Restorative Practice Responses to Student Absenteeism:

An Exploration of Racial Microaggressions and Student Self Efficacy

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Alexandria City Public Schools

Every Student Succeeds

Statement of the Problem
The Plight Of African American High School Students

- **Chester M. Pierce** was a Professor of Psychiatry at Harvard Medical School and Professor of Education at Harvard University.

- He first proposed the term racial microaggressions in the 1970s, but the concept has since been theorized and studied in the fields of law (Davis 1989), education (Solórzano 1998), psychology (Sue 2010), and social work (Ross-Sheriff 2012).

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Primary Categories Of Racial Microaggressions

- <u>Micro assaults</u>

- <u>Micro invalidations</u>

- <u>Micro insults</u>

- Communicates an intentional message of hate or insult

- Subtly diminishes and minimizes the experiences, values, feelings, or potential

- Both verbal and nonverbal messages that elusively communicate an insult, offense or invalidation

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Racial Microaggressions
"Everyday Expressions Of Institutionalized Racism"
(Huber & Solorzano, 2015)

- Racial microaggressions are embedded in a web of institutionalized racism that work to disempower, subordinate and isolate people of color

- Processes can occur at both the interpersonal (micro) and systemic (macro) level and within a variety of contexts

- Can be intentional or non intentional

The Impact of Racial Microaggressions
on African Americans

- **Derald Sue** is a prolific researcher in the area of microaggressions who has conducted various qualitative studies pertaining to the psychological impact of racial microaggressions on African Americans.

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The Impact of Racial Microaggressions
on African Americans

- Sue (2010) noted that African Americans reported **feelings of isolation, inferiority, rejection, depression, paranoia, stress and anger** were all common psychological indicators reported by recipients of racial microaggressions.

Racial Microaggressions Within Educational Settings

- High suspension rates
- Excessive placement in special education or alternative programs
- Transmission of socio-cultural messages and images which perpetuate students' feelings of inferiority

- Perceived deviance or assumptions of criminality
- Denied, reduced or selective placement in talented and gifted or honors classes
- Overrepresentation in disciplinary sanctions

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How are black students impacted by school-based responses to student absenteeism ?

School-Based Responses to Student Absenteeism

- Regular school attendance is not only an important part of student academic achievement; it is **required by law** (Code of Virginia 22.1-254).

- ACPS strictly adheres to the Commonwealth of Virginia's Compulsory Attendance Law in an effort to reduce absenteeism and maintain positive attendance rates.

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ACPS Chronic Absenteeism Data For Specific Racial Groups
2017 - 2018

- **Total Students**
- **Total Chronically Absent**

- **Black**
- **Hispanic**
- **English Learner**

- 15,802
- 8%   (1,301 students)

- 23% (296 students)
- 52% (676 students)
- 47% (615 students)

Virginia Department of Education
School Attendance
2017 – 2018
Students who missed 10% or more days of school

- **Total Students**
- **Total Chronically Absent**

- **Black**
- **Hispanic**
- **White**

- 1,292,826
- 11.4%

- 14.5%
- 13.1%
- 10.2%

Potential Student Impact of State Attendance Policies and Interventions

Given the systemic attributes of microaggressions in secondary education it would seem logical that such inequities would impact multiple aspects of students' educational experiences

- Impact:
  - Perceived microaggressions
  - Diminished self efficacy

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Restorative Practice As An Intervention

Restorative Responses to Microaggressions

– **Culturally Responsive Academic and Behavioral Supports**

"teaching to and through the experiences that students bring to the school...[it] acknowledges, responds to and celebrates the cultures of students"

~ Gloria Ladson Billings

What are Restorative Practices?

