



# Restorative Justice & Circles for Conflict Resolution

## What is Restorative Justice?

A theory of justice that focuses on mediation and agreement rather than punishment.

A major cultural shift from a punitive model

Empowering individuals to resolve conflicts on their own and in small groups.

### 3 Pillars of RJ

#### HARMS & NEEDS

Empathy for all, by all.

The victim was harmed, and the accused may also have a history of harm being done to them and it may be a factor in their behavior.

#### OBLIGATION TO PUT RIGHT

A mumbled "sorry" isn't enough.

A moderated process is necessary to help the accused somehow right the wrong that was committed.

#### ENGAGEMENT OF ALL

Everyone is involved in the healing.

A dialogue with all parties (victim, offender, and community) is needed to genuinely move on and have an impact.

## Traditional Discipline vs. Restorative Justice

### Traditional:

Camper who makes bad choices gets more attention than the camper their behavior harms



### Restorative:

The harmed party and the perpetrator are equally important in solving conflict and both receive attention to their needs during the process



"A fundamental change in how you respond to rule violations & misbehavior"

### Punitive/Traditional Approach

Mindset: A rule is broken

Justice is focused on establishing guilt (WHO?!) →

Accountability = Punishment →

Justice is focused on the offender; the victim is ignored →

Rules and intent outweigh whether the outcome is positive/negative →

### Restorative Approach

Mindset: People and relationships are harmed

Justice is identifying the needs and responsibilities of all impacted

Accountability = agreeing on actions to make things right

Victim, offender, and community all have a role in justice

Offender is responsible for behavior and repairing the harm, working towards positive outcomes

## 3 Steps: Foundation, Maintenance & Intervention

### Foundation (80%)

This is where we spend the most time. It's all the things camp do really well! It includes community development, opportunities for sharing, and ways to encourage relationship building

#### ☺ Cabin/Group Agreement on Day 1

It's not "adult rules" – it requires ownership from the campers

All agree to be held accountable

#### ☺ Talking about fears, goals, daily wins, problems; voicing concerns

Can be led by staff or peer leaders

Encourages peer-to-peer respect

Typically what we think of in camp as a "bunk meeting" or "embers," etc.

#### ☺ Bunk/Group Meeting

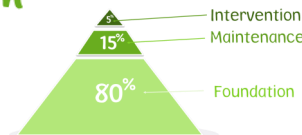
#### ☺ Daily Check-Ins with Campers

#### ☺ Teambuilding/Icebreakers

#### ☺ Camp Traditions & Routines

#### ☺ Staff Trainings

#### ☺ Inclusion Supports



### Maintenance (15%)

Relationship Maintenance is usually done 1:1, and often with a mediator

#### ☺ Responding to minor issues

#### ☺ "Small Circles" – just the affected individuals or including a mediator

#### ☺ Counsel individual campers through thinking about what happened

#### ☺ "Check the sparks" so they don't become a fire

### Intervention (5%)

Resolving Conflict & Repairing Relationships (Addressing the big stuff)

#### ☺ A similar process to smaller mediations, but may involve an entire camp group (a cabin unit or the 8-year-old-boys)

#### ☺ In addition to the individuals at the center of the action speaking, all involved have a chance to share their feelings and concerns and be part of the solution



emily@BrightMooseTraining.com



BrightMooseTraining.com



call/text:  
781-430-8358

**BRIGHT MOOSE**  
TRAINING, CONSULTING & ADVOCACY

# Restorative Justice & Circles for Conflict Resolution, Continued

## The Role of Circles

"Circles" are collections of people and come in various sizes for various purposes

A circle can be just two people, or it can be the size of the entire community

Relationship building is done in circles, as is relationship maintenance and repairing



### Expectations for Circles

- Respect the talking piece
- Speak from the heart
- Say just enough
- Listen with respect
- Remain in the circle
- Honor confidentiality

### Tips for Circling Up

Set clear topics/goals for the outcome

Set a positive tone. Campers will follow your lead

In a kind & supportive way, help campers stick to the conversation

Always sit in the circle with campers and participate

Use a talking piece

Do the "Go Around" - Each person responds to a prompt

## Mediations/Interventions Using Restorative Questioning

The offending camper(s) have a chance to come forward, and to make things right by meeting with the affected camper(s). A mediator (usually a staff member) can be included if needed. The mediator's role is to ask non-judgmental questions. Often they will ask each party those questions individually first, then again all together. Discussion leads to an agreement to fix harm and allow harm to be fixed.

### Questions for the Affected Camper

- What did you think when you realized what had happened?
- What impact has this had on you?
- What impact has this had on others?
- What are you thinking about what happened?
- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?



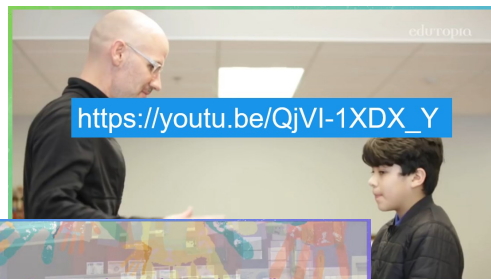
### Questions for the Offending Camper(s)

- 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 needs to happen to make things right?

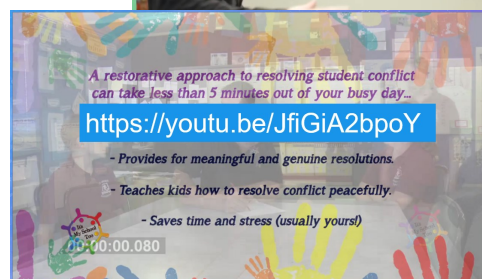


### Mediated Discussion:

- Can you explain what happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- How do you think/feel about what happened?
- What were you thinking/feeling at the time?
- What do you need to move forward?
- What are you willing to do to repair the harm that has been caused?



[https://youtu.be/QjVI-1XDX\\_Y](https://youtu.be/QjVI-1XDX_Y)



<https://youtu.be/JfiGiA2bpoY>

- Provides for meaningful and genuine resolutions.
- Teaches kids how to resolve conflict peacefully.
- Saves time and stress (usually yours!)

*I highly recommend checking out these videos on YouTube which are great examples of circle work (top) and a restorative questioning intervention in action (bottom).*  
-Emily ☺



#### References for Source Material Include:

- [www.edutopia.org/article/what-heck-restorative-justice-heather-wolpert-gawron](http://www.edutopia.org/article/what-heck-restorative-justice-heather-wolpert-gawron)
- "Raising Self-Reliant Children in a Self-Indulgent World" by Glenn & Nelson
- [www.edutopia.org/blog/restorative-justice-resources-matt-davis](http://www.edutopia.org/blog/restorative-justice-resources-matt-davis)
- [schoolsocialwork.net/restorative-justice-4th-graders-part-2/](http://schoolsocialwork.net/restorative-justice-4th-graders-part-2/)
- [www.wishschools.org/cms\\_files/resources/RP%20Circle.pdf](http://www.wishschools.org/cms_files/resources/RP%20Circle.pdf)
- Howard Zehr, Founding Father of Restorative Justice
- [www.weareteachers.com/restorative-justice/](http://www.weareteachers.com/restorative-justice/)
- [www.cmediation.org/restorative-justice/](http://www.cmediation.org/restorative-justice/)



[emily@BrightMooseTraining.com](mailto:emily@BrightMooseTraining.com)



[BrightMooseTraining.com](http://BrightMooseTraining.com)



call/text:  
781-430-8358

