WHAT YOUR COLLEAGUES ARE SAYING . . .

"Schools are a community, and all communities experience challenges and success. One of the challenges we commonly face is supporting our educators in understanding how to meet our students' social-emotional and behavioral needs in a way that provides proactive and sustainable solutions. *The Restorative Practices Playbook* is an outstanding resource any educator can use to start their journey toward positive change. This book is full of practical tools and examples that can support an individual teacher or create systemwide change. I highly recommend this book to all educators."

—Heath Peine, Executive Director of Student Support Services,
Wichita Public Schools

"I haven't been as excited about the implications of any book I have read as I have with *The Restorative Practices Playbook*. As we continue to evolve in our discipline methods as a district, this playbook offers a systematic guide that can help us to reflect and adjust our practices. We need to offer better solutions to support positive behavior in our schools, and this book provides action steps to make those changes happen."

—Kris Felicello, Superintendent of Schools,
North Rockland Central School District

THE RESTORATIVE PRACTICES PLAYBOOK

THE RESTORATIVE PRACTICES PLAYBOOK

TOOLS FOR **TRANSFORMING DISCIPLINE** IN SCHOOLS

DOMINIQUE SMITH
DOUGLAS FISHER
NANCY FREY

Foreword by
ZACHARY SCOTT ROBBINS

CORWIN
Fisher & Frey

CORWIN
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FOR INFORMATION:

Corwin
A SAGE Company
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Thousand Oaks, California 91320
(800) 233-9936
www.corwin.com

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Director and Publisher, Corwin Classroom: Lisa Luedeke
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FOREWORD

Restorative justice work is social justice work. In *The Restorative Practices Playbook*, Dominique Smith, Douglas Fisher, and Nancy Frey highlight the power of genuine positive relationships among students and adults in schools. The authors provide readers with practical tools to encourage a sense of belonging and to foster connectedness among school community members. They provide readers with a toolkit to help educators feel safe being vulnerable to students and with each other and to allow students to be vulnerable and accept responsibility. These practices reduce conflict and enable schools to handle conflict in productive ways that emphasize growth, development, and learning rather than isolation and punishment.

In *The Restorative Practices Playbook,* the authors show readers how restorative practices positively impact schools and school-related outcomes. Students benefit from classrooms that function in predictable ways with predictable routines facilitated by a teacher they can trust to treat them with a predictable level of kindness and care. Even when events upend students' worlds outside of school, students must trust schools and the adults responsible for making schooling happen in ways that provide them with predictable routines and learning.

Dominique Smith, Douglas Fisher, and Nancy Frey show readers how restorative justice practices provide structures, processes, and functions schools can use to make things right when someone disrupts the school environment. These practices allow community members to repair harms and restore fractured relationships among each other. When done well, restorative practices help school community members protect core values and instructional time by diverting students from suspensions and expulsions and keeping them in classrooms. It is imperative that we keep all kids in school and ensure all students have equitable access to a free and appropriate public education.

I first met Doug Fisher and Nancy Frey the same way as many of you reading this foreword. I met them through their work. Before becoming an author, school principal, and professor, I was an English teacher. I knew Dr. Fisher and Dr. Frey through their research and writing on improving students' reading comprehension and writing. Later in my career, a high school I was leading got accepted into a competency-based education pilot program, which complemented a dual enrollment program I was determined to build with support from community partners. I dug deeper into Dr. Fisher and Dr. Frey's work at Health Sciences High and Middle College (HSHMC) to get curricular ideas and insight to revamp my school's curricular program. Connecting with Dr. Fisher and Dr. Frey through this foreword and other academic work is the universe working in mysterious ways.

Some time ago, I met Dr. Dominique through Twitter. (I'm not even kidding.) Dr. Dominique Smith is a school leader at HSHMC, and he sent a few members of his staff to hear me talk about my work in restorative justice. I connected with them, but I wasn't able to connect with Dominique at that time. Now, Dr. Dominique is "my dawg." For those who may not understand that colloquialism, Dr. Dominique and I have a wonderful appreciation for each other. Dr. Dominique and I connected about restorative justice online, via telephone, and it was clear that we were like-minded.

The work that this team has done on *The Restorative Practices Playbook* will help many children, educators, and schools. The ideas in the manuscript are wonderfully presented. The messaging about mindfulness, collaboration, and agency is needed. The playbook is written in an informative, easy-to-read style. Educators will find it a fantastic resource for reflection and action planning, particularly educators and school leaders new to restorative practices.

I do want to note that this book does not seek to take a deep dive into the intersections of race, implicit bias, and restorative practices. This book isn't written for that purpose. This is not the book that intends to explore restorative justice where it is equally (sometimes mortally) essential to be culturally competent as it is to be competent in one's subject matter pedagogy to be effective. This isn't that book. There are other books about restorative justice that immerse readers in discussions about the intersections of disproportionality, systemic discrimination, and restorative practices.

