

Restorative PRACTICES



Frequently Asked Questions

Restorative Practices Trainings

Questions and answers to help you decide which training or skill session will support your restorative journey. Click on the question to get to the answer.

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Registration

I have questions about navigating the registration site. Who can help me?

Contact [Jolene King](#) at Lakes Country Service Cooperative, 218-737-6521.

What are the main topics offered in the Restorative Practices Trainings?

The Restorative Practices Trainings can be divided into four main categories:

- Circle Trainings
- Repairing Relationships Trainings
- Implementation Trainings
- Restorative Skills Sessions

Each year, there are different topics offered under each category, in addition to the main trainings of Circle 1— Building community and Restorative Chats and Circle to Repair Relationships. The topics listed in this document may change from year to year, depending on the requests we receive from educators, community partners working with schools, and trainers. See the registration site for the current offerings, as they become available.

We are sending a team. Should everyone go to the same session?

When everyone is new to restorative practices, it can be a good team-building experience for everyone to attend First Steps: An Introduction to Restorative Principles or Circle 1: Building Community. The common experience and the opportunity to get to know one another in a new way helps strengthen the team bonds.

Or you can consider having team members split up and attend different trainings, especially if team members have different levels of knowledge or lived experience. When the team returns to the school, they can draw upon their collective knowledge. The beginning session for learning about repairing relationships is Restorative Chats. Circle, Equity and History is also open to people new to RP.

Eventually, the team will deepen its understanding by exploring—in circle—topics such as building a restorative mindset, equity and bias in RP practice, and punishment and repairing relationships. Training is a first step. Practice and reflection with other team members helps to build integrity for the practices.

I work at a pre-school. Are the trainings open for pre-school staff?

Yes, the RP skills sessions and trainings are open to pre-school staff and to anyone interested in restorative practices or working with children and youth. It is useful for any staff working with any group of students or adults to be able to build community and strengthen relationships with each other. RP provides processes to address harm when it occurs among the adults (staff and parents) as well as with children.

Circle has been used by home health nurses and social workers to help build the capacity of the family to communicate with each other in a respectful way that allows all voices in the family to talk without interruption. Children who learn how to make amends and identify feelings are building core practices for empathy, problem-solving and getting along with others.

Restorative Skills Sessions

What are the Restorative Skills Sessions?

The Restorative Skills sessions are offered in June and are nine-hour sessions over three days or ten-hour sessions over two days. The purpose of the topics is to help strengthen skills and the restorative mindset. Some examples of restorative skills sessions are:

- Restorative Mindfulness and Energy Care
- Nurturing Professional Wellness
- Indigenous Roots, Restorative Community
- Circle Keepers and the Equity Journey
- Restorative Student Leadership
- When Harm Happens in the Name of RP
- Circle to Teach – Elementary or Secondary
- Exploring the Compass: Using Circle for Beyond Diversity Discussions
- Circle and Fun

Which sessions will expand my repair of relationships skills?

Repairing relationships is a skill that grows with each circle or conference and with each training. Deepen your practice by attending any and all of the repairing relationships trainings, as well as skill sessions that address harm or the skills of listening and asking questions. Those topics will vary from year to year.

Having knowledge on how to adapt repair processes for students with special needs or for adult-to-adult conflict or harm, will improve your abilities to support any level of harm. Addressing racial harm is an essential area of learning for all restorative practitioners.

Which skill sessions will support my work as a circle keeper?

We bring ourselves to the circle; practicing our own self-care, challenging our own thinking and building our own knowledge helps to build up our personal resilience. These nine-hour or two-day sessions are also very useful for people tasked with helping the adults in a school community build a restorative mindset. Topics may include:

- Restorative Mindfulness and Energy Care
- Nurturing Professional Wellness
- Indigenous Roots, Restorative Community
- Circle Keepers and the Equity Journey
- Restorative Student Leadership
- Circle to Teach—Elementary or Secondary
- Exploring the Compass: Using Circle for Beyond Diversity Discussions
- Circle and Fun

I am an administrator or educational leader. What should I attend?

