets detention, and is forced to apologize to the teacher.	Phillip and the teacher sit together with a Circle Keeper. Phillip explains why he was running and the teacher explains why he was concerned that running could be dangerous. Phillip chooses to apologize, and offers to design and post "speed limit: walking" posters for the hallway.
Andrea is angry at Mark so she writes something about him on the bathroom wall with a Sharpie.	With the help of the bathroom logbook and a teacher who knows everyone's handwriting, Andrea has lunch detention for a week, and isn't allowed to use the restroom pass anymore.	Andrea is asked what she thinks would be a fair consequence for her actions. She volunteers to repaint the bathroom wall. She also requests a Peace Circle with Mark so they can talk about why she's upset with him.
Amos is 20 minutes late to class because he was hanging out with friends outside.	Amos gets written up, and if this happens 3 more times he will be in In School Suspension for a day.	Amos and his teacher talk after class about why he was late, what he missed, and why his lateness was a distraction to the teacher and other students. When asked what he thinks would be a fair consequence, he suggests that he come 20 minutes early tomorrow to make up for it and help the teacher set up for class.
Students are taking turns reading aloud in class, and one student really struggles. Mila makes a joke about her that the whole class can hear.	Mila is sent out of the room. Soon, the teacher comes and yells at her and calls her parents to tell them what happened.	The teacher tells Mila she's really disappointed that she would make that hurtful comment, and that they'll talk about it in a few minutes. Later, they talk in private about what happened. Mila doesn't think it was a big deal, so the teacher asks her to write about what happened from the other girl's point of view. The teacher calls her parents and asks them to ask Mila about what she wrote. The next day, Mila chooses to write a letter of apology.

Write the word “accountability” on the board, and ask students if they can help you define it. If they are having trouble, explain that the goal of the “Restorative Way” on the chart is accountability. As students give suggestions, shape a definition that uses their input but more or less comes out to something like “Accountability means we are responsible for our actions, and responsible for repairing harm we have caused.” Ask students to examine each row in the chart more closely, and ask:

- In each row, what or who was harmed by the student’s behavior?
- When you compare the Punishment-Only way versus the Restorative Way, in which box is the student required to repair the harm caused by their behavior?
- In which box is the student more likely to change their behavior for the better? Why?

Wrap up by explaining that sometimes you might ask the class to help think about the Restorative Way and how we can make sure we are accountable to each other. This might happen in a whole group Circle or sometimes just in a one-on-one conversation. Today’s activity was meant to build their skills in thinking about how to make things right. All the members of the class share the responsibility to treat each other with respect and make a positive classroom environment so everyone is able to learn.



Step 5:

Restorative Conversations about the Class Community

Over weeks and months of applying steps 1-4, you will have scaffolded learning experiences to build relationships that are trusting, open, and authentic. Students will be familiar with core components of restorative mindsets and language: empathetic listening, “I” statements, accountability, and making things right. Continue to use the proactive practices you used to achieve this classroom community, but now you can also incorporate Restorative Practices that respond to problems. Restorative Practices should become a prominent part of your approach to discipline—students now have the awareness and skills to play a role in determining consequences for their behavior.

While a restorative classroom environment will likely reduce the amount of student misbehavior, inevitably there will be days you need to speak with individuals about conflict or harm. As you have [Restorative Conversations](#) with students, both model and remind students to use empathetic listening and “I” statements. Ask students what they will do to repair the harm caused by their behavior, and seek their input when determining consequences that will most likely prevent the behavior from happening again.

Misbehavior that is chronic or intense may have a complex root cause, and requires a multi-part response. The chart on the next page illustrates the four stages of a restorative response, aligned with those outlined in [Guidelines for Effective Discipline: An Administrator’s Addendum to the Student Code of Conduct](#).

Restorative educators can use this flow chart to shape a response that preserves their positive relationship with the student, considers the underlying factors that may cause or reinforce the behavior, repairs harm, and restores the student’s positive identity as a member of the classroom community.

Peace Circles

A [Peace Circle](#) is used to resolve a conflict between students or between a student and an adult, and should always be led by a trained Circle Keeper. Students may be aware of the need for a Peace Circle before you are.

Speak with students about what kinds of problems would be appropriate to bring to a Peace Circle, and then allow students to request them. If you have not been trained in facilitating a Peace Circle, refer students to the appropriate person at your school. If it is a class-wide issue, speak with your school’s trained Circle Keeper to see if they are able to join your class to facilitate the Peace Circle.

Welcome Circles

If a student has been absent for an extended period, joins the class midyear, or is returning from a suspension or expulsion, you may choose to have a Talking Circle to prepare for the student’s arrival. If you have a Talking Circle before the student’s first day, you might ask the class how they will treat the student in a way that is welcoming and supportive. If you have a Talking Circle on the day of the student’s arrival, you might ask the class to share one thing they missed about the student, or one thing that happened during the absence to help bring him or her up to speed. If you are aware of an unresolved conflict related to the student’s return to class, make arrangements with your school’s trained Circle Keeper to arrange a Peace Circle for all students and adults who are impacted by the conflict. These practices are essential for restoring the sense of community, empathy, and caring relationships that you have worked to establish.

If you are interested in being trained as a Circle Keeper, search the Learning Hub for “OSEL Restorative Circles.”

Works Cited

- Clifford, M.A. Teaching Restorative Practices with Classroom Circles. Center for Restorative Process. Available in full at <http://www.centerforrestorativeprocess.com/restorative-practices.html>
- Gouldner, H. (1978). Teachers' pets, troublemakers and nobodies. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.
- Johnson, D. (1970). The social psychology of education. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Ladd, G. W., Herald-Brown, S. L. and Reiser, M. (2008). Does Chronic Classroom Peer Rejection Predict the Development of Children’s Classroom Participation During the Grade School Years? Child Development, 79: 1001–1015.
- Sprick, R. (2009). CHAMPS: A proactive & positive approach to classroom management, 2nd Ed. Eugene, OR: Pacific Northwest Publishing, Inc.

A Teacher's Flow Chart for Restorative Discipline:

RESPONDING TO CLASSROOM-LEVEL MISBEHAVIOR AND FOLLOWING UP TO DRIVE POSITIVE CHANGE