My colleagues have written a book that is exemplary at doing what it is designed to do. *The Restorative Practices Playbook* helps educators start or continue their restorative justice journeys, remain reflective about their practice, and make refinements to stay on track in their efforts. I am confident that *The Restorative Practices Playbook* will give schools tools to take important steps along their path to restorative practice.

My ministry in this restorative justice work is anchored in the belief that Jim Crow disciplinary practices in schools must end. Restorative justice provides waypoints to derail Jim Crow disciplinary outcomes. In this spirit, Dominique Smith, Douglas Fisher, and Nancy Frey provide readers with *The Restorative Practices Playbook*. This playbook is timely and much needed.

—Zachary Scott Robbins
School Principal, Clark County School District

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School Principal
Clark County School District
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INTRODUCTION

Clarke is a new student who is very excited and a bit nervous about the new school. Clarke attended a rural, or as they say, “country school,” for several years. You find out Clarke’s father is a well-known farmer who is taking a role at the corporate office in the city. Clarke has worked on the farm for years and has lots of stories about equipment, animals, and crops. Clarke is especially fond of milk cows and wrote about the taste of fresh milk during a quick write. On the second day of attending the new school, someone realizes Clarke has a knife on the back of their belt.

Given your current school or district rules, what are you required to do? What course of action is required of you? Clearly, a rule has been broken and Clarke created an unsafe environment. As we will explore throughout this book, a punitive approach focused on the following questions:

- What law or rule was broken?
- Who broke it?
- What punishment is deserved?

In this case, Clarke clearly violated an important rule related to school safety. The question then is, what is the punishment? In many places, Clarke would be suspended. In some places, Clarke might even be expelled. After all, there was a knife on campus that created an unsafe place to learn. Some will argue that Clarke will only learn if there are exclusionary consequences for this action.

Do you agree with this course of action, given what you know about Clarke? What do you wish would happen differently? We shared this example because we hope you are thinking that there is a much simpler solution and one that will likely ensure that Clarke learns not to bring a knife to school. But the situations you encounter are often much more complex than this. And they deserve the same type of investigation as to the *why* before considering a course of action.

Before we continue, let’s consider another example. Nancy is at the airport and security pulls her bag from the line. They ask if there was anything sharp in her bag and Nancy replies, “No,” not remembering that she had been helping a friend over the weekend and has a utility knife in her bag. Of course, security finds it and shows it to her. She apologizes profusely and then is suspended from flying ever again. Okay, the suspension part’s not true. But they do ask if she wants to check the utility knife or throw it away. Once the problem is solved, they let her go on her way.

We are not advocating for weapons on campus (or airplanes) any more than we support students being disrespectful to teachers. But there are ways to ensure that students learn from the mistakes that they make. We are educators and our primary role is to teach. When students have unfinished learning, educators create opportunities for students to learn. Unfortunately, too often that role seems to stop when it comes to behavior:

If a student doesn't know how to read,

We teach that student how to read.

If a student doesn't know how to do math problems,

We teach that student to do math.

If a student doesn't know how to behave,

We punish that student.

Where is the teachable moment? Isn't that why we entered this most noble profession? To teach. That's what restorative practices are about. In this book, we focus on a set of practices that are designed to teach. That must include teaching prosocial behaviors based on strong relationships and a commitment to the well-being of others.

Before we continue, it's important to clear up a confusion. We have been asked far too many times, *What about consequences? Are there ever consequences for the actions that students take? What if they hurt someone? What if they destroy property?*

THERE ARE WAYS TO ENSURE THAT STUDENTS LEARN FROM THE MISTAKES THAT THEY MAKE. WE ARE EDUCATORS AND OUR PRIMARY ROLE IS TO TEACH.

Restorative practices are about healing. They are about re-establishing the learning environment. Of course, there are consequences. That may even include time away from school for calming down and making plans. We just understand that some of the traditional consequences that schools use do not result in any new learning.

Doug's high school English teacher was frustrated with one of Doug's writing assignments. In front of the whole class, the teacher told Doug that he would spend the rest of his life "flipping burgers." Frustrated and hurt, Doug threw a pencil at the wall and walked out of class. He was then sent to the principal, who asked if Doug had done what was written on the referral, which he admitted. Doug was suspended for three days. No one at school asked Doug why he did it. What did Doug learn from this suspension? Well, one thing he learned was to never trust that teacher. Doug missed that class a lot after that day but made up the grade in the summer. The hurt and lack of belief that the teacher showed were never addressed. Perhaps the teacher intended something else and a quick conversation could have resolved the feelings. Perhaps the teacher had not considered the impact of a statement made in frustration and a conversation could have enlightened that

teacher. What if Doug had heard that his actions scared the teacher and had a chance to learn about the impact of his actions? Why were so many opportunities missed? Opportunities to spend time figuring out what went wrong, why, and how to resolve it.

