

# Restorative Discipline: What Parents Need to Know

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What's this thing called  
Restorative Discipline?



# Restorative discipline

- ▶ Restorative practices take incidents that might otherwise result in punishment and create opportunities for students to:
  - Become aware of the impact of their behavior.
  - Understand the obligation to take responsibility for their actions.
  - Take steps toward making things right.

Why are we doing this?



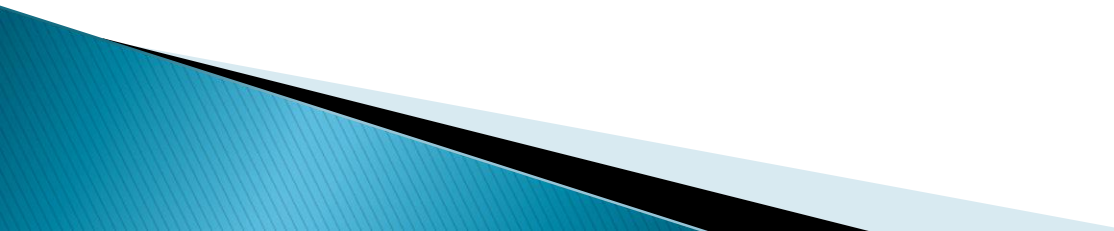


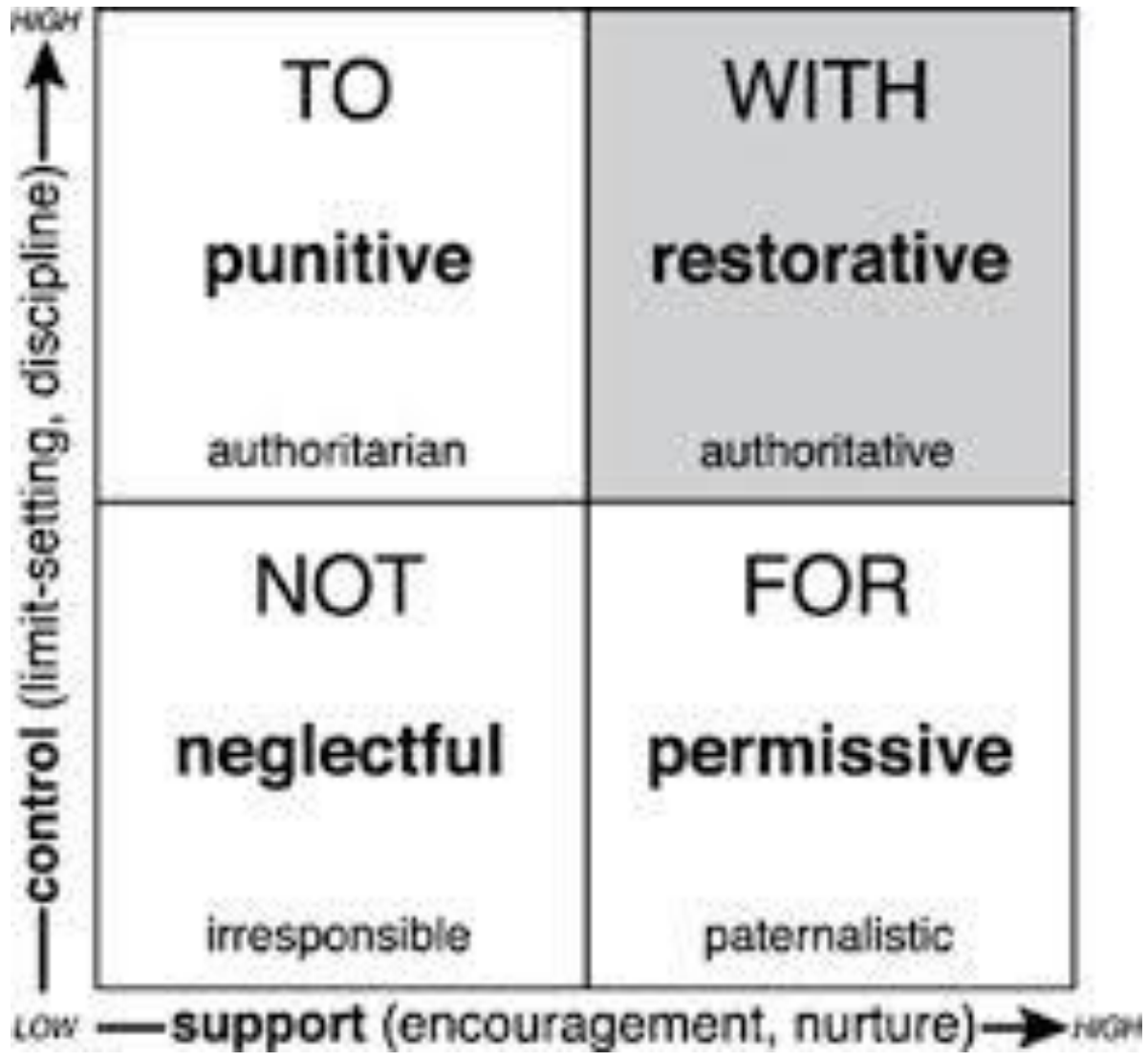
"Restorative  
Practices **in**  
keep students **in** school,  
**learning**, rather than  
removing them for  
suspension or expulsion..."

