



THE WINSTON CHURCHILL MEMORIAL TRUST

Report by

MARGARET ARMSTRONG

CHURCHILL FELLOW – 2004

To study restorative justice programs/models that focus on the development of emotional, physical and psychological safety for all members of the school community – UK, Canada, USA, NZ

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Signed

Dated

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Introduction

“Feeling safe, supported and respected at school is both the fundamental right of all students and fundamental to effective learning”

Implementation Manual for the National Safe Schools Framework, 2003

Comments are often heard from parents, journalists, and concerned taxpayers about the dwindling levels of school safety. These safety issues can also be seen as a reflection of broader societal issues. Schools today are facing many issues that in the past were considered to be only the realm of the family and wider community. Today, these issues impact on the operation of schools at a classroom and whole school level. Bullying, increasing levels of violence and concerns with academic performance place great pressure on our schools and the staff working within them. In recent years, many initiatives have been developed by the educational sector to increase the level of safety for all within the school community. These initiatives need to meet the needs of the individual school, and be continually evaluated and assessed. Schools, and the staff within them, need to be willing not only to consider new initiatives but also to embrace a total cultural change.

Paramount in a school community is the value placed on positive relationships. Relationships between all members of the school community – students, parents, staff, administration and school leadership need to be based on values of respect and understanding. Therefore for schools to feel safer, positive relationships within them are the key ingredient to any cultural change, or changes to behaviour management processes.

A restorative justice philosophy in schools represents a change from the traditional approach of behaviour management, where we have rules and consequences, to one of “relationship management” (Thorsborne, 1999), where school rule-breaking is seen as damaging relationships.

As applied in a school setting, restorative justice has some underpinning fundamental concepts:

- *Misconduct is viewed as a violation of people and relationships*
 - *These violations create obligations and liabilities*
 - *Problem-solving focuses on healing and making things right*
- (adapted from Zehr, 1990)

Therefore, restorative practices in schools are a range of processes that involve the development and enhancement of relationships in schools, the teaching of conflict resolution, problem-solving and negotiation skills. In addition, classroom management is participatory, democratic and focuses on problem-solving. In order to implement these practices a shift in thinking is required at a whole school level. This shift requires a change or modification from a traditional punitive approach to one of a relational approach whereby opportunities are created for individuals to accept responsibility for repairing harm and for communities to support them as they do so. These practices also offer schools the opportunity to view misbehaviour and conflict as a learning tool rather than just dispensing punishment alone. Restorative practices help students, and indeed all members of the school community, to learn from their mistakes, reconcile and resolve their problems with others and create a safer and more democratic school.

Implementing restorative practices in schools is not a simple process – it is not another program for dealing with bullying behaviour, nor is it a way of managing behaviour – it is long term systematic change. It requires a culture shift in schools where all members of the school

community are empowered to help each other deal with inappropriate behaviours. The basic assumptions about rules, punishment and authority are challenged by this philosophy. It provides an opportunity to safeguard the physical, emotional and psychological safety of all within the school community.

Effective work has already been achieved in school communities to increase levels of safety. However, like other community institutions, bullying, harassment and violence in schools still occurs and schools are faced with daily challenges in regard to these incidents. Much research is being done (and has been done) in the field of restorative practices in schools to investigate its effectiveness, especially in improving levels of safety. This research indicates, without doubt, that this philosophy, when embraced by the whole school community, has a significant and positive impact on levels of safety. Education authorities need to act upon the recommendations of this research and support schools with implementation.

The Churchill Fellowship has provided a fantastic opportunity for my continued professional learning by visiting school communities and organizations involved in implementing restorative practices. It provided an opportunity to view training methods and courses to support schools and investigate various methods of strategic change and challenges within schools and communities. I was especially interested in the ways schools found to effectively implement and manage the transition from the traditional approaches to more restorative practices. This opportunity for professional learning, which included meeting and working with an international network of practitioners has increased my knowledge and expertise and will be invaluable for my ongoing implementation of this philosophy in schools.

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Dennis Gluck
Nancy Riestenberg
Joseph Roy
Kay Pranis
Susan Stacey

New Zealand

Jude Moxon
Warwick Tie
Katy Hutchinson

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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To study restorative justice programs/models that focus on the development of emotional, physical and psychological safety for all members of the school community – UK, Canada, USA, NZ

Highlights

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| United Kingdom | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Selected schools in Lewisham and Milton Keynes• Restorative Skills in Educational Settings training• National Protective Behaviours Conference |
| Canada | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Selected schools in Vancouver, BC• Institute of Safe School, BC• Building Connections, BC |
| USA | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• International Institute of Restorative Practices, Pennsylvania• Palisades school district• Using Circles Effectively training, Pennsylvania• Community Conferencing Centre, Maryland• Selected schools in Minneapolis• Department of Corrections personnel, Minnesota |
| New Zealand | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Massey HS, Auckland• New Frontiers in Restorative Justice Conference, Auckland |

Recommendations

Underpinning the following recommendations is a commitment to a staged approach to embedding an effective restorative culture shift in schools as outlined by Blood & Thorsborne (2005)

- Stage 1 – Gaining Commitment – Capturing the Hearts and Minds
 - Stage 2 – Developing a Shared Vision – Knowing where we are going and why
 - Stage 3 – Developing Responsive and Effective Practice – Changing how we do things
 - Stage 4 – Developing a whole school approach – Putting it all together
 - Stage 5 – Professional Relationships – Walking the talk with each other
1. High quality trainers are required to support restorative practices in schools. As this training cannot be successfully gained through academic coursework alone, it is recommended that current restorative practitioners are encouraged to make themselves available to schools to provide this training and be supported state-wide and nationally by a professional association.
 2. An *Australasian Association of Restorative Justice Practitioners* is to be established in Australia, New Zealand and Asia during 2005. This will provide restorative practitioners with an opportunity for professional learning and networking. Educational authorities need to promote and support this association.
 3. Dialogue needs to be established with Teacher Registration bodies and educational institutions to encourage them to include restorative justice/behaviour management practices as a compulsory component of pre-service teachers' education.
 4. Investigation needs to be undertaken to explore funding opportunities/grants to produce Australian training videos/DVDs to support the training of restorative practitioners in schools.