So where do we start? How might we create restorative classrooms and schools? It starts with *why*. But, although we could, we are not going to provide you with an extensive literature review about the impact of restorative practices. We don't find that as compelling as asking you: What is your *why*? When you find your *why*, you will know how restorative practices can help you accomplish your vision.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES ARE ABOUT HEALING. THEY ARE ABOUT RE-ESTABLISHING THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT.

Simon Sinek's "Start With Why" is among the most-watched TED Talks. His message is clear: your *why* is what drives you and gives you purpose. So, what is your *why*? When is the last time you thought about it? Consider the following prompts. Take some time to reflect and add your own thoughts.

Why did you become an educator?	
What makes you a great teacher or leader?	
What do you hope for your students?	
What goals do you have for yourself as an educator?	

We have asked countless numbers of people a simple but most meaningful question: *Why are you an educator?* Again and again, individuals light up and tell us their *why* with a story:

- For the kids
- To be the adult I never had
- To be just like my third-grade teacher who saved my life
- To fight for students with disabilities because my brother didn't have a chance
- To make a difference in the lives of others
- To showcase that learning is fun
- To share science in a way it has never been seen before
- To allow *all* voices to be heard
- To help create the next generation
- To see a student's eyes light up when they finally get it
- To change lives
- My family were all educators and I knew I could make a difference
- To give students a person they can count on

As we read these *whys* and reflect on our own, we see a trend. Educators come into this profession for the love, care, and ongoing growth of students. These are known as the moral rewards of teaching. And they are a powerful force for satisfaction in our roles and the generally positive feelings we have about our chosen work.

WHAT MIGHT BE DIFFERENT IF THE VALUED ADULTS IN A YOUNG PERSON'S LIFE REMAINED AND WORKED THROUGH THE TROUBLE?

Dominique's *why* has always been *to be that adult who doesn't leave.* In part, restorative practices allow him to realize his *why*. Far too often, adults leave when students get in trouble. What might be different if the valued adults in a young person's life remained and worked through the trouble? What if we came to understand that exclusionary practices prevent us from realizing our *why*? That there are more effective ways for building, maintaining, and repairing relationships. And that there are rewards that come from watching students learn how to navigate the complex words of social skills and relationships. As Dominique says,

I get to listen to students.

I get to hear their stories.

I get to ensure that students have another chance.

Importantly, restorative practices are not just a way to create long-term change in students. These practices are fortifying for you, the educator, who has the opportunity to address the intentional and unintentional harm that inevitably comes from supporting the development of other humans. In part, restorative practices allow you to have your say, to provide others an opportunity to make amends, and for you to leave school feeling good about your accomplishments.

THE LOGIC OF RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

BELIEF STATEMENT

The foundation of restorative practices is a school culture that actively invests in relationships among students, staff, and the community.

A Dilemma

Tony Hall is a new staff member in a high school. The school is in an urban neighborhood, and there is a convenience store across the street where students often go to get food or drinks before school. Each day, a different staff member is assigned to stand outside before school to remind students to use the crosswalk instead of jaywalking.

Mr. Hall is standing outside on duty one morning when a student he didn't know jaywalks across the street to the convenience store. As the student comes back across the street, Mr. Hall calls to him to use the crosswalk. When the student ignores him, Mr. Hall approaches the student: "Hey! I asked you to use the crosswalk. You can't jaywalk across the street."

The student, who is already having a hard day due to an argument at home, failing a test during first period, and seeing some negative social media posts, replies, "Who are you?" Mr. Hall explains that he is new to the school and that the student needs to listen to what he says.

Annoyed and preoccupied with his own challenges from the day, the student replies, "You're nobody. Get out of my f***ing way!" and keeps walking toward class.

Shocked and offended by the student's disrespectful behavior and language, Mr. Hall immediately takes the student to the principal's office. Heated and upset, Mr. Hall explains the situation to the principal.

How should the principal handle the situation?

COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS

Chances are pretty good that you have found yourself in a similar situation as a student, a teacher, or an administrator. The thing about these heated moments is that each of us brings our own stew of experiences, mental models, and biases to the situation. And don't forget that these are fueled by the emotions of the moment as well as those that are lingering from earlier in the day. When situations arise that are unexpected, we tend to rely on mental shortcuts to help us make a quick decision. The problem is that these decision-making shortcuts can sometimes introduce errors (more about that idea later).

It's possible you have some biases about restorative practices. Perhaps you've heard about them in the news or have been part of a conversation about them with some other educators. We'd like to take on some of those misconceptions about restorative practices:

Misconception 1: Only schools with a small student population can have success with restorative practices. Larger schools have too many students to engage in that work.

Fact: Restorative practices can be used in schools of any size. Although a large school has a large student population, there are also more teachers/staff to help build more relationships with students.

Misconception 2: Restorative practices don't hold students accountable; students can say or do anything without consequences.

