

A Values Based Approach to Restorative Justice Circle Training

Many organizations offer restorative justice training to schools and communities using a variety of techniques and strategies. Critics suggest that restorative justice is just a new “flavor of the month” or another thing to add to already overloaded schedules; but when fidelity is balanced with time and intentionality, restorative justice can transform the climate and culture of school communities. A comprehensive restorative justice training requires at least four consecutive days. Anchoring your training in these foundational values will allow you to strengthen your implementation and ensure that your school community is building a sustainable and successful restorative culture.

Community Focus

- Community and culture are centered
 - Trainings include a historical/indigenous perspective
- Trainers understand the language used in schools
- Trainers advocate for and empower community ownership of restorative justice

Sacred Space

- Safe space is established through the use of ritual, and co-creation of values and guidelines
- Opening and closing ceremonies ground the sacredness of the space and the learning
- Training is conducted using a center piece and a talking piece
 - Storytelling is an essential component

Racially Explicit

- Implicit and explicit bias is explored along with their impact on community members
- Trainers listen to participants, asking specific questions about culture
- Quantitative and qualitative data about race and racial disparities inform training practices

Accountability

- Trainers have an understanding of school systems
- Follow-up, technical supports, assistance, and advanced training are provided for participants
- School-based assessments are used to inform training offerings
 - Participants are encouraged and supported in documenting their work

Connection

- Relationships are centered
- Trainers spend the necessary time to build relationships with and between participants
- The connection between policy and practice is made evident
 - Investment from administrators and educators is developed and expanded

The training model values should be reflected in any restorative justice implementation process. Strategic and systemic planning, analysis, design, and vision should all reflect integration of these values. These values were developed in partnership with a group of nationally renowned restorative justice circle keepers, trainers, and practitioners at a convening at Gallaudet University.