

Implementing Restorative Practices At Home

A Guide for Families and Caregivers



St. Leonard's
community services
LONDON & REGION

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Welcome to the Restorative Practices Family and Caregiver guide!

This booklet will provide you with some information about Restorative Practices and share some skills with you that can be implemented in your home!

We recognize that many of you are already using Restorative Practices in your home. This guide will provide you and your family with some practical tools to help improve communication, navigate conflict and strengthen relationships!

“

People are happier, more cooperative and productive, and more likely to make positive changes in behavior when those in positions of authority do things WITH them, rather than TO them or FOR them.

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”



Table of Contents

- 1 Welcome
- 3 Understanding Key Terminology
- 4 What are Restorative Practices?
- 5 Restorative Practice Values and Beliefs
- 6 Social Discipling Window
- 7 Social Discipline and Parenting Styles
- 8 Authoritarian Vs. Restorative Approaches
- 9 Restorative Questions (For someone who has caused harm)
- 11 Restorative Questions (For someone who has experienced harm)
- 13 Affective Statements
- 14 Social Media and Conflict
- 18 Family/Household Agreement
- 19 Family Circles
- 20 Being Restorative at Home
- 21 About This Resource
- 22 Local Resources



Understanding Key Terminology

It is important to understand the difference between conflict and bullying.

Taking the time to listen to your child/youth to determine what their perception and experience has been and connecting with the school to have a fuller understanding of the situation is important to be able to address it together and best support your child/youth.

Conflict occurs when there is a disagreement between two or more people. These disagreements can be difference of opinions or different views. Even though there might be conflict between students, that does not always mean bullying is occurring.¹



Bullying is aggressive behavior that is repeated over time. It is meant to cause harm, fear or distress or create a negative environment at school for another person. Bullying occurs in a situation where there is a real or perceived power imbalance. *For the full definition please see the Education Act at www.e-laws.gov.on.ca*



Cyber-bullying is the act of engaging in bullying behaviors through electronic means such as social media platforms, email, text or direct messaging, digital gaming and/or communication applications.¹



Harassment involves unwanted physical or verbal behaviour that offends or humiliates another person. Generally, harassment is a behaviour that persists over time.²



It is important to understand that a restorative process should not proceed if there are concerns that need to be addressed first. This may include:

Bullying or Harassment (one-sided, ongoing and repetitive abuse of power) and **Serious Mental Health Concerns**

For further information please contact your school administrator or see TVDSB/LDCSB's mental health and wellbeing page for additional resources.

1. Thames Valley District School Board. 2023. Bullying Prevention and Intervention. Safe Schools - Family and Caregivers. Retrieved from <https://www.tvdsb.ca/en/parents/safe-schools-families-and-caregivers.aspx>

2. Canadian Human Rights Commission. 2020. "What is harassment?". Retrieved from <https://www.chrc-ccdp.gc.ca/en/about-human-rights/what-harassment>

What are Restorative Practices?

The International Institute of Restorative Practices define **Restorative Practices** as a field within the social sciences that studies how to strengthen relationships between individuals as well as social connections within communities.

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A framework that acknowledges that relationships are central to building community.

Collaborative problem solving with a focus on addressing the harms and coming to a resolution.

Establishes HIGH expectations with HIGH support. Emphasis on doing things WITH individuals instead of TO or FOR them.

Ensures equity of voices so that each student can share their story and perspective.

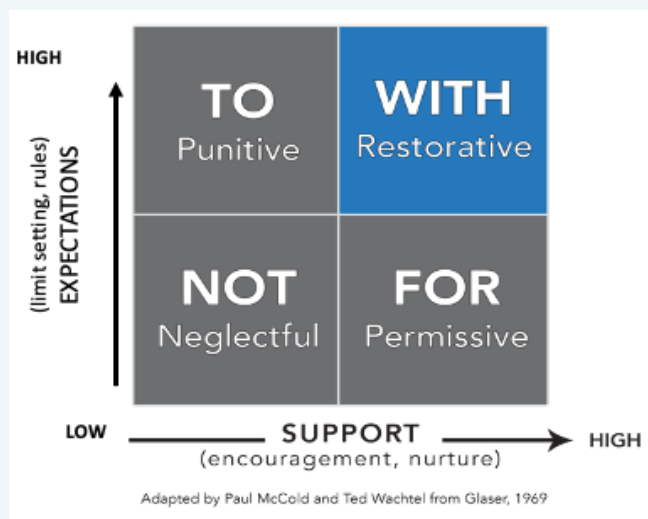
Underlying Values and Beliefs of The Restorative Approaches Team at SLCS

- Mutual respect
- Character development
- Acceptance of responsibility
- Acceptance of diversity
- The belief that people have the capacity to change
- The belief that given time, support and a chance to explain and learn, that problems can be resolved
- The importance of an inclusive and safe approach to problem solving where the needs, values, and goals of all involved are considered
- Building and maintaining respectful relationships



Social Discipline Window

This graphic is called the Social Discipline Window. When plotted on a graph measuring Expectations on one side and Supports on another there are four possible ways of **how people in positions of authority interact with others**. Depending on social roles, people who may be in positions of authority over your child/youth include: parents, caregivers, supervisors, teachers, coaches, etc.