Fact: Restorative practices take student accountability to a higher level because students and teachers are engaged in collaborative conversations around choices, actions, and behaviors that can foster true personal growth and change.

Misconception 3: Students should come to school knowing how to behave appropriately.

Fact: Most children and youth mimic what they see modeled by adults at home or in their community of influence. If the adults in their lives don't model appropriate behavior or don't have a good understanding of positive social and emotional behavior, we can't expect students to come to school with those skills. We as educators need to teach behavior with the same commitment that we teach reading and mathematics.

Misconception 4: When students display negative or problematic behavior, they are doing so by conscience and purposeful choice.

Fact: Many students come to school having experienced trauma, adverse childhood experiences, conflicts of all sorts, and a host of other things that impact their automatic reactions and self-protection mechanisms. We need to address trauma and recognize how students present these experiences to educators.

Misconception 5: "I should only have to teach my academic content. Everything else that students need should come from their families or the counselors."

Fact: The reality is that if students' physical and emotional needs are not met first, it doesn't matter what else we try to teach them; they won't have the capacity to learn it. Restorative practices seek to support the whole child and the whole situation and create a safe and welcoming place for students to learn.

Misconception 6: Restorative practices are a set of strategies that are to be used for a finite amount of time.

Fact: Restorative practice work is ongoing in order to build relationships with students and create a safe environment for learning. Growth and change take time, and not all students respond right away.

Misconception 7: Engaging in restorative practices instead of expulsion or suspension condones violent or extreme behavior.

Fact: Removing a student for extreme behavior only sends the problem somewhere else—it doesn't solve anything. Restorative practices provide students a chance to change their behavior and provide the opportunity to get students the services and support they need to make lasting personal change.

Misconception 8: Restorative practices make it impossible to suspend or expel students for extreme behavior.

Fact: Restorative practices significantly enrich the toolkit educators have for maintaining a safe and orderly environment. They do not replace other tools, including disciplinary tools. However, the result of implementing restorative practices is that suspension and expulsion rates have the potential to drop significantly as other accountability systems are grown.

LEARNING INTENTIONS

- I am learning about the principles of restorative practices.
- I am learning about ways schools enact restorative practices.

SUCCESS CRITERIA

- I can explain a logic model for restorative practices.
- I can engage in reflective thinking about my own experiences.
- I can apply principles of restorative practices to scenarios.

WHERE DO RESTORATIVE PRACTICES COME FROM?

There are three major influences that inform restorative practices. The first influence is the most enduring and echoes indigenous cultures from all over the world. These ties are most apparent in Māori, Native American, and First Nations practices that place the community at the heart of problem resolution. Harm is understood at the collective level, not solely as a conflict between two individuals. Therefore, repairing harm requires the involvement of the community.

The second influence comes from the social sciences, particularly in mediation and resolution practices. The fields of social work, counseling, and psychology each draw on the importance of assisting people in identifying feelings, hurt, and harm, but also in moving them forward to find resolution and to make amends. The additive perspective is that participants can experience insights about themselves. They become better equipped to make future decisions because of their gained wisdom.

HARM IS UNDERSTOOD AT THE COLLECTIVE LEVEL, NOT SOLELY AS A CONFLICT BETWEEN TWO INDIVIDUALS. THEREFORE, REPAIRING HARM REQUIRES THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE COMMUNITY.

A third influence stems from the field of criminal justice. The term *restorative justice* is used to describe an alternative process that focuses on taking responsibility for actions as well as harm and for ensuring that victims are heard and are made an active part of the process. First used in the 1970s, restorative justice has proven to be a particularly effective dimension in the juvenile justice system. Police departments and school districts have also found it to be a bridge between two institutions in a young person's life. The focus of this book is on *restorative practices*, which encompass a broader array of proactive and preventative approaches. Having said that, restorative conferences and victim-offender dialogue draw on restorative justice lessons learned from a variety of organizations.

Each of these areas influences the important element of conflict resolution. However, restorative practices encompass far more than problematic behavior. In fact, initiatives that only focus on the conflict to the exclusion of building a restorative culture are doomed to fail. The trusting relationships needed to ensure that there is something worth restoring are simply not there. Restorative practices are a largely proactive approach that builds students' capacity to self-regulate, make decisions, and self-govern. Without these skills, often referred to as 21st-century skills or soft skills, students will not make the academic strides they need to achieve their aspirations. At the school level, restorative practices provide a pathway for bringing equitable discipline that reduces exclusion, improves the school climate, and "fosters a relationally driven school community" (Kervick et al., 2020, p. 155). The data are clear: Black and other minoritized students and students with disabilities experience disproportionate disciplinary actions, including suspension and expulsion (e.g., Gregory et al., 2010).

