Restorative Practices

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from Maralise Hood Quan,
Executive Director

Restoring relationships - that is what makes a community.

We differ, we disagree, and we HAVE a choice! We can choose to avoid those who live and think differently, segregate ourselves to interact only with those who think and look like us, or we can choose to listen, learn from one another, and deepen our relationships. We ARE in relationships — and that is life affirming and messy. This issue of our newsletter shares with you some of the insights we have gathered as we explore Restorative Practices.

Since last year, CDR has had the honor of accompanying the community of staff, faculty and administrators of Tacoma Community College to the kind of leadership and culture they want to foster in their organization. CDR has worked side by side in restoring their relationships while respecting each and every human on campus that supports students succeeding in our community. We salute the college for leading our community in all aspects of Restorative Practices.

Quotable Quotes

“Restorative justice says “No, the offense affected a relationship” and what you are seeking for is to restore the relationship, to heal the relationship.”
—Desmond Tutu, social rights activist & bishop

“Crime is a violation of people and relationships. It creates obligations to make things right. Justice involves the victim, the offender, and the community in search for solutions which promote repair, reconciliation, and reassurance.”
—Howard Zehr, criminologist

“I think that we have to own the fears that we have of each other, and then, in some practical way, some daily way, figure out how to see people differently than the way we were brought up to.”
—Alice Walker, novelist & activist

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The philosophy of restorative practices requires a crucial paradigm shift; replace punishment with engagement and investment in the relationships that create a sense of belonging that will influence a learner to want to comply with behavior expectations. Instead of a kid in trouble, think of a kid in struggle. The profound research into Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) suggest that learning stops when fear or suffering is used for compliance, especially if the learner has experienced trauma. Engaging the spirit, mind and body of each and every learner is the goal of restorative practices.

Human connections—every human is dependent on others. I expect this from you, you expect this from me, and when we live up to our expectations we both thrive! So how much do we invest in our capacity to connect? Where do we learn the skills and the expectations of being member of a group?

We learn in our families… yet each family defines membership rules in different ways. Then we send our children to school and expect that all will learn how to connect, even overcoming huge differences in expectations, skills, and approaches to interactions. We expect them to comply with the new rules of this new community, and if they don’t we “discipline” them or punish them until they learn the “right” way to do things.

Studies show that an investment in creating positive connections, building relationships, and expressing clear expectations will pay a return on the investment with compliance through self-regulation of behavior, peer engagement in positive interactions, and motivation to learn and enjoy each other’s different perspectives.

Imagine a room with a circle of chairs and a teacher, standing. In walks a group of twenty 12-year olds and the teacher sits down, along with all of the kids. One student, that day’s “circle keeper”, adds a spring flower to the centerpiece and invites everyone to share a story of spring. Each student shares something personal, all students listen intently, and at the end of the circle there is a palpable difference in the room. They are engaged! The students are calm, a sense of community is building, and there is enjoyment of each other’s company.

This community-building circle is the foundation of restorative practices. The goal is to create a community that is inclusive, supportive and enjoyable. Thus in the future, when one student cannot control their behavior and disrupts the class room, they disrupt this sense of community. Everyone understands what they need to restore: being in a relationship based upon respect, inclusion, and enjoyment.

Restorative practice is achieved through a series of steps that can be used in a variety of settings to respond to diverse needs of a group or individual. The first step is to create a community that is enjoyable enough that each member is willing to protect it and to want to work to return to the circle when a harm has been done. Each group practices and cultivates their ability to be in community on a daily basis. The continuum increases formality along the way, starting with informal mindfulness, restorative dialog, respectful agreements, collaborative and proactive solutions, daily circles, peer-mediation, restorative circles, re-entry circles, mediation, and formal conference.

Restorative practices presented as a methodology can address discipline issues within a school. Restorative practices at the national level is a way to change systems with disproportionate discipline and inequity. The continuum of practice allows for trauma-informed approaches to each child in the classroom. Teachers find greater focus and productivity in the room and schools measure less referrals to principal’s office, suspensions and truancies. Students measure success as creating a respectful and safe environment to learn and thrive as actors in their education.
The Center for Dialog & Resolution joins with twenty other dispute resolution centers around the state of Washington as a resource for training, coaching and support to apply restorative practices in our educational institutions. We have 45 professional trainers and coaches who have a common methodology and commitment to each of our communities.

The State of Washington addresses a variety of crucial issues in our educational institutions, but a foundational problem that hinders success is the rate of disproportionate discipline for certain groups of students. The paradigm shift inherent in Restorative Practices directly addresses this issue by building relationships that engage students in self-regulation. Once motivated, students comply with the behavior norms in the classroom. Research on adverse childhood experiences and trauma-informed education recognizes restorative practices as an essential tool in improving our students’ learning experience and success.

We are working with the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Education Service Districts to create a standardized range of practices and to find fidelity in the application. We are available to explore the restorative practices our schools are already using and to discover ways we can offer further tools or support training.

As a learning institution, we believe learners of all ages can benefit from the powerful relationship and community building tools inherent in restorative practices. For example, we recently had the honor of working with the faculty and staff of a prominent college as they explored and defined their shared vision of a learning community. Through a respectful and interactive process of listening intently, learning from one another, speaking with clarity, and identifying supportive interactions and structures, the group was able to agree upon a vision that would allow them to work in a fulfilling manner towards student success. It was also a learning experience for our mediators who continue to learn new skills and expand their knowledge of community.