Program Summary

The program encompasses four countries in nine weeks between October 8 and December 9. It included:

- 20 school visits including 3 alternative school settings
- 9 meetings with members of Restorative Justice Organisations or Departments with Restorative Justice offices
- 4 meetings with organizations involved with youth crime
- 10 Training Opportunities
- One International Conference
- One National Conference

Date	Place	Organisation	Contacts
12 th Oct	London, UK	Lewisham Local Education Authority	Sian Williams Caroline Newton -RJ Coordinator
12 th Oct	London, UK	Lewisham Action in Mediation Project	Marcia Lewis - Manager
12 th Oct	London, UK	Christ Church School, Forest Hill	Brigitte Cameron – Head Teacher
12 th Oct	London, UK	Crofton School, Lewisham	Caroline Newton
12 th Oct	London, UK	Youth Offending Team, Lewisham	Graeme Quinn-Smith – Referral Coordinator
13 th Oct	London, UK	Forest Hill Boys School	Mick Levens – Deputy Head
13 th Oct	London, UK	Catford Girls School	Sue Wiseman – RJ Facilitator
14 th Oct	Milton Keynes, UK	Thames Valley Police	Chris Harman – Schools Liaison Officer
14 th Oct	Milton Keynes, UK	Southwood Middle School	Bryan Schram – Head Teacher
14 th Oct	Milton Keynes, UK	Safety Centre, Milton Keynes	John Simmonite
14 th Oct	Milton Keynes, UK	Healthy Schools Meeting	Chris Harman
15 th Oct	Milton Keynes	Protective Behaviours Training Session	Chris Harman
15 th Oct	Milton Keynes, UK	RJ Coordinators Meeting	Tom McCready – RJ Coordinator
19 th Oct	Reading, UK	Meeting with Belinda Hopkins re training	Belinda Hopkins
20 th Oct	London, UK	Restorative Skills in Educational Settings Training	Belinda Hopkins - Trainer
21 st Oct	London, UK	Restorative Skills in Educational Settings Training	Belinda Hopkins - Trainer
22 nd Oct	London, UK	Meeting with Partners in Education - Evaluators	Mark Bitel - Consultant
25 th Oct	Wolverhampton, UK	Presentation at National Protective Behaviours Conference	Shall McKee - PBUK Chris Harman
28 th Oct	Vancouver, BC, Canada	Victim Offender Mediation Training for Probation Officers Training	Catherine Bargaen - Trainer
29 th Oct	Vancouver Island, BC	Cedar Community Secondary College	Sherry Elwood, Principal
1 st Nov	Vancouver, BC	Clayton Heights SC – Peer Mediation Training	Rick Hugh – Deputy Principal
1 st Nov	Vancouver, BC	Princess Margaret SC	Jenny Lynnea – Counsellor
2 nd Nov	Vancouver, BC	Fraser Region Community Justice Initiatives Assoc.	Catherine Bargaen – Mediator/Trainer
2 nd Nov	Vancouver, BC	Parkside Centennial Elementary School – Peer Mediation Training	Catherine Bargaen – Mediator/Trainer Debra Hale
2 nd Nov	Vancouver, BC	Langley School District – Teacher Training	Catherine Bargaen Debra Hale
2 nd Nov	Vancouver, BC	Presentation at Langley School District Board Meeting	Catherine Bargaen
3 rd Nov	Vancouver, BC	Building Connections	Michelle Tubbs – Dispute Resolution Practitioner

3 rd Nov	Vancouver, BC	University College of the Fraser Valley – Institute of Safe Schools (BC)	Martha Dow - Director Terry Waterhouse – Associate Director
4 th Nov	Vancouver, BC	New Westminster Secondary School	Kathleen McDonald – Mediator/Trainer Colleen Treacy – Youth Worker
8 th Nov	Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, USA	International Institute of Restorative Practices	Bob Costello – Director of Training Beth Rodman – Executive Director
8 th Nov	Bethlehem, Pennsylvania	Community Service Foundation School (alternative setting)	Mark Reipster – Counsellor
9 th Nov	Bethlehem, Pennsylvania	CSF School	Mark Reipster – Counsellor
10 th Nov	South East Pennsylvania	Palisades Middle School	Eddie Baumgartner- Principal Dennis Gluck – Dean of Students
10 th Nov	South East Pennsylvania	Palisades High School	Rich Heffernan – Principal Monica Counsellor Aileen – Academy teacher
11 th Nov	Springfield County, Pennsylvania	Springfield Township High School	Joseph Roy - Principal
12 th Nov	South East Pennsylvania	Tinicum Elementary School	Janet Baker – Principal Kelly Brown – Guidance Counsellor
15 th Nov	Bethlehem, Pennsylvania	Using Circles Effectively in Schools training	John Bailee - Trainer
16 th Nov	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	Centre for Restorative Justice University of Pennsylvania	Brenda Morrison – Research Fellow
17 th Nov	Baltimore, Maryland	Dr Roland Patterson Snr Academy 7 th Grade teacher training	Lauren Abramson – Director – Community Conferencing Centre
17 th Nov	Baltimore, Maryland	Community Conferencing Centre	Lauren Abramson – Director Nell Andrews – Facilitator
18 th Nov	Baltimore, Maryland	Dr Roland Patterson Snr Academy 6 th Grade teacher training	Nell Andrews – Facilitator/Trainer Cindy Lemons – Facilitator/Trainer
22 nd Nov	Minneapolis, Minnesota	Beaver Lake Special School	Julie Coehler – Program Supervisor
22 nd Nov	Minneapolis, Minnesota	Minnesota Department of Education	Nancy Reistenberg – Prevention Specialist
22 nd Nov	Minneapolis, Minnesota	PEASE Academy – Alternative setting	John Howitz – Executive Director Angela Wilcox – Teacher
23 rd Nov	Minneapolis, Minnesota	Mtg of Restorative Justice Practitioners	Nancy Reistenberg Cynthia Zwicky – Behaviour Specialist
23 rd Nov	Minneapolis, Minnesota	Project Charlie – Storefront Group	Marion London – National Director
23 rd Nov	Minneapolis, Minnesota	Minnesota Department of Corrections	Kay Pranis Susan Stacey Tim Hansen
1 st Dec	Auckland New Zealand	Massey High School	Jude Moxon – RJ Coordinator
2 nd Dec	Auckland New Zealand	New Frontiers in Restorative Justice Conference	Warwick Tie
3 rd Dec	Auckland New Zealand	New Frontiers in Restorative Justice Conference	Warwick Tie
4 th Dec	Auckland New Zealand	New Frontiers in Restorative Justice Conference	Warwick Tie
5 th Dec	Auckland New Zealand	New Frontiers in Restorative Justice Conference	Warwick Tie