Educational leaders—principals, superintendents, union leaders, team leads—are looked to as instructional leaders in the school. It is hard to lead on something you have little understanding of or experience with. One place to start is with a nine-hour restorative skills session. They are held for three hours over three days online, or over two days in person.

- Restorative Student Leadership
- Nurturing Professional Wellness
- Indigenous Roots, Restorative Community
- Circle Keepers and the Equity Journey
- Administrators' Affinity Circle
- Inside – Out: Lessons Learned from inside the school to prison pipeline
- Restorative Mindfulness and Energy Care

Develop basic understanding and knowledge of circle and repairing relationships so you can practice being restorative in your school. Build your knowledge of the practices with these two, three or four day trainings:

- Circle 1—Building Community
- Circle Equity and History
- Restorative Chats
- Compassionate Witnessing

For those educational leaders who have circle knowledge and experience, consider:

- When Harm Happens in the Name of RP

- Circle Keepers and the Equity Journey
- Inside—Out: Lessons Learned from Inside the School to Prison Pipeline
- Addressing Racial Harm: Exploring Our Stories
- Repairing Relationships with Adults in School
- Restorative Conversations for Adults: Building Relationships and Resolving Conflict
- Whole School RP at an ALC
- Whole School Design—Building
- Whole School Design—District

Why are there sessions on Indigenous Teachings?

Restorative practices are based in the worldview and mindset of Indigenous cultures. In order to practice with fidelity, restorative practitioners need to explore the principles, stories and practices of Indigenous cultures. Some offerings specific to Indigenous teachings include:

- Embracing Circle and the Sacred Space Within It
- Indigenous Roots, Restorative Community
- Circle: Indigenous Voices, Indigenous Educators—an affinity circle

Why are there sessions on Equity?

Racial equity is the work of restorative practices, and systemic racism impacts our work in schools. Much harm in schools is the result of implicit bias, disproportionality, and systems that tend to favor one group over others. While all trainings center equity, it is important to focus on historical and present harm, our own biases, and our shared history of the education system. Discussing equity with a diverse group of people can offer insight into personal and institutional practices. Restorative practices—and the circle process—provide a way to not only address issues of inequity but also a respectful way to engage in conversations about equity.

Trainings to deepen your personal equity journey:

- Circle, Equity, and History
- Exploring the Compass: Using Circle for Beyond Diversity Discussions
- Addressing Racial Harm: Exploring Our Stories
- Indigenous Roots, Restorative Community
- Circle Keepers and the Equity Journey
- When Harm Happens in the Name of RP

What is Circle to Teach?

Restorative practices are a way of being, rather than a program with discrete parts. The mindset of the teacher is as important as any way of holding a circle in the classroom. The Elementary and Secondary levels of Circle to Teach trainings will focus on building the restorative mindset for relationships before rules and all behavior is communication. They will also provide examples for using the process to build a caring and equitable community. Once that community is established, ways of adapting the circle process can enhance social emotional skills through practice and provide a concrete way for students to work in groups, or as an entire class.

Implementation

What is Whole School Implementation?

Restorative practices are more than learning how to repair relationships and harm. In order to repair relationships, you have to have relationships in the first place. The term “whole school implementation” describes the vision that the whole school will center relationships and that restorative practices and principles are offered to all members of the school community, adults and students alike. The Whole School Implementation circles invites everyone to explore restorative mindset, equity and relationships at either the ALC, building or district level. Whole School Implementation will help identify paradigm shifts needed in working with staff, reviewing policy, and assessing classroom practices from a restorative stance.

Repairing Relationships

What is the difference between Restorative Chats, Circle to Repair Relationships, Restorative Practices and Students with Special Needs?

Restorative Chats are short, in-the-moment conversations to help people solve a problem. The restorative questions form the core of the process, but developing a restorative mindset before using the questions is critical. The questions are the basis for other repairing relationships processes, like Circle to Repair Relationships and Family Group Conferencing. Agreements in any restorative process are made by consensus, including restorative chats.