# A Discipline Continuum



The underlying premise of Restorative Practices rests with the belief that people will make positive changes when those in positions of authority do things with them rather than to them or for them.





# Punitive Discipline or Restorative Discipline

## Punitive Discipline

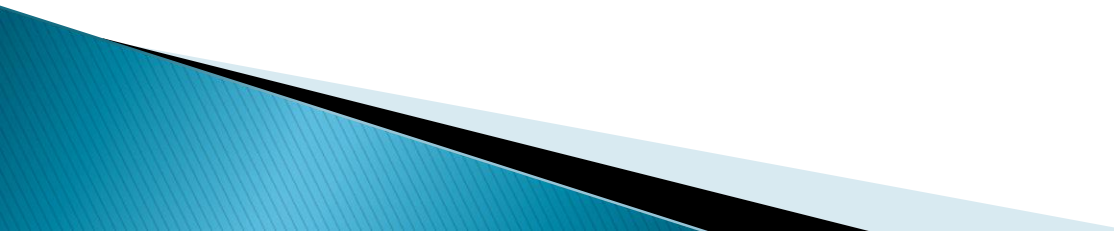
- Misbehavior is breaking the rules.
- Offender is accountable only to the school authorities.
- Accountability is equated with punishment, usually exclusion.
- Those harmed are peripheral to the process.
- Offenders are defined by their deficits (the misbehavior).

## Restorative Discipline

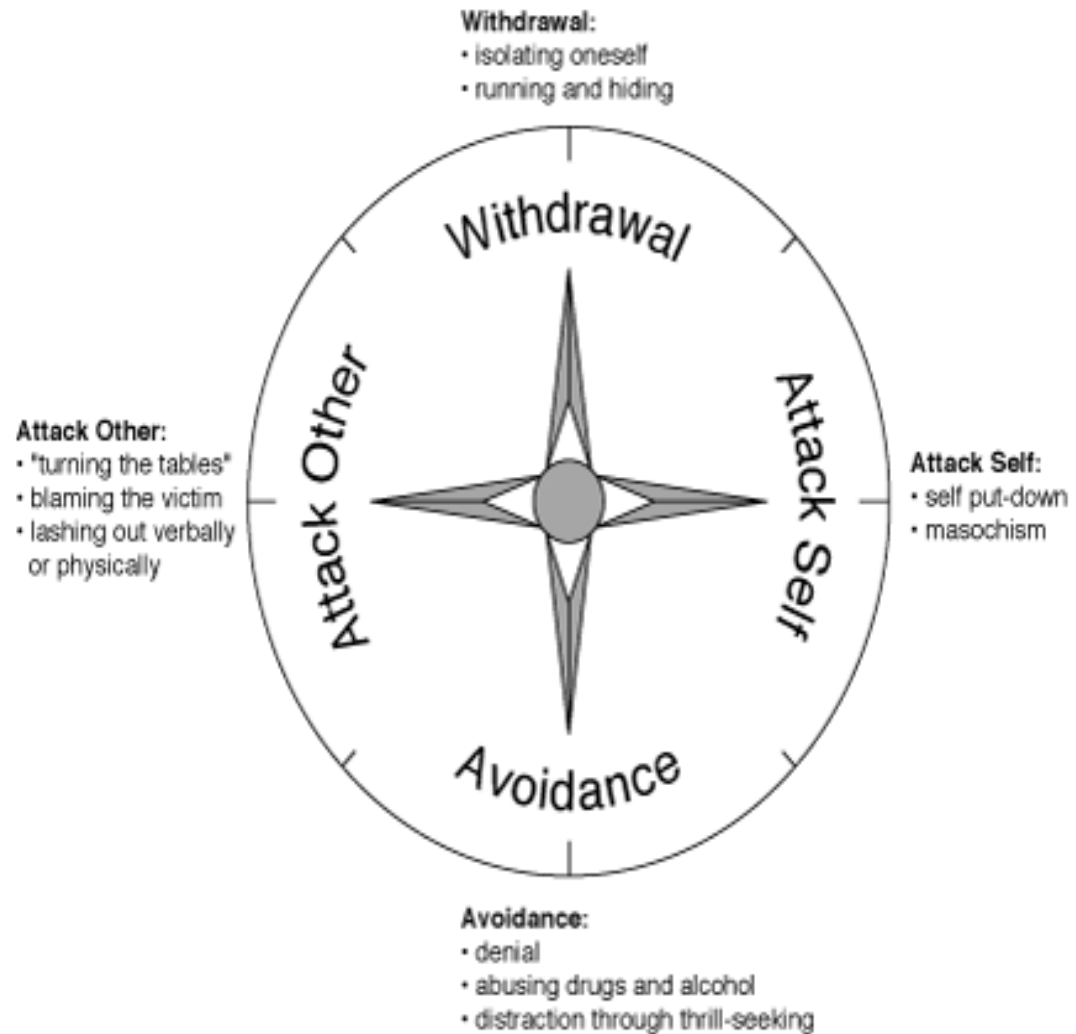
- Misbehavior is a violation of people and relationships.
- Offender is accountable to those harmed and the community.
- Accountability is defined as taking responsibility and repairing the harm.
- Those harmed play a key role in response to wrongdoing.
- Offenders have capacity to take responsibility and change their behavior.