TRAINING AND IMPLEMENTATION

ENGLAND

Although there were many similarities between English and Australian schools, there are significant differences in the training and implementation of restorative practices.

Current Practices in Schools

The Lewisham Local Education Authority (LEA) with 70 primary schools, 12 secondary colleges and 5 special settings, has appointed a Restorative Justice Coordinator/Trainer to support schools. This LEA has developed partnerships with Lewisham Action in Mediation (LAMP) to help support and train school personnel. **Christ Church School** has decided to access their training via this support. The Head Teacher at Christ Church believes for restorative practices to be truly successful, all staff need to be exposed to training and empowered to implement it, in their classrooms and corridors. Christ Church School has also employed a number of classroom assistants to help classroom teachers ease the behaviour management issues. This, along with working directly with a behaviour management consultant, will help implement restorative practices across the school. Other larger schools (and secondary colleges generally), like **Crofton Secondary College** and **Forest Hill Boys School**, haven't the luxury of exposing the entire staff to training. They have opted to train strategic members of staff, mainly head of house and learning mentors who tend to deal with most behavioural issues within the schools. They have however, included in this training, when possible, the leadership team – a vital component of any sustainable, effective change in schools.

All schools in the London, and Milton Keynes area that were visited have a designated staff member (usually a learning mentor), without direct teaching responsibilities, who has the task of dealing with behavioural issues. These staff deal restoratively (when appropriate) with incidents and issues when they arise. Referrals to learning mentors come from staff or the young people themselves. This allows the teaching staff to continue to teach virtually uninterrupted. However, interestingly, it is when these designated staff leave the school (as was the case at Crofton) that the impetus for the change disintegrated to some degree. It was certainly evident that when there was a team of staff in the school supporting the implementation and ongoing practice, then these processes were more consistent and viable. When this team involved a member of the leadership team, implementation was seen as more important and a necessary part of school change. There were plans in place to train more staff as part of the LEAs project and develop their further implementation accordingly.

Readiness

Interestingly, when discussion turned to reasons for embarking on a restorative philosophy in schools, it was evident that some readiness was required. It is far easier when there is already an ethos in the school congruent with a restorative philosophy. Timing, and a willingness to change, were imperative. Evaluation of restorative practices in English schools (Bitel, 2005) mentions that schools, unwilling or suffering from "*initiative over-load*", shouldn't embark on such a significant change. As restorative practices have developed in schools, many existing processes already in place have come under its umbrella and formed a continuum of restorative practices. In the English schools visited these practices would include victim/offender mediation, peer mediation and circle time. The latter is a very positive and consistent activity in English schools whereby classes regularly sit in circles with a class teacher/facilitator. These circles provide "*a safe, trusting and non-blaming environment to speak, listen, share thoughts, explore ideas and interact.*" (Smith 2003) It has had an impact

on supporting young people, raising confidence and building self-esteem. Circle time is gaining popularity in Australia, especially in schools adopting restorative practices.

Funding

Funding for implementation of restorative practices is not an issue for the schools visited. In Lewisham, the LEA is supporting the approach by providing a trainer to work directly with schools. Their funding comes from the Childrens' Fund and Building Safer Schools Fund. Schools are also managing their funds for this change and building it into their financial statements. This commitment is necessary for ongoing professional development of staff and sustainability of restorative practices. Research recommends that any implementation of these practices is a 3 – 5 year commitment. English schools, seeing a direct benefit to their school community, generally are putting their money where needed to support such an implementation. This LEA funding also provided for the publication of a document "Restoring The Balance: A Guide To Restorative Approaches To Behaviour Management In Schools" to be available for schools considering restorative practices.

Training

Although, training for schools in Lewisham is supported internally now by an RJ coordinator, in the early days (last 2 years), it was necessary to employ an international trainer to build up the training base locally. Margaret Thorsborne, an Australian based trainer, has visited the LEA on many occasions to provide this training. Australia is well placed to have such a pioneer in our midst, and indeed much high-quality training has occurred here in Australian schools by this well-qualified and highly competent trainer.

I was indeed privileged to meet with, and attend some training provided by, another highly respected British restorative practitioner. Belinda Hopkins (Transforming Conflict) facilitates training days for schools in "Restorative Skills in Educational Settings". This training is extremely comprehensive, lasting 8 days and includes interactive sessions on empathic listening, restorative enquiry, restorative discussions, mediation, circle time and restorative conferences. My timeframe only allowed me to attend two days, but it was evident that this training was very effective for school personnel. A huge commitment is required from the school to release staff for 8 days, and no matter how wonderful the training is, this requirement was too much for some schools. My experience suggests that this would certainly be the case for many Australian schools. Belinda also spends time consulting with schools and the Youth Justice Board in the UK, as part of the Restorative Justice Consortium which released a definitive document outlining "Restorative Justice Principles as applied in a school setting" which will be very useful to schools worldwide.