©International Institute for Restorative Practices.

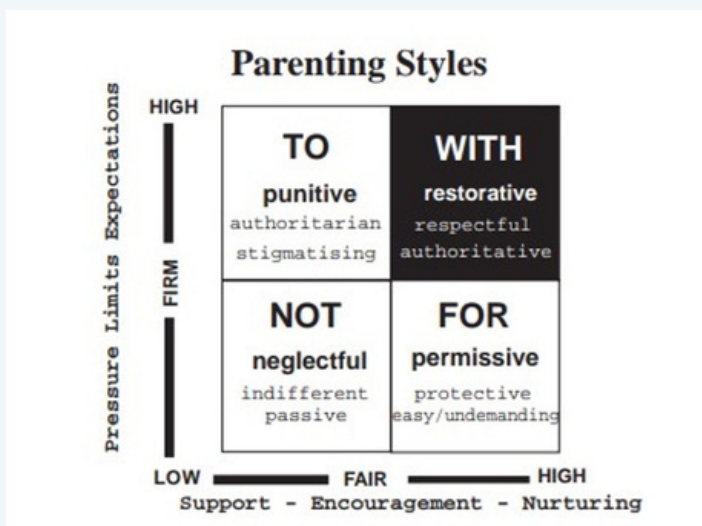
- The box on the top left shows a person who has very high expectations but offers very low support and so is working from a **Punitive** or **Authoritarian** place, and does things **TO** people
- On the bottom right corner, a person who offers very high support but has very low expectations is **Permissive** and does things **FOR** people
- On the bottom left would be a person who has very low expectations and offers little to no support and is therefore **Neglectful** and is **NOT** doing things to or for others
- On the top right is a person who has high expectations and offers high support to meet those expectations is **RESTORATIVE** and works **WITH** others, is the one that we are striving for by using Restorative Practices

This are not to say that there aren't situations where we each might choose to use these other relational styles, such as safety etc.

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Social Discipline Window and Parenting Styles

In thinking about when a child or youth comes home and shares an incident or conflict at school, often a first response is to react impulsively and in the defense of our child, which may escalate the situation before we have all of the information. We may want to address the situation in a blaming or punitive response towards our own child or others involved. It is our experience that often when youth relay incidents at home, the accountability for their part (or at least an understanding that there may be other contributing factors or perspectives) may not yet have been explored.



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With a restorative mindset and utilizing restorative language, the hope is to slow down this reaction. By working through the restorative questions (see pg. 10) to explore the situation further WITH your child/youth and also working WITH their school administrators and staff to ensure that all voices and perspectives are respected, heard and understood and clear expectations for all are then in place to move forward.

Authoritarian vs Restorative Approach

The chart below outlines differences in an Authoritarian approach to addressing conflict compared to a Restorative approach.

	Authoritarian Approach	Restorative Approach
Focus	Rule-breaking; blame or guilt; adversarial processes; punishment to deter; and impersonal processes	Harm done to individuals; responsibility and problem-solving; dialogue and negotiation; repair, apology and reparation; and interpersonal processes
Outcome	Needs of those affected are often ignored and unmet needs behind the behavior are ignored	Needs of those affected are addressed and unmet needs behind the behavior are addressed
Accountability	Being punished	Putting things right ²

Carpenter, C. 2017. Quick Start Guide to Restorative Approaches in the Classroom for Teachers. *International Institute for Restorative Practices.*

An Authoritarian approach focuses on who is to blame for the conflict and uses punishment to try and correct the behaviour. With an Authoritarian approach, the needs of those who have been affected by the conflict are often unmet and/or ignored.

However, when using a Restorative approach, we can focus on the harm that has been done, and allow both sides to share how the conflict has impacted them. From here, we can start to address some of the unmet needs that may have caused the negative behaviour.



Restorative Questions for Someone Who Has Caused Harm

These are some questions that you can ask your child/youth when addressing challenging behaviours.

What happened?

What were you thinking at the time?

What have you thought about since?

Who else may have been affected by what you have done?

In what way?

What do you think you need to do to make things right?

How can I support you?

Guiding your child/youth through a Restorative conversation

1

Start by asking them **“What happened”** and allow them to share their experience of the conflict with you.



