Restorative Practices

Division for Children, Youth and Families
Restorative Practices:

Restorative Practices describe various strategies designed to build and restore communities. In its most formal sense, Restorative Justice is a victim-centered approach to addressing wrongdoing with a focus on repairing the harm that was caused by an offender. Restorative Practices also include the use of informal and formal processes that precede wrongdoing. These processes proactively build relationships and a sense of community to prevent conflict in the first place.

“People are happier, more cooperative and productive, and more likely to make positive changes when those in authority do things with them, rather than to them or for them.” Source: IIRP
The Social Discipline Window

Support

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Restorative Practices in DCYF

- In 2010 DCYF began the development of a Practice Model and chose Restorative Justice Theory as a foundation; in 2014 Restorative Practices became a key component of DCYF’s 5 Year Plan
- In April of 2013 six people from DCYF were trained in Restorative Practices by the International Institute for Restorative Practices
- Beginning in June of 2013, proactive Restorative Practices were slowly implemented throughout SYSC
- The training and implementation process began with interactions that are designed to build community
- Two levels certification for Restorative Practices were developed by DCYF in New Hampshire
- Restorative Justice Practices will not take the place of consequences or treatment but may be used to help to identify consequences
- Action Research has already shown promising results at SYSC related to Restorative Practices
What did the Research Show?

- Restorative Practices have been linked to an increased sense of community as evidenced from staff and youth self-reports.
- Youth participation in Restorative Practices has increased as a result of meaningful staff participation in restorative activities as evidenced by a decrease in “passes”.
- Routine Proactive Circles have developed a culture on units where youth become integral factors in monitoring and maintaining structure in the circles.
- IIRP has also completed research linking proactive restorative practices to an increased sense of community and a decrease in aggressive behavior.
Restorative Principles: Two Different Views -

**Criminal Justice**
- Crime is a violation of the law and the state
- Violations create guilt
- Justice requires the state to determine blame (guilt) and impose pain (punishment)

**Restorative Justice**
- Crime is a violation of people and relationships
- Violations create obligations
- Justice involves victims, offenders and community members in an effort to put things right.

**Central Focus:** Offenders getting what they deserve

**Central Focus:** Victim needs and offender responsibility for repairing harm.

-Adopted from The Little Book of Restorative Practices by Howard Zehr
Restorative Principles: Three Different Questions -

**Criminal Justice**
- What laws have been broken?
- Who did it?
- What do they deserve?

**Restorative Justice**
- Who has been hurt?
- What are their needs?
- Whose obligations are these?

-Adopted from *The Little Book of Restorative Practices* by Howard Zehr
Restorative Practices Continuum

**Proactive Circles**
Proactive Circles or “Go Arounds” are informal “Check-ins” that are designed to build a sense of community. They have been linked to improved relationships and a decrease in aggressive behavior.

**Affective Language**
Affective Language is language that shows how somebody’s behavior affects others. It allows for, and encourages, expressing emotions.

**Responsive Circles**
Responsive Circles include a variety of activities that are designed to repair the harm that was caused by a wrongful act. The goal is to allow offense victim(s) and wrongdoer(s) to have a voice in the reparation of harm, and begin having “the right conversations.”
Restorative Questions

Affective (Restorative) Questions when challenging behavior:

- What happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- What have you thought about since?
- Who has been affected by what you have done? In what way have they been affected?
- What do you think you need to do to make things right?

Source: International Institute for Restorative Practices
NH Department of Health and Human Services  DCYF & DJJS
Restorative Questions (Continued)

Affective (Restorative) Questions to help those affected:

- What did you think when you realized what had happened?
- What impact has this incident had on you and others?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?
- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

Source: International Institute for Restorative Practices
Questions