Circle to Repair Relationships can be used for a one-time session to address an incident as well as an on-going process of support to address underlying needs. The facilitator, called a keeper, uses a talking piece to direct when people speak. When you have the talking piece, you get to talk. When you do not have the talking piece, you get to listen.

Restorative Practices and Students with Special Needs is especially for people with knowledge and experience to repair relationships. The training offers ideas and tools to accommodate students with special needs. Both restorative chats and circles to repair relationships can be adapted so that students with special needs can participate fully.

All repair of relationships processes has four main parts, which include: 1) building an understanding of the harm and who was affected by it, 2) pre-meetings to invite and prepare participants, 3) face-to-face meeting or meetings, and 4) follow-up for agreement completion. If you are doing repair of relationships regularly, it is helpful to have training in all three processes as different models can be useful in different situations. It is also helpful to know how to make accommodations for a variety of students.

Why are there trainings specific to repairing adult relationships?

Adults are human. They can benefit from using restorative practices for their own needs. These sessions draw from the field of workplace RJ to support strengthening healthy relationships between adults so that they can support the building of healthy relationships throughout the whole school.

- Repairing Relationships with Adults in School
- Restorative Conversations for Adults: Building Relationships and Resolving Conflict

Who should attend Addressing Racial Harm, Exploring Our Stories?

Complex incidents of racialized harm affect the whole community, inside the school and outside the school. Consider bringing a team to the session such as administrators, circle keepers from the school or from the community, teachers and licensed and non-licensed educators, to explore the challenges, personal and professional.

Deepening Skills

I have been to a circle training and a repair of relationships training. What should I attend next?

Consider attending any of the following:

- Circle 2 – Learning from Our Stories
- Circle, Equity and History
- Whole School Implementation
- Circle to Teach, Elementary or Secondary

If you have attended a circle to repair relationships training, consider:

- Repairing Relationships with Adults in Schools
- Restorative Practices and Students with Special Needs.
- Addressing Racial Harm
- Compassionate Witnessing

Bring a friend who has not experienced circle to a Restorative Skills Sessions. Learn how to use restorative practices from the perspective of youth with Restorative Student Leadership.

I have been asked to be a trainer in my school. How can I build my capacity for restorative practices?

The St. Paul Public School's restorative practices leads, after four years of training and RP exploration and practice with their schools, developed the following recommendations for developing trainer skills and capacity:

- Spend at least 30 hours in circle with experienced circle keepers and RP practitioners;
- Experience circle with at least five different experienced circle keepers;
- Facilitate circle with both adult and child/youth audiences in multiple contexts;
- Apprenticed as a trainer with an experienced keeper doing this training at least twice;
- Experienced Beyond Diversity or an equivalent racial justice community of practice.

With this as a guide, you might return to a Circle 1 training or other training you have already attended. It is also suggested to attend Exploring Anishinaabe and Oneida Values and another Restorative Skills session. This time, pay attention to what the trainers do—how they handle difficulties, build community, and explore concepts. All sessions offered in the June trainings are held in circle, using circle principles, so you can experience the ways in which people share the Indigenous knowledge of restorative practices.

Where else can I get training?

Individual trainers and restorative practices organizations provide training as requested. Go to the [Restorative Practices in Schools Program Directory](#) or the [About Circles – Living Justice Press “Circle People” webpage](#) for contact information, descriptions of services, and trainer biographies.

Are the skills sessions and trainings recorded?

To ensure a brave, safe, and supportive learning environment, we ask that no online or in-person Restorative Skills Sessions or trainings be recorded. Circle is interactive; participants are invited to share who they are as people, their questions, and stories in a caring space. Agreeing to confidentiality is an essential component to creating that caring space.

Where can I find more information?

For more information, go to [Implementing Restorative Practices](#), or contact [Grace Yang](#) (651-582-8777), Restorative Practices Consultant at the Minnesota Department of Education.