"RP is an emerging field of study that enables people to build relationships, maintain community and restore relationships in an increasingly disconnected world"
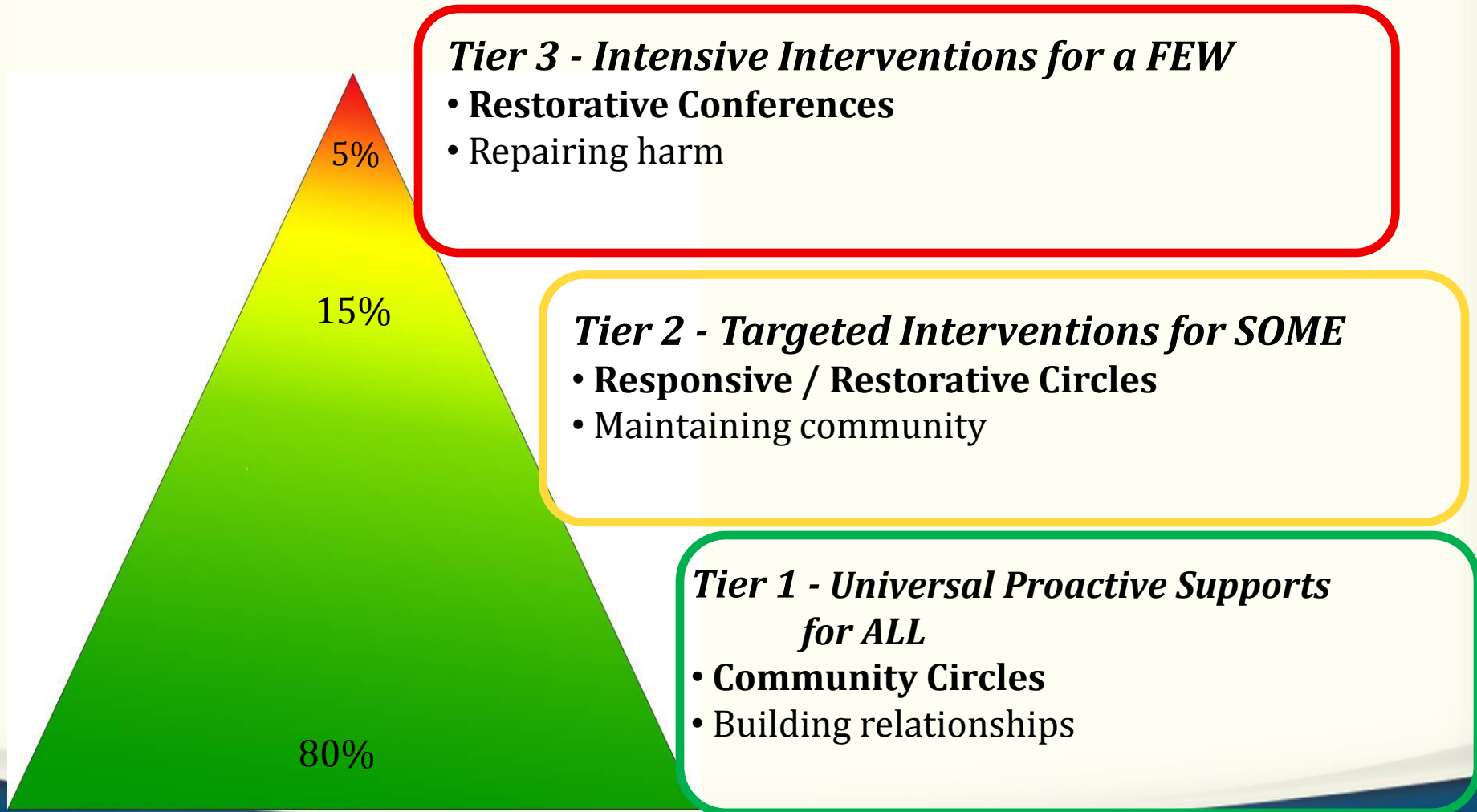
Types of Circles

- Use Community Circles to
  - build a trusting, positive environment
  - develop a greater sense of belonging and promote connectedness among students and staff
  - maximize the voice and role of students in the school community

- Use Responsive / Restorative Circles to
  - solve problems that arise within the group
  - repair harm done to community members
  - allow all community members to be included in the process of positive change

Multi-tiered Restorative Approach

5%

15%

80%

Tier 3 - Intensive Interventions for a FEW
- **Restorative Conferences**
- Repairing harm

Tier 2 - Targeted Interventions for SOME
- **Responsive / Restorative Circles**
- Maintaining community

Tier 1 - Universal Proactive Supports for ALL
- **Community Circles**
- Building relationships

Circle Essentials

Sequence of Events in a Circle *Examples*

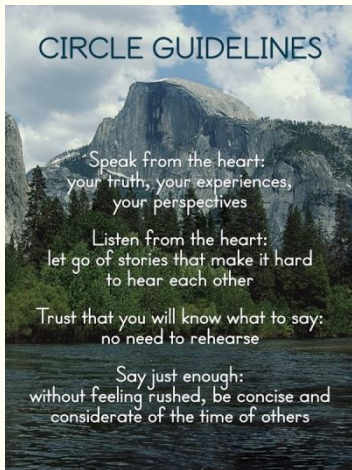- Establish a circle pattern
- Use it consistently