PRINCIPLES AND RESEARCH ABOUT RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

The research about restorative practices holds that, when compared to more conventional disciplinary approaches, it can have a positive effect on students' ability to be accountable for their actions (Gregory et al., 2016). An interesting study of the perceptions of Black fifth- and eighth-grade students indicated that students believed that the use of circles, an important group practice, fostered their ability to take the perspectives of others and to resolve conflict through communication (Skrzypek et al., 2020).

INITIATIVES THAT ONLY FOCUS ON THE CONFLICT TO THE EXCLUSION OF BUILDING A RESTORATIVE CULTURE ARE DOOMED TO FAIL.

Many schools have adopted restorative practices as a comprehensive way to address racial, ethnic, gender, and ability disparities in exclusionary discipline, especially suspensions and expulsions. Researchers have drawn a bright line between disciplinary disparities and academic disparities, calling it "two sides of the same coin" (Gregory et al., 2010, p. 59). More recently, restorative practices have been seen as an important conceptual bridge to other initiatives, such as multitiered systems of support (MTSS) and social-emotional learning efforts (González et al., 2019).

A LOGIC MODEL FOR RESTORATIVE PRACTICES

Restorative practices don't just happen—they require coordinated effort to fully benefit from the potential to change the way students experience schooling. One way to plan for this is to create a simple logic model. Logic models provide an overview of how your effort is supposed to work and describe what happens when the actions are accomplished (Julian, 1997). Others call this a theory of change or even a road map. Having a logic model allows you to

- Identify a common challenge
- Allocate resources
- Project the impact
- Monitor it for success

Some people find the use of a logic model helpful, as it outlines the resources and activities necessary to achieve the intended results (see Figure 1.1). For others, it is a way to be able to see how resources and activities are aligned with intended outcomes. It isn't sufficient to simply name a goal and state what the outcomes will be. After all, a goal without a plan is just a wish.

Figure 1.1 Restorative Practices Logic Model

Goal: Create a healthy school ecosystem that addresses the needs of each child and inspires joy for all.

OUR INTENDED WORK		OUR INTENDED RESULTS	
RESOURCES	**ACTIVITIES**	**OUTPUTS** ***DIRECT BENEFITS***	**OUTCOMES** ***INDIRECT BENEFITS***
If *we have access to these resources,* ***then*** *these activities can be completed.*			
	If *we successfully complete these activities,* ***then*** *these changes will occur as a direct result of the actions.*		
		If *the activities are carried out as designed,* ***then*** *these changes will result.*	
			If *participants benefit from our efforts,* ***then*** *other systems, organizations, or communities will change.*
• Leadership team comprising key stakeholders • School-based mental health professionals with appropriate caseloads • Assessment tools • Restorative practices training materials	• Compile assessment information • Analyze assessment results • Evaluate discipline policies • Invest in creating and maintaining a restorative culture • Create a plan to infuse restorative practices into core programs and initiatives • Educate staff on restorative practices, including affective statements and impromptu conversations • Define behaviors that are addressed via restorative *conversations* • Define behaviors that are addressed via restorative *conferences* • Provide ongoing training on best practices	• Increased social-emotional and academic attainment • Decreased discipline referrals • Reduced exclusionary discipline (suspension and expulsion) • Greater equity in disciplinary decisions • Increased sense of belonging by students • Circles are regularly used to address a range of topics, including academic, social, and behavioral issues • Decreased dropout rates • Increased school attendance of students and staff	• Improved school climate • Improved mental and physical health outcomes • Fewer health-risk behaviors • Fewer students involved in the juvenile criminal justice system • Improved job satisfaction for staff • Decreased disability labeling and diagnoses

WEAVING THE LOGIC OF RESTORATIVE PRACTICES INTO THE SCHOOL DAY

Restorative practices are built around an 80/20 model—they are 80% proactive and 20% reactive. Historically, school policies are punitive in nature, with the belief that the right reaction will change behavior. But anyone who has spent time in K–12 schools knows that punitive actions do not always produce the desired results in students. Traditional punitive consequences such as a referral, removal from class, detention, suspension, or even expulsion do not solve the problem because those actions don't address whatever the underlying issue is. Restorative practices seek to address the real issues, and although they may not be successful or restore closure 100 percent of the time, it's better than not trying at all.

MANY SCHOOLS HAVE ADOPTED RESTORATIVE PRACTICES AS A COMPREHENSIVE WAY TO ADDRESS RACIAL, ETHNIC, GENDER, AND ABILITY DISPARITIES IN EXCLUSIONARY DISCIPLINE, ESPECIALLY SUSPENSIONS.

Restorative practices can occur throughout the school day in both academic and nonacademic settings. Everyone in a school building—administrators, counselors, teachers, and staff—can utilize restorative practices to build relationships with students and create a safe and accepting school climate. When a restorative school climate is established, students trust the teachers and feel safe going to an adult for help if something is happening on campus that needs attention. There might be natural consequences for the situation, but students know that the adults aren't out to "get" them. They understand that the goal is to create a safe environment with quality learning experiences for everyone on campus.