As part of a training and implementation package, some schools in England, particularly those in Milton Keynes, have incorporated Protective Behaviours (PBs) training. Protective Behaviours is an empowerment process that espouses the following two statements:

- *We all have a right to be safe all the time*
- *Nothing is so awful that we can't talk with someone about it*

The Protective Behaviours program has been available to schools for many years and it teaches communication and problem-solving skills, improves self-esteem and life skills. These skills empower users to understand their personal safety and provide the means to deal safely with life experiences. Many schools in Milton Keynes have included this training to dovetail with restorative practices training. As a Protective Behaviours Trainer myself, I was delighted to participate in training in Milton Keynes and hear the experiences of schools in that area implementing PBs alongside restorative practices.

National Protective Behaviours Conference (UK)

This 1 day conference enabled me to meet many school and agency personnel with an interest in restorative practices and its links to PBs.

Highlights included:

- Children's Performance - Wednesfield Gospel Choir
- Clive & Fiona Benjamin – Presenting the history and development of PBUK
- Debbie Mehaffy – Northern Ireland Women's Aid Federation presenting her "Helping hands Resource"

In Victoria, a research report, Building Blocks to Safe Schools (BBSS), conducted by the Children's Protection Society (auspicing PBs in Victorian schools) has just been released. The research report, examines the protective factors contributing to childrens' perceptions of safety in a school environment, as reported by students, teachers and parents. The research also examines the factors contributing to the safety of teachers, highlighting the need for teachers to feel safe if they are to provide a safe environment for their students. Research indicates that a student's feelings of safety and belonging, and their ability to learn, are closely linked. The BBSS model provides a framework that schools can use to optimize safety. It explores the application of PBs as a strategy to address issues identified as contributing to safety. Restorative practices dovetails well with this work.

Key Learnings from English Experience

- Having teaching staff, without teaching duties, with direct responsibility as coordinators of restorative practices in schools can have a significant impact on implementation.
- Readiness to take on this change is vital.
- The involvement and support of the leadership team is paramount.
- Regular use of circle time develops a safe, supportive culture in classrooms.
- The inclusion of protective behaviours training enhances implementation of restorative practices and improves levels of student safety.
- Schools will allocate funding when they are committed to the change.

CANADA

Due to time constraints, it was only possible to visit British Columbia. Therefore, my observations only reflect the situation in this province. My visits provided me with a different perspective on the training and implementation of restorative practices in schools. Much of the work being done with BC schools is around mediation generally and peer mediation specifically. The schools visited were all secondary colleges and therefore faced the same challenges with training staff, as do the English secondary colleges.

Current Practices and Training in Schools

There is a significant partnership between the local Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) and school districts across BC. It is the RCMP who provides training to schools and works closely with schools in a preventative, proactive way. This was especially the case with **Cedar Community Secondary College** at Nanaimo on Vancouver Island. These RCMP officers are also available to facilitate conferences in schools both small (mini) conferences and the more major (community) conferences. At Cedar Community, the leadership team are being trained first, followed by interested classroom and lunchroom staff. The schools visited all have Principals or Deputy Principals committed to the implementation of restorative practices. All British Columbia schools have 3 mandated goals – literacy, numeracy and

social responsibility. Despite the lack of guidelines or evaluation around the social responsibility goal, the schools were keen to implement restorative practices to fulfill this goal and were devising their own school-based guidelines and evaluation. They were very realistic about time constraints and the practice being congruent with the restorative justice philosophy as well as being aware that they needed to maintain the impetus.

Another school visited, **New Westminster Secondary School**, concentrated their efforts on training quality peer mediators. This training was extensive, involving students for a full year, rewarding their efforts with academic credits. They were then available to the student body as mediators working mainly during lunchbreaks. Students were often referred to them by teachers or some students, self-referred having experienced previous mediation successes. The students facilitate the whole process and have their own website (see resources) to help the student body understand mediation.

Other schools visited, mainly **Clayton Heights Secondary School** and **Princess Margaret Secondary School** were adopting a different process of implementation. The training here was supplied by Real Justice (an affiliate of the International Institute of Restorative Practices), and counselors at the respective schools were trained as facilitators of community conferences only. It was also planned to introduce the entire staff of both schools to restorative practices during holiday professional development sessions. Plans after that weren't cemented yet, but implementation was to be taken slowly and transition managed strategically.

Community Organisation Involvement

A significant organization involved with schools in British Columbia and especially in Langley School District was the **Fraser Region Community Justice Initiatives Association (CJI)**. CJI is a multi-faceted organization providing conflict resolution services (underpinned by restorative justice philosophy) to the criminal justice system, workplaces, community, institutions, organizations, churches, schools and businesses. In 2000, CJI embarked on a major project with the Langley School District. The purpose of the project (titled *Educating for Peacebuilding: Conversation Peace*) is *"through training and educating school district staff, students and parents, to create a climate in the district which encourages the use of restorative justice based approaches in response to discipline and conflict situations"* (CJI Annual Report, 2004). CJI and the school district have developed a partnership dedicating staff to this project for the next 10 years. Their training involves school staff and peer mediators. It is essentially mediation training, and I was fortunate to sit in on a final training session with teachers, and a group of Year 6 peer mediators. A very comprehensive training manual and workbook for secondary staff and students has been published, (titled *"Conversation Peace*) and CJI staff are completing a primary version during 2005 (titled *"Talking Peace"*). This organization provides invaluable support and training to the Langley School District as well as being available to mediate between students or between staff when required. This partnership was highlighted at the school Board meeting I attended where a Year 11 student spoke about the impact of a mediation session on her life and her consequent decision to train as a peer mediator.

Another community organization involved in schools is the **Fraser-Burrard Community Justice Society** who provide community conference facilitator training to volunteers who then make themselves available to schools and juvenile justice to facilitate conferences when required.

Whilst in British Columbia, I was fortunate to meet with Martha Dow (Director) and Terry Waterhouse (Associate Director) from the **Institute of Safe Schools (BC)**. This Institute located at the University College of the Fraser Valley *brings together educators, police agencies, community organizations, students and others, to support the development and coordination of resources and research for evidence-based approaches for safe, healthy, and inclusive schools and communities.* (Media Release, 2004) Amongst their projects will

be opportunities to research into school safety and social responsibility, (through development of student surveys) and development of strategies to respond to peer victimization. This discussion was very relevant with the launch in 2004 of the National Safe Schools Framework here in Australia.

