Overview of Conflict Resolution Education (CRE) and Restorative Practices in Schools

Emily Linnemeier and Schoene Mahmood

Mission and Vision

- The mission of Western Justice Center (WJC) is to increase the opportunity for peaceful conflict resolution and displace the power of violence in our society. We design, implement, evaluate and promote innovative methods of conflict prevention and resolution for children, communities, and courts.
- WJC envisions a society in which conflicts are transformed into opportunities for learning and growth.

WJC Programs

- Institute for Safe and Inclusive Schools:
  - Programs:
    - ABCs of Conflict
    - Compassion Plays
    - Creating Bias-Free Classrooms
    - Peer Mediation Invitational
    - Safe School Ambassadors ®
  - Resources
    - Haven (Safe Schools Social Network)
    - Online Library
    - Conference Facilities
      - Los Angeles Conflict Resolution Education Network
    - Special Events

WJC Programs

- Community:
  - Law Enforcement
  - Workplace

ABCs of Conflict

- Offered since 2009 (formerly Train-the-Trainers Conflict Resolution Education Course)
- For middle and high-school educators and youth providers
  - Learn about conflict resolution education
  - Practice teaching conflict resolution skills and processes
  - Learn how to create a mediation and/or dialogue program in a school or youth organization
  - Develop a base of resources and supplemental materials
  - Network with other professionals
- 30 hours

ABCs of Conflict Lessons

- Lessons:
  - Understanding and analyzing conflict
    - Sources and dynamics
  - Approaches to conflict
  - Negotiation
  - Positions, interests and underlying needs
  - Communication skills
    - Active listening
    - Communication without judgment
  - Emotions and regulation strategies
  - Culture and identity
  - Power
  - Peer mediation
  - Dialogue facilitation
- Mediators and CR professionals provide coaching

Compassion Plays

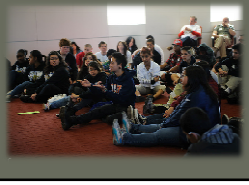
- ENCOMPASS
- Live Theatrical Performance: Horizon Line, Kick, Wheels
  - One-actor play
  - Central teenage character
  - Questions of identity
  - Different perspectives
- Facilitated Discussion
  - Connections
  - Compassion
- 90-minute format
- Up to 100 audience members
- Middle and high-school focused

Creating Bias-Free Classrooms

- ENCOMPASS
- Focusing on students impacted by homophobia and gender or racial bias
- Professional-level student actors from Los Angeles County High School of the Arts
- Monologues and educator self-assessment
- Improvisational classroom scene and skill building
- Mandated responsibilities

Peer Mediation Invitational

- Annual event since 2003
- K-12 Los Angeles-area school-based mediators
- Practice skills with peers from other schools
- Receive coaching from professionals



Safe School Ambassadors

- Community Matters
- Nonviolent communication and intervention skills for defusing incidents in the moment
- "Inside-out" approach
  - Socially influential students
- 2-day training
  - Approx 40 students, 6 adults
- Ongoing small group meetings

Haven

- Social Network similar to Facebook
- Student and educator networking
- Training and discussion of various methodologies:
  - Bullying prevention
  - Conflict Resolution Education
  - Prejudice Reduction
  - Restorative Practices
  - Violence Prevention

Online Resource Library

- Catalog of:
  - Programs focused on safe and inclusive schools
  - Best practices
  - Curricula, articles

CONFLICT RESOLUTION EDUCATION (CRE)

Conflict Resolution Education

"…produces a positive moral climate in school and reduces reliance on authoritarian approaches to conflict resolution; enables students to negotiate and mediate solutions and regulate their actions; and improves attendance and academic achievement through fewer suspensions, better peer relationships and a greater interest in learning."

(Sandy, Bailey and Sloane-Akwara, 2000)

Four Approaches in CRE

- Cadre Approach (peer mediation)
- Process Curriculum (conflict resolution class)
- Peaceable Classroom
- Peaceable School (whole school approach)

(LeBoeuf and Delany-Shabazz, 1997)

Cadre Approach

- Group of students trained in conflict resolution and peer mediation
- ACR recommended training hours

(The Association for Conflict Resolution, 2007):

  - 12-15 for elementary school students
  - 15-18 for middle school students
  - 18-20 for high school students
- Alternative to punitive disciplinary system
- Referral system for cases
- Trained adults oversee mediations

What is Mediation?

- Impartial
  - Mediator does not take sides
  - Mediator guides process, does not make decisions
- Voluntary
- Confidential

Benefits of Mediation

- Produces win-win outcomes
- Maintains relationships
- Not costly
- Quick
- Helps parties have control over the outcome
- Helps parties voice needs and concerns

Diversity

"The peer mediation team reflects the diversity of the school's community in all senses, including age, race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, language, ability, academic standing, socio-economic status, and interests, so that all students feel comfortable participating in the program."