WHAT'S YOUR HISTORY?

When it comes to discipline, we are each a product of our experiences and our professional learning. Let's take on that last one—professional education. Many of us had a college course in our preliminary teaching program called Classroom Management. Perhaps you learned about techniques such as writing names on the board, using clip charts, referrals, or a timeout corner. When you were hired, you read the district handbook for employees, which covered the disciplinary process. Most of all, you absorbed the informal (sometimes unspoken) practices you witnessed such as when to write a referral, which administrators might be more sympathetic to your position, and, based on the teachers' lounge chatter, who were the kids most likely to give you a run for your money.

But your experiences are not limited to those that have occurred as an adult working in a school. We'd like to invite you to reflect on your experiences in

writing and share them with a small group of colleagues (see Figure 1.2). There is no need to disclose all the information, and we do not in any way want to cause you further distress. We do not want you to explore a deeply traumatizing event that caused you great harm but rather a time when you were wronged. If this activity is one you prefer not to engage with, please feel free to move on. We use this activity to explore the meaning of justice.

Figure 1.2 When You Were a Victim

Directions: Write about a time when you were wronged, intentionally or unintentionally. You do not need to disclose the circumstances. Only consider how you experienced what followed.

How did you feel?	
What questions did you want to ask the offender?	
What else did you want to say to them?	
Who or what could make things right for you?	
What would justice have looked like for you?	

Each of us has experienced intentional or unintentional harm. If the harm involved the legal system, the offender may have been punished. But punishment of the offender isn't the same as having some resolution. Victims often have unanswered questions: *Why me? What did I do? What were you thinking?* If that experience didn't have a resolution, it is likely to linger with you in a different way. We have done this activity many times with educators, and we are always struck by how often the incident dates back years. It is not uncommon for people to have unsettled feelings that are magnified because they weren't afforded the kind of closure they need. When there is no opportunity to make amends and commitments, the experience stays with us.

Each of us has also found ourselves in the role of the offender, whether intentionally or unintentionally. This is an uncomfortable truth that we must confront. In this next exercise (Figure 1.3), we invite you to consider a time when you have been the offender in someone else's story. This is only for your own reflective purposes. There is no need to engage in dialogue about it. The point of this is to explore what you mean by justice and to consider the ways in which restorative practices can help address the unmet needs that we all have when it comes to harm. And that includes our students.

Figure 1.3 When You Were an Offender

Directions: For your reflection, write about a time when you were the offender, intentionally or unintentionally. This is a time when you did something wrong—something you're not proud of—and you got caught.

How did you feel?	
What would you have liked to say to the victim?	
Who or what would have made things right?	
What would justice have looked like for you and for the victim?	

This experience may have caused other emotions for you. The most common response we hear is that people would have liked to apologize to the person they caused harm to. Resolution works both ways. The opportunity to own our own behavior when we are not our best selves, to apologize and to receive a degree of forgiveness, as well as to make a commitment not to engage in that behavior again, gives us some important tools for how we move forward.

A RESTORATIVE CULTURE

The core of restorative practices centers on a restorative culture. It begins with the wisdom and the humility to acknowledge that we have found ourselves as victim and offender at various times throughout our life. Further, it is predicated on the knowledge that young people are learning about the social world—not just the physical and biological worlds we teach our students about in our classes. Educators model for students how to walk with grace through the world: we create classroom structures that foster a sense of belonging and we use language that builds students' sense of agency so that they can pursue their goals and aspirations. We teach them the prosocial skills needed to be accepted by peers. In these cases, efforts to help them label emotions and solve problems in order to improve relationships with peers may be necessary. We create classrooms and schools that allow students to govern what happens through shared decision making and exercising choice responsibility. And when faced with more significant conflict, we guide them to advocate for themselves and others, take responsibility, and make amends. These efforts are nested within one another at the individual, classroom, and school levels. Using Figure 1.4, take a few minutes to reflect on these efforts undertaken by you and your colleagues. What environments do you see occurring at your school?

THE GOAL IS TO CREATE A SAFE ENVIRONMENT WITH QUALITY LEARNING EXPERIENCES FOR EVERYONE ON CAMPUS.

Figure 1.4 A Restorative Culture Inventory

Directions: What evidence do you have that these efforts are happening at your school? What do you notice about strengths? Are there gaps that exist?

	WHAT DO I DO AS AN INDIVIDUAL TO FOSTER THIS CONDITION?	WHAT HAPPENS AT THE CLASSROOM LEVEL TO REINFORCE THIS CONDITION?	WHAT SCHOOLWIDE EFFORTS SUPPORT THIS CONDITION?
Belonging			

(Continued)

(Continued)

	WHAT DO I DO AS AN INDIVIDUAL TO FOSTER THIS CONDITION?	WHAT HAPPENS AT THE CLASSROOM LEVEL TO REINFORCE THIS CONDITION?	WHAT SCHOOLWIDE EFFORTS SUPPORT THIS CONDITION?
Language of agency and goal setting			
Prosocial skills			
Governance and decision making			
Addressing conflict			

HOW RESTORATIVE AM I?