Another wonderful opportunity available to me in BC was to spend time with Michelle Tubbs (**Building Connections**) an inspiring educator and dispute resolution practitioner. Michelle has made herself available to schools as a role model of appropriate dispute resolution utilizing restorative practices. Her dialogue circles with students (although I didn't view it personally) seem to be a terrific way of allowing students, most affected by conflict, to speak and be heard in a safe environment.

Key Learnings from Canadian Experience

- Peer Mediators could support teachers and schools in the appropriate modeling and facilitation of conflict resolution processes. Appropriate training of these mediators is vital.
- Mediation and conflict resolution skills can be successfully taught to the whole student community.
- Community agencies undertaking a restorative approach to community conflict resolution can impact on community safety and give a voice to victims of crime.
- Dialogue circles are an effective tool for schools to gauge the voice of its students.

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

My time in the USA was spent visiting schools and organisations in Pennsylvania, Maryland and Minnesota. I was fortunate to be able to spend time with a number of mainstream and alternative school settings as well as community organisations undertaking a restorative approach.

Current Practices and Training in Schools - Pennsylvania

My visits to schools in Pennsylvania were enlightening. In south-east Pennsylvania, schools have access to and training support from the **International Institute of Restorative Practices** (IIRP). IIRP is a non-profit organization that provides education, consulting and research in support of the development of restorative practices around the world. The IIRP have trained the staff and supported the **Palisades school district** closely with implementation over the past few years. This training and ongoing professional development support has been invaluable to its implementation. Of most significance was the work that has been undertaken at **Palisades High School** and **Tinicum Elementary School**. Palisades High School has an alternative setting (the Academy) within the school for those students who didn't feel connected to school or who were struggling with behaviour or academic performance. This *Academy* employs five teachers, and students produce their assignments electronically. All students have a palm pilot and miniature keyboards, so all classes are paperless. At its inception 5 years ago, it was realised very quickly that if student behaviour wasn't addressed (and relationships with staff being paramount to this), then any curriculum innovation was not going to be as successful. Staff received extensive training in restorative practices and immediately saw improvements in student/staff relationships and behaviour management. In discussion with some students as to their reasons for attending the Academy and not the mainstream high school, comments like: *"it feels more like a family"*. *"we are not lectured to"* and *"we get to know each other really well as classes are small"* were common.

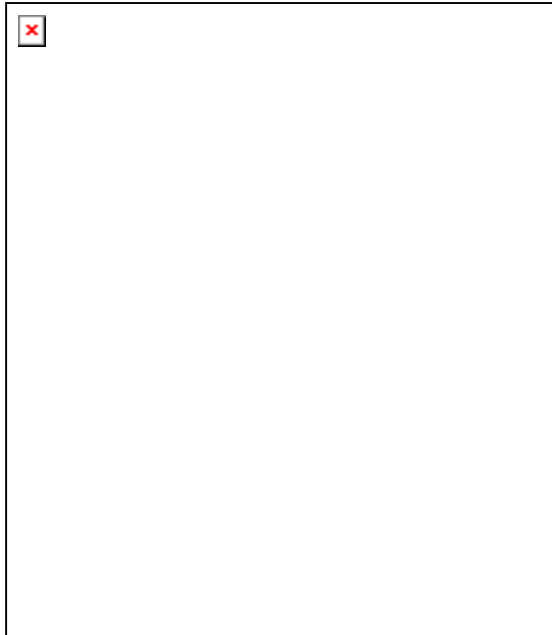
With the success of the Academy, the restorative practices were extended into the mainstream setting. A number of interested staff were trained as facilitators of conferences (mainly counselling staff) and a team was set up to take referrals from staff and students. This team are rostered on for specific sessions and are available to facilitate small and large conferences. The specialisation of this team allows teaching staff to concentrate on teaching whilst being supported by the team in behaviour management. Over the past 5 years, the IIRP staff have been available for ongoing professional development, support and advice.

Over approximately the same time period, other schools in this district were also exposed to restorative practices training via the IIRP. Tincum Elementary and **Palisades Middle School** were two such schools. Once again, there were staff in both schools with designated restorative practice responsibilities. At Palisades Middle School, this was the dean of students and at Tincum, the guidance counsellor. Their roles were two-fold – to lead the initiative and support staff with ongoing training and advice, and to be available to facilitate conferences (both big and small) when required.

An extremely important aspect of restorative practice implementation at Tincum is the support provided by the introduction of a curriculum program, called Second Step (produced by the Committee for Children – see resources). This emotional intelligence curriculum teaches pro-social skills, builds empathy and compassion, teaches problem-solving and impulse control. All elementary teachers at Tincum teach this program and feel it has enhanced the restorative practices extensively as the children have additional skills to deal with conflict. The teaching of emotional intelligence to all students is fast becoming a key component of social education in schools and is compatible with and encouraged as a curriculum component with a restorative philosophy.

An alternative school setting that also implements a restorative philosophy is the **Community Service Foundation (CSF)**. The CSF has been operating as an alternative setting for youth involved in the juvenile justice system for many years. They introduced restorative practices in the mid-nineties and operate solely along the lines of this philosophy. The young people in this setting are expected to attend classes during the morning, and afternoons are set aside to work through behavioural and social issues. Students are seated in circles and are encouraged to take responsibility, to both give and ask for support as well as help others address their behaviour. This in turn fosters in the group a strong sense of community and a strong sense of safety. As Bob Costello, Director of Training with the IIRP (2003, *Transforming School Culture*) mentions: *“Restorative practices are not new tools for the toolbox, but represent a fundamental change in the nature of relationships in schools. It is the relationships, not specific strategies, that bring about meaningful change”* The CSF have had enormous success with their alternative schools in dealing with troubled youth. Interestingly, what wasn't in evidence at this alternative school (unlike other alternative settings visited) was an alternative curriculum or at least an alternative delivery of curriculum. When querying this, it was mentioned that the school was about behaviour change first and foremost.

