

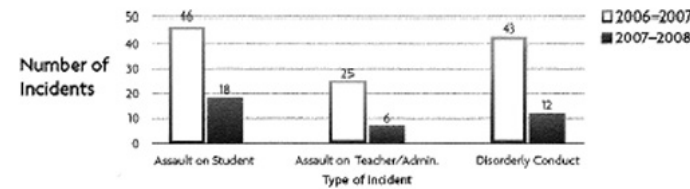
EVIDENCE TELLS US CHANGE IS POSSIBLE

Many Bronx teachers and administrators agree that suspensions and issuing summons do not work, for individual students, or to keep schools safe. And yet without an alternative, we continue to suspend and issue summonses.

Abundant evidence demonstrates that restorative practice can be that alter-native. The International Institute for Restorative Practice (safersanerschools.org) cites these results from their Whole-School Change program:

West Philadelphia High School (Large Inner-City High School)

Serious Behavioral Incidents by Type in 2 School Years



Similar evidence comes from Minnesota, where almost half inner city, suburban, and rural school districts use some form of restorative practice, including circles. One Minnesota school reported an 80% drop in acts of physical aggression, from 773 to 153 over 3.5 years implementation.

Marilyn Armour, PhD, Director Institute for Restorative Justice and Dialogue at U of Texas, Austin cited in Tikkun Winter 2012

In 2004, the U.S. Secret Service and the U.S. Department of Education published their research on school shootings between 1974 & 2002. This publication, *Threat Assessment in Schools*, lists these steps for creating a safe school:

- emphasize the importance of listening;
- adopt a strong but caring stance against the code of silence;
- prevent and intervene in bullying;
- involve all members of the school community in planning, creating, and sustaining a school culture of safety and respect;
- develop trusting relationships between each student and at least one adult.

Restorative practice implements all components listed in this Secret Service and Department of Education research.

April 3, 2013 front page of *NY Times* documents a wave of interest in restorative practice, a wave that includes trainings organized by the Office for School & Youth Development, NYC Department of Education.

Substantial subsidy for training may be available depending on your situation made possible by generous support of the Simon Bolivar Foundation and DREAM!/Safety with Dignity Angels.

YOUR FACILITATORS

Lyn Pyle is a former high school teacher, a community organizer, and founding member of Mass Transit Street Theater, with 26 years experience directing at-risk Bronx teens in theater and facilitating their leadership development in an after school program. The level of violence these young people deal with daily led Lyn to become a certified trainer in Creative Response to Conflict, the Alternatives to Violence Project, and the International Institute for Restorative Practices. She brings this unusual combination of professional experience to her more recent work training students to be peer-mediators and encouraging student-led “talk it out” campaigns using the arts. Lyn holds an M.A. in Comparative Literature from the University of California, Berkeley.

Loren Weybright is a recently retired professor of education and former NYC teacher who has trained teachers and students in conflict resolution education for four decades. He also trained K-12 teachers in pedagogy, science education, and reflective practice. Currently, Loren brings his coaching and mentoring skills to Southeast Asia, where he works with K-12 teachers in restorative practice, science education, and pedagogy. Loren has a permanent NYC teaching certificate and is a certified trainer with Creative Response to Conflict and the International Institute for Restorative Practice.

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RESTORATIVE PRACTICE *with* SAFETY WITH DIGNITY

RESTORATIVE PRACTICE IS a practical and versatile system that enables young people, teachers, and all school staff to reduce conflict and violence in school by:

- encouraging social emotional learning,
- building a stronger school community,
- and developing additional skills for effective classroom management, and a better teaching and learning environment.

DREAM!/Safety with Dignity offers professional development in restorative practice—interactive techniques that encourage student self-awareness, empathy, better communication, and responsibility for one’s impact on others.



In even the most challenging schools, integrating present curriculum in restorative processes has achieved lasting change and a safe & effective teaching & learning environment. Relationships between students and staff are enhanced, student behavior improved, and bullying, violence, and suspensions reduced.

WHAT WE DO

There is no magical solution, but Professional Development in Restorative Practice arms teachers with inspiration, examples of real-life solutions, and the practical skills to reduce conflict and violence in the classroom.

Safety with Dignity will work with a small team of interested staff to tailor a plan that meets your school's needs. In most cases we recommend beginning with a 2 1/2 hour, all-staff Introduction to Restorative Principles & Practices. Teachers & hallway staff will walk away with several skills they can use next day with students:

- informal restorative questions to challenge negative behavior in a way that places responsibility for making things right on those involved;
- how to integrate present curriculum for any subject into a circle process that builds self-awareness and communication skills without taking extra classroom time;
- facilitation of community building circles that develop emotional literacy, and positive student/student and student/teacher relationships while teaching reading, math, science, or global studies.