(The Association for Conflict Resolution, 2007)

Process Curriculum

- Distinct conflict resolution training
  - Elective class
  - Daily or weekly lesson

Peaceable Classroom

- Conflict resolution infused into curriculum
- Class uses conflict resolution skills and processes to resolve conflicts
  - Active Listening and other communication techniques
  - Negotiation
  - Mediation
  - Dialogue

Class Meetings

- Chairs arranged in circle, no interruptions, everyone holds others accountable to guidelines
  - Educator is facilitator
  - Students encouraged to summarize what previous speaker has said before moving on to someone else
- Focus on issues for discussion rather than questions with a right/wrong answer.
  - Can be used to discuss curriculum or issues affecting the class

(Amstutz and Mullet, 2005 pp. 50-52; and Bodine, Crawford, and Schrumpf, 2002, pp. 17-19 and 32-33)

Peaceable School

- Most positive effects with a whole-school approach
  - Involvement at all levels
    - Training for all school stakeholders, including adults
    - Conflict resolution processes utilized for:
      - Adult-adult conflict
      - Adult-student conflict
      - Student-student conflict
  - Conflict resolution concepts integrated into curriculum, policy, procedures and school culture

Rules

- Specific statements on expectations
- May include consequences
  - Should be explained to students before violations
  - Offering a range allows for appropriate expectations for individual students
    - Consistency in application so all students feel they are treated fairly
- Clear, simple, and few

Rules cont.

- "Stated in the positive" – explain the behavior that is expected
- Flexible to change if not working or do not make sense
- Should work for people

(Bodine, Crawford, and Schrumpf, 2002, pp. 33-34; and Kreidler, 1984)

Rights and Responsibilities

- Rights: an understanding of what one can expect
- Responsibilities: an understanding of how to act and treat others
  - Those based on needs are most effective

(Bodine, Crawford, and Schrumpf, 2002, pp. 24-27)

Effective Agreements

- Understanding of why they are in place
- Acceptance that they are important to follow
- Discussion necessary for this understanding to be explicit
- Even more effective if students help develop them
  - People are more likely to own what they have helped develop
- Educator should exhibit behaviors that fit within the agreements, so they are models

Space for Resolving Problems

- Empower students to resolve their own problems:
  - Reflect on what is occuring when not meeting expectations
  - Evaluate own behavior
  - Determine how to move forward
    - Review with educator, in either verbal or written format
  - Negotiate issues with one another, if trained in conflict resolution skills
  - Be mediated by in-group mediators.
- Benefits: does not take as much of the educator's time, reinforces the skills students have learned, gives them an opportunity to practice so they become more skilled

(Bodine, Crawford, and Schrumpf, 2002, pp. 37-40)

One-on-One Meetings

- Discuss issues without an audience
  - Everyone saves face
  - Concentrate on resolving the issues
- A series of questions that can be asked of students at these meetings include:
  - "What are you doing?"
  - "What do you want?"
  - "Is the present behavior going to get you what you want?"
  - "What can you do to get what you want?"
- Provide a time for students to let educators know ways they can better support them and their learning

(Bodine, Crawford and Schrumpf, 2002, pp. 36-37)

Conflict with Students

- Provide a range of choices
- Set up a time to speak with student when others are not around
  - Works well when student is openly upset or angry with educator
    - Acknowledge emotions of student
    - Set time to discuss situation
    - If things can't be worked out, utilizing a mediation program can model the use of it for other students and educators, alike

(Perlstein and Thrall, 1996)

Communication Skills

- Use appropriate body language, as well as active listening and communication without judgment
  - Model behaviors one wants others to use, both in interactions with adults and students
  - Speak from one's own perspective, especially when it comes to opinions and perspectives:
    - Rather than, "You know how it is really annoying when you tell someone something and they tell someone else?," say, "When I tell someone something and they tell someone else, it is really annoying to me."
  - Use I-messages to illustrate how specific behaviors are affecting you:
    - Rather than, "You are such a disruption to the class!," say, "It's upsetting to me when the discussion is interrupted, as it takes us all off track."

