

# Restorative Practices at a Glance

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## Definition

Restorative practices (RP) are intended to involve all parties affected by a specific offense or situation in order to **understand and address** the problem. They aim to ensure the **needs, harms, and obligations** are addressed in an effort to collectively heal and ensure things are made right.<sup>1</sup>

The principle and goal are simple: to create an environment in which individuals work *with* authority figures rather than *for* them, which encourages individuals to **work collaboratively to make positive changes** and ensure wrongdoings are corrected in a way that benefits all parties.<sup>2</sup>

## Quick Facts - RP is:

- The core of trauma-informed, equitable, and effective approaches.<sup>3</sup>
- Repairing damaged relationships.<sup>4</sup>
- Infusing learning communities with a sense of belonging and strong relationships.<sup>5</sup>
- Identifying conflict as an opportunity to improve and strengthen relationships.<sup>6</sup>
- Developing accountability, cooperation, problem-solving, and trust.<sup>7</sup>

## Misunderstandings - RP is Not:

- A zero-tolerance methodology.<sup>7</sup>
- Avoidance of accountability or consequences.<sup>7</sup>
- A short-term solution.<sup>8</sup>
- Ignoring bad behavior.<sup>9</sup>

## Did You Know:

- When implemented comprehensively, **restorative practices have many benefits** including improved climate and safety, increased school connectedness, the development of conflict resolution skills, improved academic performance, and social emotional learning.<sup>10</sup>



- A restorative approach in a school shifts the emphasis from managing behavior to focusing on the **building, nurturing, and repairing of relationships**.<sup>11</sup>
- Studies regarding the effectiveness of school-based restorative programs suggest such programs not only decrease suspensions but also the number of fights and other violent acts, the amount of substance abuse, and the number of police visits to the school.<sup>9,12-13</sup>

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## About the National Center for School Safety

The National Center for School Safety (NCSS) is a Bureau of Justice Assistance-funded training and technical assistance center at the University of Michigan School of Public Health. As a multidisciplinary, multi-institutional center focused on improving school safety and preventing school violence, the NCSS team is composed of national leaders in criminal justice, education, social work, and public health with expertise in school safety research and practice. NCSS provides comprehensive and accessible support to Students, Teachers, and Officers Preventing (STOP) School Violence grantees and the school safety community nationwide to address today's school safety challenges. NCSS serves as the national training and technical assistance provider for the STOP School Violence Program.

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