

WHY USE RESTORATIVE PRACTICES?

How often do you think about the impact your words and actions have on others? Does it surprise you to know that people are often unaware of the impact they have - positive and negative - on others? Restorative practices are rooted in the belief that our lives work better when we are self and other aware about how our behaviors affect ourselves as well as others. If our actions harm others in some way(s), restorative practices help us “right the wrongs” we have caused. Using a Character Champion (CC) Growth Mindset, we maintain a willingness to learn how to repair the harm we have done by using the following restorative questions to help those who have been harmed by our actions express the impact of our behaviors on them:

- 1) What did you think and feel when you experienced what had happened?
- 2) What impact has this incident had on you and others?
- 3) What has been the hardest thing for you?
- 4) What do you think and feel needs to happen to make things right?
- 5) What restitution actions would feel supportive and helpful?

In order to foster a community based on building and maintaining mutually respectful, supportive, and compassionate relationships all individuals are encouraged to talk honestly and take responsibility for the impact of their actions. Community members are encouraged to self-reflect, problem-solve, and generate win-win solutions. The following restorative questions are asked to understand why the harming behavior(s) occurred:

- 1) What happened?
- 2) What were you thinking and feeling at the time?
- 3) What have your thoughts and feelings been since it happened?
- 4) What do you think and feel you need to do to make things right?
- 5) What restitution behaviors can you agree to do to repair the harm that was done?

In a spirit of kindness, empathy, and perspective-taking the goal is to restore a healthy relationship by courageously negotiating and co-creating a restitution plan that community members think and feel is restorative in its goal. Restorative practices use a Character Champion circle format and take turns talking by using a talking tool to show whose turn it is to speak. It is important to use restorative practices to interrupt and stop the cycle of emotional, mental, and physical abuse that is occurring in the community. All community members share the right to live with emotional, mental, and physical safety where they feel valued and a sense of belonging to the community with equal rights and protections. By promoting compassion for self and others, the use of restorative practices result in building and maintaining healthy individuals, couples, families, schools, workplaces, as well as the larger community locally and globally. If we can learn to live, work, and play together compassionately, we can proactively prevent problems and conflicts. We can mutually agree to stay aware and care about how our actions impact others in positive/negative ways by continuing to use restorative practices to balance our need for freedom with the safety needs for limit-setting so that our well-being results.