Peer Mediation

- Formal
  - Certain students designated class mediators
  - Mediation scheduled and parties in conflict invited to participate to try to resolve differences before a traditional discipline method is used
- Informal
  - Students use mediation skills in non-formal situations
  - In the moment: a student mediates between friends during lunch, for example

Adult Training

- Children learn from adult modeling
- Programs with a range of staff involvement more successful
- Provide training for:
  - Administration
  - Teachers
  - Support and resource staff
  - Security
  - Other people working at the school
  - Parents

CRE Impact
Findings from the Field

- In schools where peer mediation programs are used regularly, incidents of school violence have been reduced by as much as 35%, to include fighting and verbal abuse (Community Mediation Foundation, 2011)
- Suspensions for fighting have decreased at schools with peer mediation programs by at least 45% (Frederickson and Maruyama, 1996)
- Trained peer mediators are more inclined to help their peers with conflicts and have increased self esteem, better communication, and higher academic achievement (Skiba and Peterson, 2000)
- Regarding peer mediation, a survey of 2,000 teachers demonstrated that referrals to the principal's office for discipline issues dropped 75% in three months, and teachers were able to spend an additional hour per day on teaching previously focused on disciplining students (McDonald, 2011)

CRE Impact
Findings from the Field cont.

- "This meta-analysis examines more than twenty-five years of evidence to determine whether participation in school-based CRE contributes to reduced antisocial behaviors among youth in kindergarten through twelfth grade in U.S. schools. Evidence from thirty-six studies, representing 4,971 students, shows improvements in antisocial behaviors in CRE participants compared to control groups" (Garrard and Lipsey, 2007)
- "A recent meta-analysis of 213 social and emotional learning (SEL) programs involving more than 270,000 students found that such programs can boost students' social and emotional skills and enable academic gains. The study reported an 11 percentile point increase in academic achievement." (Bornstein, 2011)
- Schools part of Peaceable Schools Tennessee – around since 1996 – a that participated in training in the initial implementation saw suspensions decrease by 39 percent, compared to 14 percent in Tennessee overall. (Justice Policy Insitute, 2011)

CRE Impact
WJC evaluations

- Middle School:
  - 12% more students reported feeling that students are supported in taking a leadership role to make the campus safe
  - *Faculty/Staff focus group:* There is significantly less violence due to conflict than there was before the conflict resolution training. In addition, there are fewer incident reports that must be referred to the administration
  - *Student focus group:* The training increased students' skill in active listening and teamwork; in addition, they noticed they used their mediation skills with their families and non-school friends
  - *Parent Focus Group:* The training has had a significant impact on their child's willingness to speak out against bullying and to listen carefully
- Elementary School:
  - 17% more students said they listen to others while disagreeing with them
  - 11% more students said they find solutions that make everyone happy
  - 16% more felt is it important to talk without judging in order to resolve a conflict in a positive way
  - 17% more said students try to help solve disagreements when they occur
  - 22% more students reported they worked with the other person involved to find solutions to conflicts

(Boyns, DeBose and Sandoval, 2010)

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

Restorative Practices in a School Environment

- Training helpful:
  - Affective statements (I-messages)
  - Affective or Restorative Questions
  - Small Impromptu Conference
  - Proactive Circles
- Need extensive training:
  - Responsive Circles
  - Restorative Conference

What is discipline?
What is the goal of discipline?
How do we best reach that goal?

Punitive Discipline

- In current times, the concept of discipline is often equated to punishment
  - Does not link the behavior to the consequence
  - Does not place people in the frame of mind to understand how their actions are affecting others
  - Is inflicting more harm for behaviors that are not viewed as appropriate or within the rules

Restorative vs. Punitive Discipline

Punitive	Restorative
• Focus on the offender and offense	• Provides active role for person or people harmed
• Offender is guilty of violating rules	• Act is harmful to relationships and community
• Offender deserves punishment for harm done	• Act produces responsibility to repair harm
• School responsible for determining punishment based on rules	• All affected responsible for addressing root causes and restoring relations
• Focus is on the past	• Focus is on the future

(adapted from Zehr, 2002 and Insight Prison Project, 2010)

Restorative Discipline

- One of the original definitions of discipline is "to teach or train"
  - Provides guidance for positive behavior
  - Provides students with skills to:
    - Understand what is positive behavior and why it is desirable
    - Feel it is important to behave positively and responsibly and know how to do so
    - Take into consideration one's own and the needs of others, and how one's actions can either help or inhibit meeting needs
  - Illustrates the importance of whole relationships and community

(Amstutz and Mullet, 2005, pp. 9-13 and 26-29; and Bodine, Crawford and Schrumpf, 2002, pp. 27-29)

Restorative Practices in Schools

- Affective Statements
  - "I" messages
  - Questions
- Circles
  - Proactive
  - Responsive
  - Learning
- Peer Mediation
  - Formal
  - Informal
- Victim/Offender
  - Conferencing
    - Impromtu
    - Formal
  - Mediation

("Restorative Practices Whole School Implementation," 2010 and "What is Restorative Practices")

Affective Statements
"I" Messages

The Formula: When _____, I feel _____ because _____.
Optional: What I'd like to see happen is _____.

