



**THE COMMUNITY
RESTORATIVE
JUSTICE CENTER**

Senate Education Committee
Wednesday, February 3, 2016
Testimony from Susan A. Cherry
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Topic: Restorative Practices in Schools.

Restorative Practices are based upon the principle that communities develop the capacity to create space for conflict resolution by some **basic processes**.

- Circles process (similar to morning meeting) allows for community building in classrooms
- Conflicts can be mediated at the place closest to the place of harm – so that all community members have an opportunity to have harm repaired and share experiences.
- Restorative questions are based around experience and affect – less around cognitive processes. Research is now clear that when conflict happens, the trauma is best repaired in the emotional parts of the brain (space to talk about feelings).
- Peer opportunities for conflict resolution are available.
- When an exit from the community is supported for safety purposes, reentry happens to promote belonging.
- When people feel that they belong (students and adults alike), they take care of their community.

Some examples of **Restorative structures**:

- Weekly circles for community building
- Classroom circles for conflict resolution that repairs harm in the classroom.
- Student panels – or a combination of student/adult panels (depending upon the ages) for school repairing of harm
- Reentry panels – a system of reentry that promotes “belonging”

Sample Restorative Questions:*

When faced with challenging behavior:

- What happened?
- What were you thinking of at the time?
- Who has been affected by what you have done? In what way?
- What do you think you need to do to make things right?

When someone has been harmed:

- What did you think when you realized what had happened?
- What impact has this incident had on you and others?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?
- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

* Taken from IIRP.edu (International Institute for Restorative Practices, Bethlehem, PA)