Youth place significant attention on how they are treated. When punished, it is easy for them to fixate on the harm they experience rather than how their behavior may affect others.

This focus on the self leads to resentment toward the punisher. And resentment turns into resistance to participation in activities and disassociation and/or aggression toward others.



# Compass of Shame



restorative  
healing  
justice  
reconciliation  
relationships  
peace  
offenders  
redemption  
victims  
advocate  
retributive  
forgiveness  
support  
responsibility  
zehr  
closure  
communities  
proportion  
mediation  
reintegrate

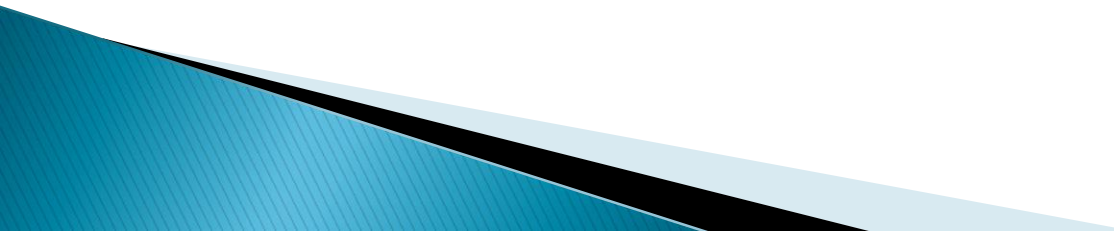
# Key Goals of Restorative Discipline

- To understand the harm done and develop empathy for both the harmed and the harmer.
- To listen and respond to the needs of the person harmed and the person who harmed.
- To encourage accountability and responsibility through personal reflection within a collaborative planning process.
- To reintegrate the harmer into the community.
- To create caring climates to support healthy communities.
- To change the system when it contributes to the harm.

*From The Little Book of Restorative Discipline, by Lorraine Amstutz and Judy Mullet*

# Five Principles of Restorative Discipline

## Restorative Discipline...

1. Focuses on harms and consequent needs.  
(victims', but also communities' and offenders')
  2. Addresses obligations resulting from those harms.  
(offenders' but also families', communities' and society's)
  3. Uses inclusive, collaborative processes.
  4. Involves those with a legitimate stake in the situation.(victims, offenders, families, community members, society)
  5. Seeks to put right the wrongs.
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# Accountability

Within the Restorative Approach, we define "accountability" in a very broad and comprehensive way:

- **Owning** *our mistakes--accepting responsibility for the harm we have caused;*
- **Understanding** *the impact of our actions on others;*
- **Repairing** *the harm—e.g., "making it right."*

**Informal**

**Formal**

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Affective  
Statements

Restorative  
Questions

Small  
Impromptu  
Conference

Group  
or Circles

Formal  
Conference

# Restorative Practices Continuum



# Community



Affective statements are the least formal tool on the Restorative Practices continuum. Affective statements are expressions of personal feelings, both positive and negative. Instead of criticizing or scolding the student, an "affective" teacher communicates how the student's behavior makes them feel.