Whilst in Pennsylvania, I availed myself of some training in Using Circles Effectively in Schools provided by the IIRP. The Executive Director of IIRP, Ted Wachtel, devised the social discipline window, which in diagrammatic form provides a framework for restorative practices in schools.



A punitive approach to discipline is seen as doing TO young people without any involvement of the student. At the other end, is the permissive approach where students are catered FOR, once again without their involvement. Ted Wachtel speaks of the opportunity for a balance between high support and high control and working WITH our students, thus changing relationships and engaging our students. It was this premise that the training centred on, using circles in classrooms to effectively engage or work WITH our young people. When used effectively, for relationship and community building, circles can contribute to creating a classroom culture where there is a strong sense of safety and learning is more effective. It was a very practical and meaningful training.

Current Practices and Training in Schools - Maryland

There was an opportunity in Baltimore, Maryland to visit the **Community Conferencing Center** (CCC), a community organisation dedicated to resolving conflicts in communities with integrity, cost efficiency and effectiveness for all involved. They were initially set up to facilitate community conferences via referrals from the juvenile justice sector. Since its inception however, its service has expanded to schools and neighbourhoods. Alarming, during a 6 month period, Baltimore City school police (usually a police officer in every school) arrest 200 children per month! The Director of the CCC, Lauren Abramson is speaking to schools and communities to, as she says, “*get people to do the radical thing of sitting down and talking to each other*” in order to reduce the numbers of these incidents of harm and encourage schools to do things another way. They have, during 2004, introduced into schools, training for teachers in *Daily Rap* sessions. The *Daily Rap* is an opportunity for students to sit in a circle with their classmates and teacher to learn to listen, express sympathy, solve problems and share their feelings. The aim of these sessions is to build much needed relationships amongst the students and to learn how to problem solve in safe ways. I was able to sit in on two of these training sessions with school staff and was impressed with the style and nature of the training. However, I felt disillusioned with a school system that has allowed its staff to be at such a low level of morale as displayed in these sessions. Hopefully the Daily Rap session would be extended into staff rooms so staff issues were also dealt with in this way. The Community Conferencing Center is the only agency of its type in a large American city, and I wish them luck with their future endeavours.

Current Practices and Training in Schools - Minnesota

In Minnesota, I was able to visit two alternative school settings, one for youth at risk of dropping out of school (**Beaver Lake School**), and the other for young people experiencing chemical dependencies (**PEASE Academy – Peers Enjoying a Sober Education**). Both schools operate successfully on restorative principles. The aim of Beaver Lake is to “*provide an alternative education where students come first and are treated equally in a safe community*”. Positive role models incorporate a variety of teaching strategies to prepare students for life-long learning. This creates a foundation for students to be “*self-advocates, independent and to achieve their goals*”. Classes are held in circles, the curriculum is designed to, at the same time as meeting state and national testing requirements, provide

students with necessary life-skills. The Program Supervisor, Julie Koelher, is highly skilled in using restorative practices and has employed staff with similar skills. As all students attending the PEASE academy have been in chemical dependency treatment, the safety of the environment is the first concern of students, their families and staff. Both settings apply restorative principles and the process of the circle that has helped them create truly respectful, safe and student-centred schools.

Both settings accessed their training via the Minnesota Department of Education and in particular, Nancy Riestenberg. Nancy is a Prevention Specialist with the Department who has lead the way with training and support to schools since accessing a grant to pilot “restorative measures” in schools during 1999 – 2003. Many elementary, middle and high schools in the Minneapolis area accessed training during this period and implemented restorative measures in their schools. Each school employed a “restorative justice planner” with specific responsibilities in this area. Since the end of the grant cycle, 3 elementary schools are continuing with their work at the same level, however, 2 high schools lost their planners because there was no other funding available to keep the positions. Once again, schools are walking a fine line between funding and staffing, but all agreed that a staff member with designated duties made implementation much easier. All schools trained as many staff as possible and continued updating the professional development so it wasn’t seen as a one-off, but a consistent effort to sustain change. Workshops are still being held in the Minneapolis area (without funding) for schools interested in embarking on this work. These workshops are held during holiday periods

Whilst in Minneapolis, a truly great experience was spending time with a group of dedicated restorative practitioners and trainers working in schools. They are continuing the work of the original pilot study in differing ways, some as consultants and trainers working independently in schools, others in their school settings building positive school climate programs for the district and providing on-the-ground training for teachers. It was a joy to spend time with such a committed group of passionate people working in the field of restorative practices in schools.

Department of Corrections, Minnesota

The Department of Corrections in Minnesota have long being an advocate for restorative justice within juvenile justice and criminal justice. Up until recently, this department had an office to work with criminal justice/juvenile justice in dealing with young people and their wrongdoing. Unfortunately, due to budget cuts, this office is no longer, but there are still many correction officers that I had the pleasure to speak with, who are continuing to advocate for these processes in criminal justice circles. One such officer (now retired) is Kay Pranis who has co-authored “Peacemaking Circles from Crime to Community” (see resources) Kay still works as a circle trainer for community groups and a general educator in Minnesota. Kay speaks of circles as “*a form of participatory democracy that moves beyond simple majority rule.*” (Pranis, Stuart & Wedge, 2003) It is because of dedicated practitioners like Kay and her colleagues in Minnesota that the restorative justice movement continues to expand internationally.

Key Learnings from the American Experience

- A whole of school approach to restorative practices can significantly improve school culture. Data relating to a decline in discipline referrals were common.
- Smaller class sizes, interactive engaging curriculum and a restorative approach to behaviour management can significantly enhance feelings of connectedness and belonging in a school setting.

- Community agencies offering services to divert young people from the juvenile justice system can be very successful in their endeavours and costs are 10% of those required to go through the court system.
- The use of circles in classrooms can build class community, and enhance belonging and safety.

NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand has long been regarded as a pioneer of the restorative justice movement. I was delighted therefore to be able to visit New Zealand, spend time at **Massey High School** in west Auckland, and attend the **New Frontiers in Restorative Justice Conference**.

Massey High School embarked on a restorative pathway several years ago, and has developed along the way a series of restorative interventions that work. Jude Moxon, a Learning and Behaviour Resource Teacher at Massey, has developed the “Restorative Thinking Process” It relies (as with so many restorative interventions) on designated staff being available to negotiate with students a plan of supported behaviour change via a ‘restorative chat’ This practice assists teachers with the management of disruptive behaviour in the classroom, and in collaboration with the teacher, supports students to reflect on and problem-solve breaches of the school rules. This practice has been highly successful at Massey and is being modelled for schools elsewhere. I found Massey to be well versed in restorative theory and supported by staff willing to mentor other staff when required. Once again, Margaret Thorsborne (Australian trainer), starting strategically with the Deans of Schools and the leadership team facilitated the initial training. This was followed up with some awareness-raising with the whole staff and ongoing professional development sessions (facilitated locally). New staff are introduced to the “Massey Way” as part of their induction.

The New Frontiers in Restorative Justice Conference

This 3 day conference was an opportunity to meet and hear from a wide variety of well-respected restorative practitioners from across the world. It was a rewarding experience and one that won't be forgotten quickly.

Highlights included:

- Howard Zehr, (USA), known worldwide for his pioneering work in transforming our understandings of justice. He spoke about our “*need to learn from what we do wrong as much as what we do right*” – the butterflies (successes) and bullfrogs (failures)
- Prof. Joan Pennell, (Nth Carolina State University), speaking about the importance, when facilitating conferences, of participants emotional, physical and cultural safety
- Sir Charles Pollard, currently a member of the Youth Justice Board (UK), and a retired Chief Constable Thames Valley Police Sir Charles talked of restorative justice being a “*social penicillin*” in that if we take “*the infection out of the problem, so the conflict can be resolved*”
- Kay Hutchison (Canada) shared her compelling life story. Through the traumatic murder of her husband, she was able to explore the power of forgiveness and described her own quest for restorative justice.

- Dr Chris Marshall, (Victoria University, New Zealand) gave us an insight into the complexities of understanding terrorism and religious violence.
- Prof Margaret Beggood, (University of Waikato, New Zealand) shared her thoughts on linking restorative justice principles to the promotion of peace and human rights. So the principles and practices of restorative justice should be utilised not just in conflict resolution, but also in conflict prevention.

CONCLUSIONS

1. There is more to restorative practices in schools than just community conferencing. When schools implement the range of restorative practices with a view to school culture change, it can have, in turn a significant impact on the psychological, emotional and physical safety of the entire school community.
2. For restorative practices implementation in schools to be effective and sustainable, a strategic plan is required and a timeframe of 3 – 5 years. Ideally, as part of this plan, a team of dedicated staff, including a member of the leadership group, is required. This team should have responsibility for supporting and training staff and community. This would significantly assist implementation of this culture shift in schools. As any culture shift in schools is challenging, emphasis needs to be given to a structured and staged approach to the implementation of restorative practices.
3. Training for staff, parents, students and the wider community is best facilitated by high-quality practitioner-trainers in a position to support the school throughout implementation. Training should be in stages and include:
 - Awareness raising for entire staff
 - Significant training for designated staff (especially leadership) in positions which deal with behaviour management issues
 - Community conference facilitator training for a small number of staff willing to facilitate community conferences for the school and community
 - Ongoing training and mentoring for staff in the use of circles and mini-conferences
 - An opportunity for parent forums
 - Training provided for existing or new peer mediators
4. Schools embarking on a restorative practices pathway would benefit from a review of the curriculum component. The inclusion of curriculum relating to emotional intelligence, values education, civics and citizenship, discovering democracy and the protective behaviours program would significantly enhance the success of these practices.
5. As restorative practices in schools is essentially promoting positive relationships across the school community, it blends well with current educational theory and practice. The Victorian Blueprint for Government schools is a comprehensive and integrated package of educational reforms. The philosophy and practice mentioned in this report adds value to the seven Flagship Strategies of the Blueprint. In particular:
 - **Flagship Strategy 1 (Student Learning)** that the Victorian Essential Learnings Standards *are developed within three core and interrelated strands. These outline the knowledge, skills and behaviours all students should acquire if they are to successfully manage themselves and their relations with others, understand the world*

and act effectively in that world. The three strands are: Physical, Personal and Social learning; Discipline-based Learning; and Interdisciplinary Learning.

- **Flagship Strategy 3 (Building Leadership Capacity)** speaks of the importance of cultural leadership whereby, *leading the school community by defining, strengthening and articulating values and beliefs that give the school its unique identity over time.*
- **Flagship Strategy 6 (Teacher Professional Development)** mentions the necessity for *professional learning to enable teachers to enhance their content knowledge and develop skills necessary to improve the teaching-learning relationship and student learning outcomes.*

Fundamental to the Victorian Government school system is its capacity to build relationships across school communities. Restorative practices underpins student learning as it facilitates an environment of safety, trust and connectedness – all inherent aspects of a learners educational experience.

6. Of course with any fundamental change in schools, comes barriers to success, and the implementation of restorative practices is no exception here. Internationally, we face the same barriers and in most cases successfully overcome them. These barriers include:
 - **Time** : Facilitating community conferences and even some mini-conferences can be time-consuming, but implementing restorative practices is a pro-active step that can ultimately save time and energy in the long term.
 - **Funding**: In some settings, funding for training and ongoing support presents a challenge. Interestingly, though when schools are committed to this change, the funding is incorporated into everyday business.
 - **Training**: Accessing quality trainers can be challenging for some schools. As this practice becomes more mainstream, then more trainers will be available.
 - **Belief in punishment and ingrained desire for retribution**: It can be challenging to overcome attitudes that offenders/wrongdoers need to be punished for their own good. In reality, restorative practices holds offenders/wrongdoers MORE accountable to the person they have harmed and to the community.
 - **Reluctance on the part of some people to participate**: As most schools have previously solved their problems in a hierarchical, punishment manner, some staff are uncertain about the benefits of a restorative approach. However, most staff will see its benefits ten-fold over the time of the change.

