

# Imagine Newsletter

A School Climate Approach to Bullying Prevention

Information for School Staff

Issue # 12

## Restorative Justice

### What is Restorative Justice & Restorative Practice?

**Restorative Justice** is an approach to responding to wrongdoing and conflict with a balanced focus on the offender, victim and community. By collectively identifying and addressing harms, needs, and obligations resulting from wrongdoing, offenders are able to put things right again and initiate healing.

**Restorative Practice** is any strategy or intervention that supports the Restorative Justice philosophy. It allows for everyone to have a voice, to share their stories and to be actively involved in resolving issues that are causing harm to relationships.



**Restorative Justice & Restorative Practice** puts repairing harm done to relationships and people over and above the need for assigning blame and dispensing punishment.

The restorative approach is based on the belief that the best people to resolve a conflict or bullying situation are the people directly involved. Imposed solutions are less effective, less educative, and less likely to be honoured. Let's compare.....

Current model of justice ....	Restorative model of justice ...
Asks: "What rule have you broken?"	Asks: "Who have you hurt? What relationship harmed?"
Focuses on the offence with blame & guilt	Focuses on taking responsibility and making amends
Punishment decided externally	Plans for repairing harm decided on by all affected
Focuses on the offender and incident	Focuses on the victim and reconciliation
Offender removed from community, e.g. expulsion	Offender remains in community, with supports



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## Benefits for children who bully:

- They can see clearly what they have done
- They can see how their behavior caused harm to others
- They learn to empathize
- They are given the opportunity to make amends & reconnect with the community

## Benefits for children who are bullied:

- They have an opportunity to share their story
- They can feel safe again
- They can let go of the past and move on (Forgiveness may be an outcome, but it cannot be forced)

## Benefits for the school:

- Reduced bullying and other conflicts, exclusions and suspensions
- Increased skill-building in the areas of relationship literacy, i.e. negotiation, problem-solving, and conflict resolution
- If bystanders are included, they can see the effect their "non-action" has had on the situation
- It helps to build a school community that is safer and more caring

### Training In Restorative Justice Practices

Community Justice Initiatives of Waterloo Region  
49 Queen St. North, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor; Kitchener, Ontario N2H 2G9  
519-744-6549 Website: [www.cjwr.com](http://www.cjwr.com)

### Resources

"Restorative Justice: Transforming Society"  
by Arthur Lockhart & Lynn Zammit  
- available from [www.inclusion.com](http://www.inclusion.com)

### Web Sites

Conflict Resolution Network Canada [www.crnetwork.ca](http://www.crnetwork.ca)  
The Centre for Restorative Justice, SFU [www.sfu.ca/crj](http://www.sfu.ca/crj)  
The Nation Centre for Restorative Justice in Education [www.transformingconflict.org](http://www.transformingconflict.org)



Region of Waterloo  
PUBLIC HEALTH

For more information, contact Region of Waterloo Public Health 519-883-2003 ext. 5356

[www.region.waterloo.on.ca/bullying](http://www.region.waterloo.on.ca/bullying)