- When
  - An observable action or statement "You laugh after I say" – not an interpretation "You disrespected me"
- I Feel
  - An emotion – not a belief
- Because
  - An explanation – values, life experiences
- And what I'd like to see happen is
  - A suggestion – taking both side's needs into consideration

Example: When you laughed after I shared my thoughts, I felt discouraged because I want my coworkers to respect my ideas. What I'd like to see happen is for you to pull me aside and tell me what you think.

Affective Statements
Questions

- Response to negative behavior
- Asks offender to think about how his/her actions caused harm
  - Who has been harmed
  - What the harm was
  - What needs to be done to make things right

Example: Who was affected by the comments you made in class about someone's outfit being "gay"? How can the harm that was done be addressed?

RestorativeQuestions

- When individuals are not falling within expectations, one way to address this might be to ask questions about:
  - The behaviors being exhibited
  - The behaviors that are expected
  - How the two are related

- Affective or restorative questions:
  - 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?
  - What do you think you need to do to make things right?
- Provide the student with the opportunity to evaluate his or her own behavior:
  - Addressing specific incident
  - Building skills for future determination of appropriate behaviors.

(O'Callaghan, 2005)

Circles

- Proactive
  - Check-In or Gathering to bring class together and build sense of community
- Responsive
  - For discussion of an incident; can include entire class or just those involved
- Learning
  - Discussion forum after a learning activity (i.e., instead of a quiz)
    - Example: A circle discussion after a movie or book assignment

Circles

- Circles can be used:
  - In a proactive way, such as to open and/or close the group
    - Allows everyone to get to know each other in a deep way
  - To celebrate a transition or rite of passage
  - In a responsive way to address issues that are affecting the group

Circles

- Traditional circles:
  - Begin and end with a ritual, such as a reading, deep breathing or meditation
  - Use a talking piece: any object that may have significance to the group
    - Only the person using the piece may speak
    - The object is passed from person to person, with each person having the opportunity to speak, hold the object in silence, or pass it on
  - There is a facilitator, but this person also participates
    - Makes sure the group is proceeding well; only steps in if necessary to remind everyone of guidelines and get the group back on track.

(Amstutz and Mullet, 2005, pp. 52-58; and Pranis, 2005)

Impromptu Conference

- For students in dispute with one another
  - Without an audience
- If the situation has to do with one student harming another, use the affective questions above with the student doing the harm, and the following questions for the person who is being harmed:
  - 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?

("Restorative Practices: Whole-School Implementation," 2010; and O'Callaghan, 2005)

Victim-Offender

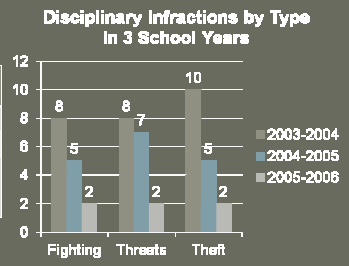
Needs to be handled by an adult

- Conference
  - Similar to a responsive circle; can include the victim, offender, family members, friends, and others involved or other supporters
    - Impromtu for lower-level offenses, directly following incident
    - Formal for serious incidents
  - Designate a purpose for the conference beforehand; typically used to determine action (not punishment) the offender will take to repair the situation
- Mediation
  - Formal mediation between "victim" and "offender" to help them come to an agreement of how the situation will be resolved

Restorative Justice Statistics

Newtown Middle School

Large Suburban Middle School
Grades 7-8
52 Teachers
861 Students ➢ Grade 7: 437 ➢ Grade 8: 424

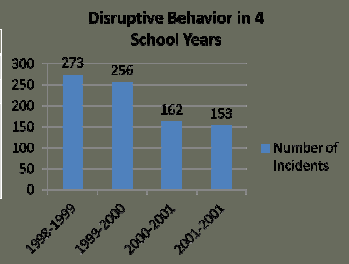


("Improving School Climate: Findings from Schools Implementing Restorative Practices")

Restorative Justice Statistics

Palisades High School

Rural Fringe High School
Grades 9-12
52 Teachers
743 Students ➢ Grade 9: 175 ➢ Grade 10: 198 ➢ Grade 11: 205 ➢ Grade 12: 165



("Improving School Climate: Findings from Schools Implementing Restorative Practices")

Restorative Practices Findings from the Field

- The International Institute for Restorative Practices reviewed restorative practices in six Pennsylvania schools and found decreases in violence, assault, and disorderly conduct, as well as in detention and suspension.
- West Philadelphia High School – dubbed "Persistently Dangerous" – had a 60 percent decrease in assaults on students and a 72 percent decrease in incidents of disorderly conduct after the implementation of restorative practices. (Justice Policy Institute, 2011)

What's Needed

- Adult stakeholder buy-in and modeling
  - School-wide
  - Committed few
- Student buy-in
- Funding
- Access to resources
  - Best practices
  - Training materials
  - Technical assistance
- Marketing
- Made part of school policies and procedures
- Evaluation

Questions?

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