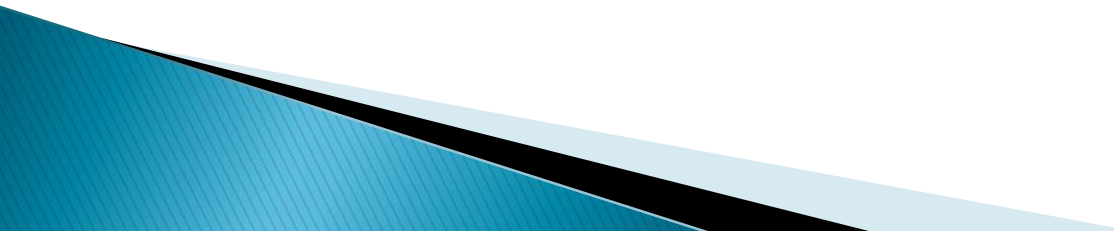
For example: "I feel frustrated when people are talking when I am trying to teach. I get distracted and lose my train of thought. It makes me feel like the time I spent preparing was wasted and is not appreciated."

Expressions of affective statements are not intended to shame or vent personal stressors, but to develop empathy, establish boundaries and provide authentic observation.

Feelings

# Affective Statements

# Guiding Questions

- ▶ Who has been hurt?
  - ▶ What are their needs?
  - ▶ Whose obligations are they?
  - ▶ What are the causes?
  - ▶ Who has a stake in this?
  - ▶ What is the appropriate process to involve stakeholders in an effort to put things right?
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# Restorative Questions

Suggested Question	Focus
What happened?	Thinking (interpretation) and behavior
What were you thinking at the time?	Thinking
How were you feeling at the time?	Feelings
Who has been affected by this?	Others' feelings, thoughts, and behaviors

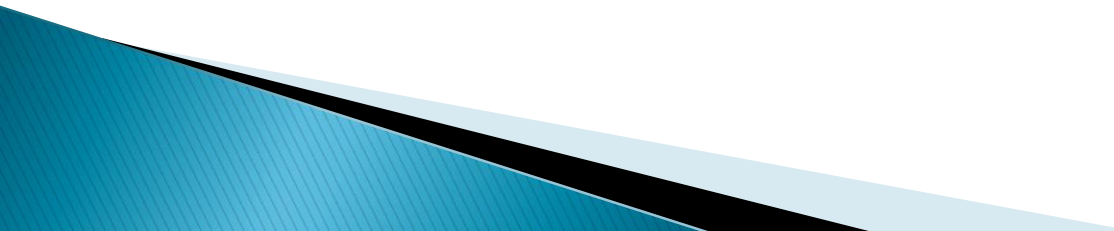
Adapted from Belinda Hopkins, *Just Schools: A Whole School Approach to Restorative Justice*, 2004

# And then....

<b>Suggested Question</b>	<b>Focus</b>
What do you need to do to make things right?	Action toward repairing the harm



# Restorative Guidelines

- ▶ Voluntary participation
  - ▶ Respect for everyone involved
  - ▶ Inclusion of all the people impacted
  - ▶ A focus on the harms, needs, and causes that have arisen
  - ▶ Consensus-based decision-making focused on how to repair the harm and prevent future harm
  - ▶ Opportunity for dialogue that aligns with the above principles
  - ▶ Expanding the capacity of the community to create a just and fair response
- 

What can I do as a  
parent to support  
Restorative  
Discipline in my  
child's school?

1 – Learn about Restorative Discipline/Restorative Practices.

2 – Talk to your child's school, at the campus and district level, to find out if Restorative Practices are being used...or to advocate for them if they are not in use.

3 – Talk with other parents about the importance of Restorative Practices in schools.

4 – Identify your allies at your school and in your community. Many teachers are interested in moving in this direction, and many administrators know about restorative justice from trainings offered by Education Service Centers, universities, and community organizations

5 – Keep at it! Remember, to really change the school culture will take time, everyone working together, and training to bring the circle-keeping, mediation, and conflict resolution skills to your school's community.

6 – If Restorative Practices are in use, ask how they are being used:

- community building circles in classrooms?
- restorative questioning?
- restorative circles?

7 – Ask to be a part of a community building circle:

- in your child's classroom
- in PTA/PTO meetings

8 – If there is a need for a disciplinary action for your child, advocate for a restorative conversation – even if traditional discipline measures are also being used.



# REGION 13

EDUCATION SERVICE CENTER

*Thank you!*  
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