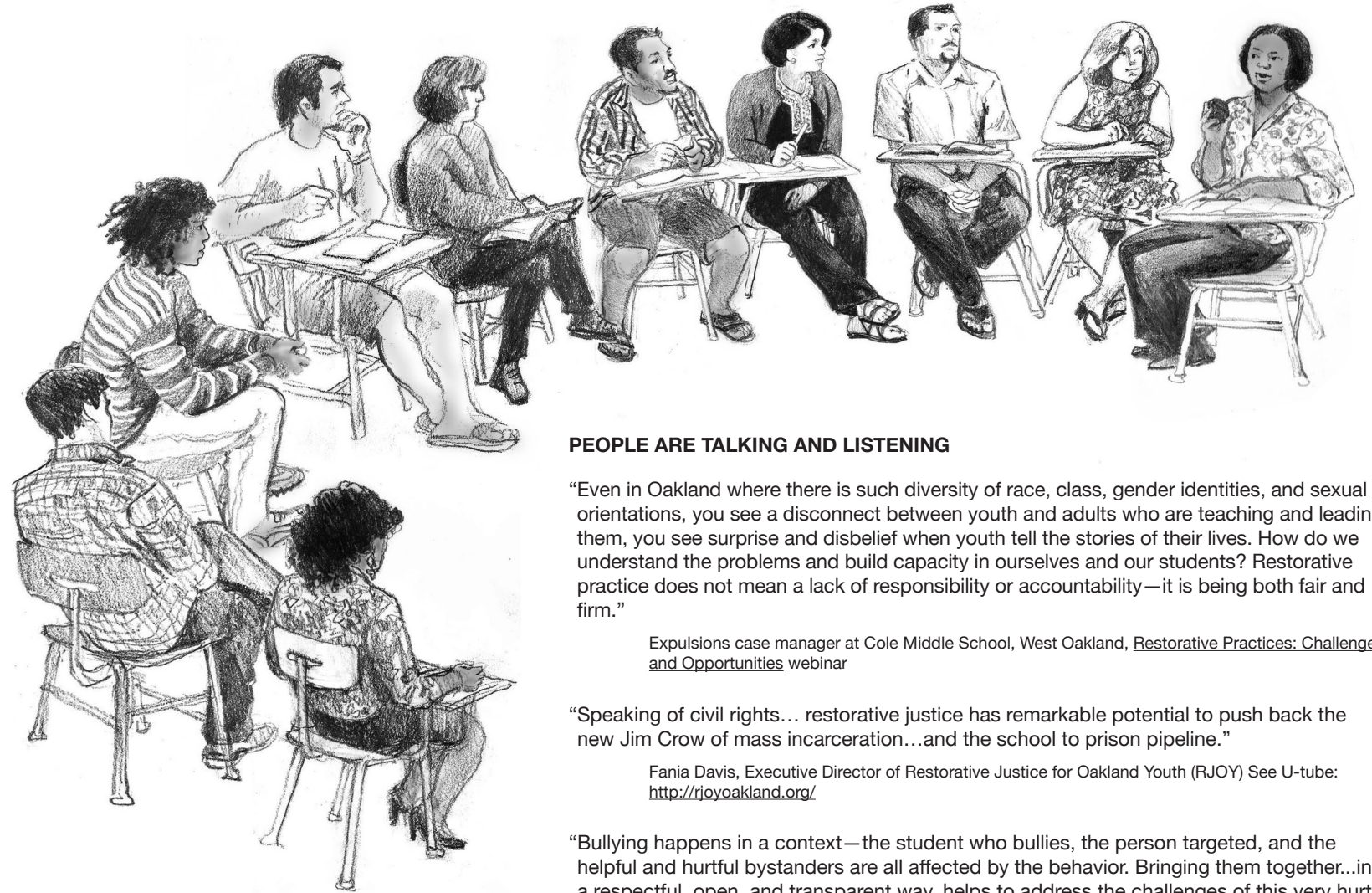
With any of the following you can continue to build a strong school community that gives students voice and at the same time, holds them accountable for their actions:

- institute a pilot project, or train for whole school implementation of restorative practice;
- develop Professional Learning Groups that bring teachers together to share experiences and solve problems. Each session focuses on an element of restorative practice chosen by the group to move them toward greater understanding and proficiency;
- train advisory teachers in use of a 15-week advisory curriculum that will increase comfort level and provide additional skills to encourage student social /emotional learning—making advisory more useful to the school teaching & learning environment;
- train staff as trainers to provide professional development for new teachers and staff as they are hired;
- in-classroom coaching (as requested), and ongoing documentation to improve implementation and mark successes for celebration; and
- train student mediators and develop a peer-mediation program that will anchor for students the shift to “talking it out.” (See brochure describing our peer-mediation training and student-led promotion for “talking it out.”)

WHAT IS A RESTORATIVE SCHOOL?

“Restorative justice is a set of principles and practices that sees crime and harm as violations of people and relationship. In a restorative school, people who harm others are held accountable to the person they hurt as well as to the school community, not just to a Discipline Code. Students are actively involved in fixing the problems they make...and staff looks for a teachable moment, especially when rules have been violated.”

Circle in the Square, Nancy Riesterberg – Violence Prevention Specialist for Minnesota Department of Education.
Time to read one reference? Read this book.



PEOPLE ARE TALKING AND LISTENING

“Even in Oakland where there is such diversity of race, class, gender identities, and sexual orientations, you see a disconnect between youth and adults who are teaching and leading them, you see surprise and disbelief when youth tell the stories of their lives. How do we understand the problems and build capacity in ourselves and our students? Restorative practice does not mean a lack of responsibility or accountability—it is being both fair and firm.”

Expulsions case manager at Cole Middle School, West Oakland, [Restorative Practices: Challenges and Opportunities](#) webinar

“Speaking of civil rights... restorative justice has remarkable potential to push back the new Jim Crow of mass incarceration...and the school to prison pipeline.”

Fania Davis, Executive Director of Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth (RJOY) See U-tube: <http://rjoyoakland.org/>

“Bullying happens in a context—the student who bullies, the person targeted, and the helpful and hurtful bystanders are all affected by the behavior. Bringing them together...in a respectful, open, and transparent way, helps to address the challenges of this very hurtful behavior. Bullying is a relationship problem that requires relationship solutions. Restorative practices are tools that help develop relationships.”

Nancy Riesterberg, Violence Prevention Specialist, Minnesota Department of Education, [Restorative Practices: Challenges and Opportunities](#) webinar