

Reconstructing Relationships:

Seeking Restorative Justice Practices and Interventions

Garry Bailey and Lisa Bateman
Abilene Christian University
garry.bailey@acu.edu lbateman1116@gmail.com
325.668.6379 903.343.9023

Expected Learning Outcomes

- = Explains broken and reconstructed relationships in the context of school bullying
- = Introduces healthy relationships in the context of anti-bullying practices
- = Contrasts Retributive and Restorative Justice practices
- = Identifies ways to get Restorative Justice process buy-in by bully and victim
- = Describes informal Restorative Justice practices and the circle intervention process
- = Builds skills in practicing Restorative Justice processes

- From Broken to Reconstructed Relationships
 - Brokenness is power expressed in unequal and uncaring relationships
 - Reconstructing is not restoring what existed but moving forward with new commitments to manage power and build positive interaction patterns
 - All humans are important--hard to hate someone you know personally
 - Power should be used for everyone, those in need, those mistreated
 - Power is only for self when the self is in need or is being mistreated
 - Reconstruction should be led by those with skills in relational repair
 - Structured and unstructured time together
 - Identify common interests
 - Avoid points of relational difficulty
 - Add elements of positive communication

- What constitutes healthy relationships?
 - Consciously manages fairness in all exchanges
 - Receive equal benefit of resources provided
 - Friendships are open and friendly
 - Equal time given to each others interests
 - Consciously manages inequalities in all exchanges
 - Provide additional benefits to equalize any inequities
 - Use invitation to operationalize openness and friendliness
 - Focus time together on activities of common interest
- Pursuing Justice in Schools: Retributive vs Restorative Justice
 - Retributive Justice for Bully/Victim Relationship: Punishment by the institution for violation of rules.
 - Usually given in form of loss or timeout
 - Loss of social time such as recess or lunch with friends
 - Loss of free time such as detention after school or on Saturday
 - Punishments are often predetermined actions given in response to specific violations of institutional policies
 - Restorative Justice for Bully/Victim Relationship: Reconstructing a healthy individual identity and social relationship through positive social actions
 - Reparations
 - Equalizing power dynamics
 - Commitment to respectful relational processes
- Getting Bully and Victim Buy-in for Restorative Justice
 - Earning freedom: Bully avoids punishment and learns social skills, victim lessens anxiety and gains social confidence
 - Demonstrate appreciation for preferred future--social equality, positive interaction, support of social networks

- **Role Play: Madison, Roxanne, and the Blond Hair**

Madison's teasing starts on Roxanne's first day at her new school. Madison refuses to call her anything but "Barbie." To add injury to insult, Madison pulls Roxanne's hair when they pass in the hallway between class periods. After a few weeks of name calling and hair pulling, Madison amps up her attempts of aggression by starting a rumor about how Roxanne's hair must be from a bottle because no one's hair is really that blonde and Roxanne is "just a dumb blonde". One day both girls are headed to the school library. Roxanne is several steps ahead of Madison. Madison yells down the hallway for Roxanne to "stop." Roxanne keeps walking. Madison rushed up behind Roxanne and kicks the back of knee. As Roxanne falls to the ground Madison commands to Roxanne, "You should have stopped. You are my Barbie and Barbie's do as they are told and I told you to stop!"

- **Degrees of Formality in Restorative Justice Practice**

- **Informal Practices**

- **Managing class differences (wealth vs middle class vs poverty)**
 - + Financial + Support Systems
 - + Emotional + Relationships/Role Models
 - + Mental/Cognitive + Knowledge of Hidden Rules
 - + Spiritual + Language/Formal Register
 - + Physical (Ruby Payne--Understanding Poverty)
 - **Engaging in Dialogic Interactions**
 - Empathetic Communication Style
 - Affirm the identity and emotions of the bully and victim
 - Demonstrate support for student healthy social interests and teacher empathetic authority over process
 - Suspending judgment, Respectful talk, and Using I statements
 - Use guidelines of mindfulness, suspending judgment, curiosity, and sincerity.

- **Formal Practices**

- **Conducting a Restorative Circle Intervention**
 - Goal is to create a balance of power between bully and victim; to help them construct appropriate student to student relationship
 - Limit circle size to no more than 15 participants. Include people bully & victim respect, and get agreement from each to participate by rules:
 - Facilitator opening comments, covers guidelines
 - Respect talking piece. Only one person speaks at a time
 - Speak honestly from heart. Describe feelings, don't accuse
 - Listen honestly from heart. Listen to understand, not to respond
 - Be brief and follow Facilitator's instructions
 - 3 Rounds where each participant is invited to speak
 - 1st is introduction of who you are, your relationship to bully/victim, and hope/expectations of the process. Keep expectations brief, hopeful, and realistic
 - 2nd is sharing points of what happened clarifying events and how it affects you.
 - Describe his/her (bully/victim's) reality
 - Fact based; not belief based
 - 3rd is sharing what tangible actions each participant will do to repair the harm and facilitate better relations
 - Facilitator summarizes and asks for agreement on issues. Next steps are written down and signed by each participant