While restorative practices are commonly viewed as a schoolwide initiative, their successful implementation is the product of individual efforts. We want to say first that one's ability to embody a restorative mindset is not static. We are humans before we are educators. Our health, the amount of sleep we got the night before, the personal and family worries and concerns we carry on our shoulder . . . these all influence our ability to enact a restorative mindset on any given day. Having said that, we are also subject to the mental shortcuts we take when interacting with students. These can be worsened when both we and the student are not our best selves.

Those mental shortcuts are called heuristics—think of these as "rules of thumb." Our brains are hard-wired to seek out patterns and associations to help us make sense of our surroundings. We exercise this cognitive process at an early age. We use these patterns to establish shortcuts that become increasingly complex as we age. These cognitive shortcuts help us make rapid decisions, which can be a very good thing. A long time ago, our ancestors used bias to make split-second decisions as to who is friend and who is foe. As our society, living conditions, and brains matured, contemporary humans co-opted the use of bias(es) as cognitive shortcuts to simplify our workloads. We create "mental scales" to weigh, disproportionately, in favor of or against certain ideas, opinions, purchases, interactions, friends, etc. (the list could go on forever). The point is that not all these cognitive shortcuts are bad. Oftentimes, we use them to help navigate the ever-busy day we experience as teachers (and humans). Unfortunately, our shortcuts can lead to a deficit mindset and overgeneralizations that can have a negative impact on the students and communities we serve. To complicate this topic even more, consider that these mental processes can happen unconsciously within the complex and hidden mechanics of our brains.

WHEN THERE IS NO OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE AMENDS AND COMMITMENTS, THE EXPERIENCE STAYS WITH US.

We can bring these cognitive shortcuts to our interactions with students. We invite you to reflect on your patterns when it comes to interacting with a student with whom you have a conflict. We're not talking about a serious conflict that has reached the point where others are involved. Instead, consider the pattern of interactions in those garden-variety annoying situations. This type of conflict has occurred when the usual redirection hasn't worked. Instead, the problem has persisted—a student is on her cell phone too much, a child continues to talk to his peers at his table even though you've instructed him to be quiet, or a student is just not doing the task you asked of them. Now complete the self-assessment below to reflect on your interactions.

SELF-ASSESSMENT: HOW RESTORATIVE AM I?

Directions: Reflect on how, in your role, you deal with students (or staff) when an incident or issue has arisen. Answer the questions below by marking a check in the column choices of *No, Not Often, Usually,* or *Always.*

	NO	NOT OFTEN	USUALLY	ALWAYS
1. Do I remain calm during the conversation?				
2. Do I really listen, without interrupting?				

(Continued)

(Continued)

	NO	NOT OFTEN	USUALLY	ALWAYS
3. Does the student understand why they are having this conversation?				
4. Would the student say I am a good listener?				
5. Do we explore how the school values apply to the issue?				
6. Does the student understand the harm they've caused, who has been affected, and how?				
7. Do I talk about how the incident affects me?				
8. Do I take responsibility for any part I might have played when things went wrong, acknowledge it, and apologize?				
9. Do I consider the extent to which I have a relationship with this student and how that affects my expectations for our interaction?				
10. If the student apologizes to me, do I accept the apology respectfully?				
11. Do I collaborate with the student to formulate a plan?				
12. Have I, at any stage, asked someone I trust to observe my practice and give me honest feedback?				
13. Do I try to handle most issues or incidents myself?				
14. Do I seek support when issues get tricky for me?				
15. Do I follow the school's systems when looking for more support?				
16. Is the relationship with the student repaired?				

Source: Positive Behaviour for Learning (2014a, p. 15). Adapted from "How restorative am I?" © Margaret Thorsborne and Associates, 2009.

Now that you have reflected on your experiences, what does this mean? Take a few minutes to analyze your responses and consider the questions that follow.

What patterns have you noticed?	
What strengths do you have?	
What areas of growth do you foresee?	

A DILEMMA: TAKE TWO

Let's revisit Mr. Hall's interaction with the jaywalking student before school to see how the principal helped build a restorative school climate. Recall that both Mr. Hall and the student are in the principal's office.

First, the principal asks the student to step outside her office and take a seat; she would come to talk to him in a few minutes. Then she asks Mr. Smith to do the same in her office. She asks Mr. Hall how he was feeling in that moment and how he felt now. The principal explains that many of the students have difficult situations outside of the classroom and that at this school, they practice restorative conversations to help build and repair relationships. She notes that this did not excuse the student's choice of language or disrespect and promises to address that as part of the conversation.