If you would like more information about restorative practices and ways your institution or organization could use these practical tools, please contact us at info@centerforresolution.org! Jen Unger or Maralise Hood Quan are ready to help share these skills and fulfill our goal of a community where conflicts are resolved peacefully.
How to disagree AND stay friends

Have you heard of Daryl Davis, the blues musician who has entered into dialog and been developing friendships with members of the KKK? His work is showcased in the movie “Accidental Courtesy”, which tells the story of how he engaged in curious and respectful dialog with people who believed anyone of African American descent to be inferior and without constitutional rights. If he can do that, imagine what you can do to develop powerful relationships with your friends and family who think differently than you!

We have all experienced these thoughts: “How can you say that?” “How can you believe that?” “How can you think that?” “How can we relate to one another if we act, think, and believe so differently?” The realization that people you know can think so differently can rock us to our core and scare us into silence. Just consider the conversations that were avoided over the holidays!

The key is connection. We as humans need connections and relationships as much as we need to learn and grow. When confronted with a severe disagreement with a friend or family member, what do you do?

Get curious! Here is a person you care for. They are expressing something so opposed to your own feelings that your first instinct is to step away. Try getting curious. Rather than trying to change their minds, change your question. What does the world look like from their perspective? Avoid judging with “right” and “wrong” thoughts. Remind yourself that trying to understand does not mean you have to agree.

Respect is easy when we agree, but how about being respectful when we disagree? As long as both parties are willing to respect and accept the rights of everyone to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, a powerful exchange of ideas and perspectives is possible.
Settlement Conference Training – August 10th, 9:00am – 1:00pm
Customer Service Training – September 19th - 20th, 9:00am – 5:00pm
5-day Mediation Training – September 29th – October 1st, October 13th & 14th 8:30am – 5:30pm
SAVE THE DATE!!!
CENTER FOR DIALOG & RESOLUTION ANNUAL FRIEND & FUNDRAISER
– October 19th; 7:30am – 8:30am

Ways to Help

Are you interested in supporting CDR, but don’t have the time to volunteer? Gifts-in-kind are tax deductible donations that help keep our center running smoothly. Since we’ve made our big move, there are several items we need to make the center complete. You can find a list of current needs below, as well as a link to our current Amazon wishlist.
https://www.amazon.com/gp/registry/wishlist/23TNAWY070IVP/ref=cm_sw_su_w

Clocks
28” or 50” TV screens
Surface tablets
Trash cans

Computers/monitors
Lamps & Lighting
Gift cards from: Office Depot/Office Max, Best Buy, Costco, Amazon

717 Club

Have you heard? We’ve launched the 717 Club!
Members of the 717 Club honor and promote values of civil dialog, such as respect, integrity, positive communication, and open-mindedness.

All who donate $717 or more during 2016-2017 join the 717 Club as Charter Members! Your investment is key to the Center’s sustainability. Members receive a welcome packet, a charter pin, public recognition, access to CDR’s resource center, and invitations to public and private events. Many of you have already joined and will soon receive your welcome packet.

717 Club members become a part of the ripple effect. Each person who experiences CDR services is another person who commits to approaching difficult conversations with respect and understanding, which creates a greater impact on the people around them. This ripple effect can help our community grow for generations, and as a member, you start your own ripple effect and watch it grow!

If you are interested in joining, please call us at (253) 572-3657 or stop by. You truly make a difference!
**From a Diamond**

Hi, I am **Vicki Diamond** from the Board of Directors of the Center for Dialog & Resolution. Hope this edition of Discourse finds you all enjoying the summer season with family and friends.

I am retired after spending 31+ years as a manager with Pierce County Government. I not only enjoyed my position, but those that I worked with for many years. As part of my ever-continuing education goals, I took the Mediation Training from the Center of Dialog and Resolution. I found through the training that there were many facets that one needed to grasp and implement to perform mediation. I recalled those skills when dealing with adversity or opposing positions within and outside of the work environment. The training served me well.

When called upon to become a Board Member, I was honored to be part of such a grand nonprofit organization. The Center’s Vision, Goals and Values are to serve the community that we all live in. How much better can it get? I wanted to be part of that ever growing system and work with such dedicated staff, and volunteers. As Albert Einstein once said "**Try not to become a person of success, rather become a person of value.**" The Center has a strong foundation because it is comprised of these types of individuals.

**Funding Partners**

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- The Woodworth Family Foundation
- The Florence B. Kilworth Foundation
Learning to Navigate Home Waters

As part of a restorative justice training, five teenagers with their parents signed up for our training as a way to avoid entering the juvenile court system because of a transgression. Both teens and parents arrived sullen and NOT happy to be at our center. Participants spent 3 hours interacting through skits and exercises. The last exercise was for each parent and child to practice “listening and summarizing” each other. One mother talked first about how she felt about her teen’s messy room. When it was the child’s turn to talk, he chose a subject about an incident at school. As the dialog again turned to the mother, she opened her mouth and no words came out. She burst into tears, crying, “I can’t summarize you because as soon as you started talking, I thinking about how I did not agree with you… and I quit listening. I wonder when was the last time I actually heard what you say to me?” Both cried together, hugged, and the mom asked if they could have a redo – a redo to practice listening to hear and understand.

We all left feeling that one family had new tools to help navigate the tough waters ahead of them… together.

DID YOU KNOW the Center for Dialog & Resolution has meeting rooms for rent? Are you looking for a space to host a meeting, training, or an event? Let us know! Contact our office manager at operations@centerforresolution.org for more information!