2

Next, ask them **“What were you thinking at the time?”** followed by **“What have you thought about since?”** This will guide your child/youth through sharing their feelings and perceptions from the past to present.



3

Then ask your youth **“Who else may have been affected?”** You may ask them to consider who else was present during the conflict and might have been impacted by actions, words, and disruptions. Ask them **“In what way”** these individuals were impacted.



4

Finally, ask **“What do you think you need to do to make things right?”** Allow them to take some time to consider what actions they need to take to repair some of the harm that has been done.



Restorative Questions for Someone Who Has Been Harmed By Others Actions

These are some questions that you can ask your child/youth when they have been harmed by others' actions.

What did you think when you realized what happened?

What impact has this incident had on you and others?

What has been the hardest thing for you?

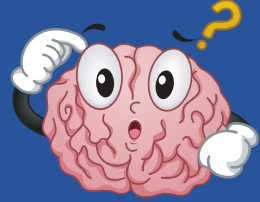
What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

How can I support you?

Guiding your child/youth through a Restorative conversation

1

Start by asking them **“What did you think when you realized what happened?”** and allow them to share their experience of the conflict with you.



2

Next, ask them **“What impact has this incident had on you and others?”** Allow them to share their feelings about the incident and discuss who else may have been involved and impacted.



3

Then ask your youth **“What has been the hardest thing for you?”** Ask them to consider all the ways the conflict has impacted them, and share their feelings/perspectives regarding the most difficult aspect of the conflict.



4

Finally, ask **“What do you think needs to happen to make things right?”** Allow them to take some time to consider what they need to be able to move past the conflict. Often, an agreement can help establish things that need to happen to move forward.



Affective Statements

Affective Statements are brief statements about the impact of another person's behavior. They are usually done in the form of "I statements," and they encourage people to clearly verbalize how they are feeling in relation to another person's behavior.

Affective statements can be used proactively or responsively, and they provide clear feedback, set boundaries, redirect unwanted behavior, and teach empathy.



"**I feel** frustrated when you do something I have asked you not to do."
or "**I feel** proud when I see you sharing your toys with your sibling"

Affective Sentence Creation

When I see/hear _____ .
(state the behavior)

I feel _____ .

Because I need _____

And what I'd like is/I am going to ask you to _____ .
(name the action)

How can I best support you?

Social Media and The Digital Age



Social media can be a great way for your child/youth to stay connected with their friends, and provides them with a variety of benefits such as:

Increased access to information worldwide, enhancing knowledge, understanding, and progress

Enhanced opportunities for cross-cultural interactions, social support, and critical thinking skills

Opportunities for enhanced social communication, such as connecting with friends and family, engaging in community events, and networking

Growth of ideas from access to articles, blogs, podcasts, music, etc.

Identity exploration and development

It is important to respect your own boundaries and others' boundaries on social media. Here are some tips:

Respecting Yourself and Others

- Don't post pictures of others without their permission
- Don't post offensive things
- Keep personal issues off social media
- Don't try to embarrass people
- Never post when you're angry



Social Media Safety Tips



Since conflict is a natural part of life, it is possible that your youth will experience some form of conflict online.



When a conflict occurs, individuals may use social media to continue the conflict by sending messages, commenting on posts, sharing pictures etc. to fuel the conflict.

It is important to talk with your child/youth about how they can stay safe, and what to do when conflicts arise online.

Tips to stay safe online:

- Have a different password of each account (have a password on your cell phone in case you lose it or someone takes it)
- Do not share your password with anyone
- Use privacy settings
- Don't send anything you don't want becoming public
- Be selective and careful who you accept as friends
- Limit access to can view your location
- Block and/or report accounts and content that are negative or hurtful
- Seek help from a trusted adult when conflict is occurring online



Encourage your child/youth to consider these questions before posting or sending something:

- Is this how I want people to see me?
- Could somebody use this to hurt me?
- Would I be upset if they shared it with others?
- What is the worst thing that could happen if I shared this?

Social Media and Conflict

While the digital age has many benefits, it is important to educate your child/youth on some of the possible risks.

Risks to online activities include:

- Predators
- Cyberbullying
- Damage to relationships or reputation
- Potential for discipline from School or Parents
- Charges with the Police
- Identity theft



A statistics Canada study found that 25% of teens aged 12-17 reported experiencing cyberbullying in the previous year (Hango, 2023). **The risk of cyberbullying has been found to be much lower when parents are aware of what kinds of activities their child/youth are engaging in online.** We encourage you to have conversations with your child/youth about safe social media use and when to seek help from a trusted adult.

The Effects of Conflict May Cause...

- An increase in anxiety
- Poor academic outcomes
- A person to lash out and become aggressive
- A person to avoid social situations/school
- Low self esteem and self-loathing, etc

So have your child/youth consider...