ONE'S ABILITY TO EMBODY A RESTORATIVE MINDSET IS NOT STATIC. WE ARE HUMANS BEFORE WE ARE EDUCATORS.

She then allows the student to come back into her office and facilitates a conversation between him and Mr. Hall. During

the conversation, the student shares that he hadn't eaten the previous night or that morning and was just trying to get something to eat before school. He also explains that he had had a difficult interaction with someone before even getting to school, and Mr. Hall just happened to be the next person "in line." Mr. Hall also has the opportunity to explain his perspective and how he felt disrespected in the way that the student approached the interaction, and together the three of them work to repair the situation.

Throughout that year, as Mr. Hall encounters that student around campus, their interactions are different because they came from a place of mutual understanding.

PROCEDURES

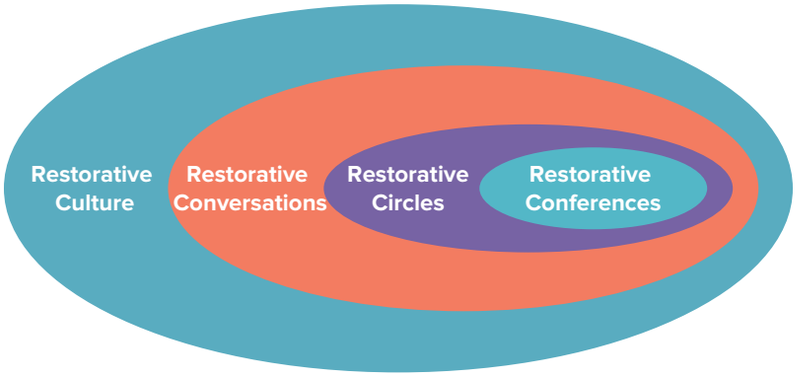
As you read this book, you will find support for creating restorative practices around the following key concepts, as illustrated in Figure 1.5:

WE STRIVE TO CREATE AN ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT THAT ALLOWS YOUNG PEOPLE TO PURSUE GOALS AND ASPIRATIONS.

- A **restorative culture** informs the language we use to build agency and identity. We strive to create an academic environment that allows young people to pursue goals and aspirations. To create a restorative culture, we attend to the ways we build teacher credibility, set high expectations, and foster positive relationships with each member of the school community.
    - **Restorative conversations** equip adults and students with the capacity to resolve problems, make decisions, and arrive at solutions in ways that are satisfactory and growth-producing for all. This requires cognitive reframing to deepen understanding of perspectives, using affective statements and impromptu conversations.
    - **Restorative circles** are tools for prompting academic learning through dialogue, building community, making class decisions, and reaching resolution through healing. Each type of circle has its own set of protocols that are aligned to the purpose.
- **Restorative conferences** include formal meetings meant to foster guided dialogue between the victim(s) and offender(s). These conferences include plans for re-entry into the school community and involve other adults and students affected by the conflict.

Restorative practices encompass large and small interactions between educators, students, and families. Read the following scenario and consider what advice you have for the teacher and the school.

Figure 1.5 Restorative Practices



Restorative Culture

- Foundations of Respect
- High Expectations

Restorative Conversations

- Affective Statements
- Impromptu Conversations

Restorative Circles

- Circles

Restorative Conferences

- Victim-Offender Dialogue

CASE IN POINT

Jacob is a student in Mr. Abram's sixth-grade class. Jacob tends to be late to school, which often leads to him not having enough time to complete his morning bell ringer practice activities. This week has been a hard week. Jacob showed up 10 minutes late on Monday, 15 minutes late on Tuesday, and 8 minutes late on Wednesday. The school policy is that after a third tardy, the student loses lunch recess privileges for a day. Jacob pleads and says it's his mom making him late.

What do you think Mr. Abram should do?

RECOMMENDATIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

We have created a table of general recommendations for consideration. Add your own site-specific implications and questions that this module has provoked for you.

	BROAD RECOMMENDATIONS	SITE-SPECIFIC IMPLICATIONS AND QUESTIONS
Schoolwide	Take an inventory of processes already in place to build on and to identify where gaps remain.	
Leaders	Hold conversations with teachers, parents, and students to gain insight into their knowledge and impressions about restorative practices.	
Teachers	Monitor your restorative conversations with students to notice your own current practices.	
Students	Examine your existing school climate survey data with restorative practices in mind. How might students' responses inform the school?	
Family and Community	Talk with family representatives about their knowledge and impressions of restorative practices to gain initial feedback.	

REFLECTION

Let's review the success criteria from the opening of this module. Ask yourself: Can you do these things now? Write your reflections below.

Can I explain a logic model for restorative practices?	
Can I engage in reflective thinking about my own experiences?	
Can I apply principles of restorative practices to scenarios?	

online resources

Access resources, tools, and guides for this module at the companion website:
resources.corwin.com/restorativepracticesplaybook