This Fellowship highlighted the international aspects of restorative practices in schools and the cultural change required to shift our thinking. Even though the differences were fascinating, the similarities we experience were enlightening.

“Nothing is so powerful as an idea whose time has come.”

Victor Hugo (1802 – 1885)

Recommendations

There is no doubt that our schools could be safer places, - student and staff surveys across the country tell us this. Education departments along with the Independent and Catholic sectors are diligent in their desires to support schools with policy and practice to create safer and more supportive schools. This is evident with the launch during 2004 of the federal government's *National Safe Schools Framework*. Despite the fact that restorative practices in schools is still emerging as a worthwhile initiative, there is overwhelming evidence to indicate that the broad use of restorative practices in schools has an impact on levels of safety. (Bitel, 2001, Cameron & Thorsborne, 2001, Morrison 2002, Shaw & Wierenga, 2002) As an educational community we need to take note of this research and look further than extending traditional forms of behaviour management.

As mentioned in Blood & Thorsborne (2005), effective culture change in schools to embed this approach requires a staged approach including:

- Stage 1 – Gaining Commitment – Capturing the Hearts and Minds
- Stage 2 – Developing a Shared Vision – Knowing where we are going and why
- Stage 3 – Developing Responsive and Effective Practice – Changing how we do things.
- Stage 4 – Developing a whole school approach – Putting it all together.
- Stage 5 – Professional Relationships – Walking the talk with each other.

For this to be supported in schools, high-quality trainers are required. As this training cannot be successfully gained academically, it is recommended that current restorative practitioners are encouraged to make themselves available to schools and be supported state-wide and nation wide by an Australasian Association.

An *Australasian Association of Restorative Justice Practitioners* is to be established throughout Australia, New Zealand and part of Asia during 2005. This will enable restorative practitioners an opportunity to network and build on current expertise.

There is a need to pursue with our Teacher Registration bodies and educational institutions discussions around including a restorative justice/behaviour management component as part of pre-service teachers' education.

Investigate funding opportunities to produce Australian training videos/DVDs to support the training of restorative practices in schools.

As part of my role within the Department of Education & Training I intend to disseminate the findings and recommendations of this fellowship widely with schools, organizations, networks and the juvenile justice sector. I will be actively introducing schools to the philosophy, and with implementation, via initial and ongoing training and support. I welcome the opportunity to work closely with the Department of Education & Training, and will be presenting my findings at conferences and to groups of interested staff as required. I will continue to pursue opportunities to strengthen our practices to improve the emotional, physical and psychological safety for all members of the school community.

RESOURCES

ORGANISATIONS AND WEBSITES

Fraser Region Community Justice Initiatives Association	www.cjibc.org
Restorative Justice Consortium, UK	www.restorativejustice.org.uk/
Community Conferencing Center, Baltimore, Maryland	www.communityconferencingcenter.org
Transforming Conflict (Belinda Hopkins)	www.transformingconflict.co.uk
Real Justice (USA)	www.realjustice.org
International Institute of Restorative Practices	www.iirp.org/
Youth Justice Board (UK)	www.youth-justice-board.gov.uk
Margaret Thorsborne & Associates	www.thorsborne.com.au
Committee for Children (Second Step)	www.cfchildren.org/
Minnesota Department of Education	www.education.state.mn.us
Protective Behaviours UK	www.protectivebehaviours.com
Children's Protection Society (PBs – Victoria)	www.cps.org.au
Conflict Resolution at New Westminster SC (British Columbia, Canada)	www.freewebs.com/mediation/

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Smith, C. (2003) *Introducing Circle Time to Secondary Students: A Seven Lesson Programme for 11 to 12 year olds*, Lucky Duck Publishing, London

Wachtel, T. (1999) "Restorative Justice in Everyday Life: Beyond the Formal Ritual", In *Reshaping Australian Institutions Conference: Restorative Justice and Civil Society*, Australian National University, Canberra, Feb. 16-18, 1999

Zehr, H. (2002) *The Little Book of Restorative Justice*, Good Books, Pennsylvania

RESOURCES to support schools with implementation

Heart Masters – A series of teacher resources, cards and activities to build resilience, and emotional intelligence in students. Available: www.inyahead.com.au

Conversation Peace: Restorative Action in Secondary Schools – Workbook and Trainer Manual. Available: www.cjibc.org

St Luke's Innovative Resources – A series of books and cards to develop strengths and resilience in young people. Available: www.innovativeresources.org

McGrath, H. Noble, T, *Bounce Back* – A series of 4 teacher resource books to support the teaching or resilience. Available: Pearson Education

Second Step – A program that teaches social and emotional skills. Available: www.cfchildren.org/ssf

Glossary of Terms

Community Conference - A community conference brings together, in the wake of a serious incident of harm, the offender and his or her victim(s) along with their families, and appropriate school personnel. Conducted by a trained facilitator, a series of scripted questions is directed in order to understand and explore the incident and the effects of the incident on the community. An agreement is reached whereby all participants feel there has been some restitution and restoration.

Learning Mentor – A qualified teacher working in a non-teaching role to improve the educational outcomes of underachievers – staff support these young people and their families and refer them onto community agencies when needed. (England)

Dean of School – Refers to a leading teacher with responsibility for a sub-school grouping within a large secondary college (New Zealand)

Dean of Students – A member of the school's leadership team with direct responsibility to all students, similar in some ways to the roles of Assistant Principals. (USA)

Learning Behaviour and Resource Teacher – A teacher employed to directly influence the ongoing behaviour management of a large secondary college (New Zealand)

Guidance Counsellor – Guidance Officer/Psychologist with responsibility for working with at-risk young people and referring them onto community agencies when required (USA)

Head Teacher – School Principal (England)