- Would the adults in my life, (parents, relatives, teachers, coaches and future employers) think this is appropriate?
- Could this get me into trouble at school or with the law?
- Who might be hurt or embarrassed by this content?
- Does this give any information about me or another person that should not be shared?
- How could this impact my future opportunities?

Social Media and Conflict

It is very important that you encourage your child/youth to do the following:

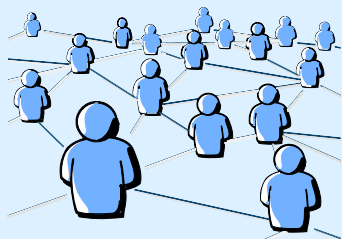
- Seek out and accept assistance from School Staff/Community/Home
- Talk to their parent/caregiver
- Talk to a coach or an adult they trust
- Friends are GREAT but don't always give the best advice



Believe that we are all capable of positive change!

- Taking responsibility for our mistakes
- Making amends
- Forgiving someone who has hurt us
- Moving on from old wounds
- Building healthy relationships and more self-esteem

Accept that it is a NORMAL part of life that conflicts happen and that friendships shift and change!



If you would like to learn more about cyberbullying and online conflict, please refer to TVDSB/LDCSB's Family Well-Being Community Workshop Series Session 'Combatting Cyberbullying: Internet Safety for Caregivers' by London Police Service for more information.

Family / Household Agreement

A family/household agreement can include things that your household values, and how you want to treat each other. Try to list the positive behaviors you would like to see, instead of the negatives you are trying to avoid. You can refer back to this agreement at any time and make changes to reflect what your household currently values and needs, ensuring to ask all family members for their input.

On the back of this booklet you will find space to write your own family/household agreement.

Here are some ideas for what you could include:

- Treat each other with respect
- Think the best of each other
- Listen actively when others are speaking
- Be patient and kind with each other



When children and caregivers actively participate in the creation of an agreement they are more likely to positively change their behaviours!



Each family/household agreement will be different depending on your household's values!

Family Circles

Circles create a space for all voices to be heard when making decisions or working through conflicts that impact everyone. This process helps all family members feel included and valued. As a result, family members are often more accountable and invested in a positive outcome and meaningful change as they have contributed to the decision making process.

Tips for Success!

- Pick a time for the Circle where you will not be rushed or disrupted
- Review your Family Agreement at the beginning of the Circle to remind each other how you have agreed to treat each other
- Utilize a talking piece that is special to your family which will indicate whoever is holding the piece has the floor to speak while others listen
- Open the Circle with an icebreaker question such as “What was the highlight of your week?”
- Ensure that the Family Agreement is being followed throughout the Circle to ensure everyone is being respected
- Thank everyone at the end for participating well, and have something positive planned after the Circle such as food or a family activity



Being Restorative at Home

Here are a few key takeaways from this manual that will help you be restorative at home!

Approach conflicts at home utilizing Restorative Practices. Try to ask more questions (avoid assigning blame or being punitive).

Practice using the Restorative Questions, Affective Statements, Family Agreements, and Family Circles at home.

Encourage everyone to remain calm, and listen to how people have been impacted. Focus on positive change and repairing harm.

Remember to seek supports for yourself! We can't help others without helping ourselves first!



About This Resource and References

This resource was created by the St. Leonard's Restorative Approaches School-Based Services Team.

St. Leonard's is a proud community partner of TVDSB and LDCSB, working with students and staff to build and strengthen relationships leading to a community where everyone feels safe, valued and supported.



St. Leonard's Community Services

www.slcs.ca

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Local Resources

St. Leonard's Community Services

www.slcs.ca
519-850-3777
405 Dundas Street, London, ON
N6B 1V9

Kids Help Phone:

<https://kidshelpphone.ca/>
1-800-668-6868

Craigwood Youth Services

www.craigwood.ca
+1 519-432-2623

CMHA Middlesex

<https://cmhatv.ca/>
+1 519-668-0624
534 Queens Ave, London ON N6B
1Y6

Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB)

www.tvdsb.ca
(519) 452-2000
1250 Dundas St. London ON N5W
5P2

CMHA Middlesex

<https://cmhatv.ca/>
+1 519-668-0624
534 Queens Ave, London ON N6B 1Y6

Connex Ontario

www.connexontario.ca/drug-alcohol-addictions-service-london-33508
1-866-531-2600

Atlosha Family Healing Services

<https://atlohsa.com/>
+1 519-438-0068
343 Richmond Street #109, London
ON N6A 3C2

Reach Out

<https://reachout247.ca/>
519-433-2023 / 1-866-933-2023

One Stop Talk

www.OneStopTalk.ca
1-855-416-8255

London District Catholic School Board (LDCSB)

www.ldcsb.ca
(519) 663-2088
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