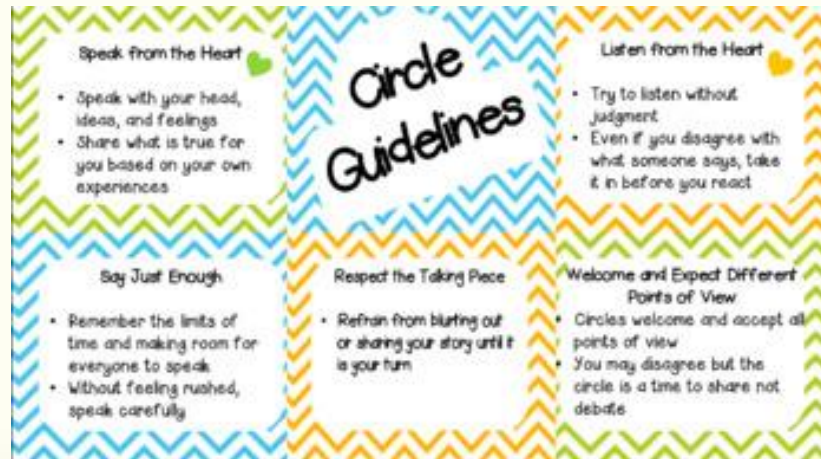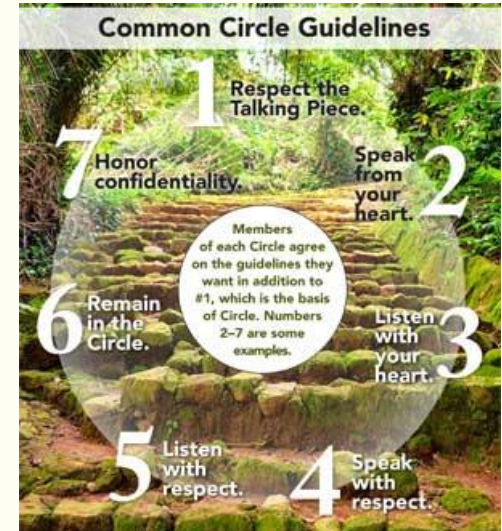| Starting the Circle 5-10 minutes	1. Arrive (circle keeper centers self) 2. State the purpose of the circle 3. Open the Circle 4. Teach and Remember Circle Guidelines 5. Make and Remember Agreements
Doing the Work of the Circle 15-30 minutes	6. **Connection:** Check in Round with Talking Piece; 7. Core Activities: • Community Building/Connection • Restorative Practices Content or Deeper Connection. 8. **Closure:** Check out Round
Ending the Circle 5 minutes	9. Close the circle 10. Debrief with colleagues

Circle Essentials

Develop circle guidelines

- Create with the group

Examples

Common Circle Guidelines

1 Respect the Talking Piece.
2 Speak from your heart.
3 Listen with your heart.
4 Speak with respect.
5 Listen with respect.
6 Remain in the Circle.
7 Honor confidentiality.

Members of each Circle agree on the guidelines they want in addition to #1, which is the basis of Circle. Numbers 2–7 are some examples.

CIRCLE GUIDELINES

Speak from the heart: your truth, your experiences, your perspectives

Listen from the heart: let go of stories that make it hard to hear each other

Trust that you will know what to say: no need to rehearse

Say just enough: without feeling rushed, be concise and considerate of the time of others

Circle Process Participation Guidelines

- Listen with respect.
- Each person gets a chance to talk.
- One person talks at a time without interruptions.
- Speak for yourself, not as the representative of any group.
- It's ok to disagree; no name-calling or attacking.
- You can pass your turn.

Circle Guidelines

Speak from the Heart
- Speak with your head, ideas, and feelings
- Share what is true for you based on your own experiences

Listen from the Heart
- Try to listen without judgment
- Even if you disagree with what someone says, take it in before you react

Say Just Enough
- Remember the limits of time and making room for everyone to speak
- Without feeling rushed, speak carefully

Respect the Talking Piece
- Refrain from blurting out or sharing your story until it is your turn

Welcome and Expect Different Points of View
- Circles welcome and accept all points of view
- You may disagree but the circle is a time to share not debate

Circle Essentials

Use of a Talking Piece

Examples

- Should be safe and meaningful
- Share the purpose/meaning with the group

Circle Essentials

Examples

Use of Affective Language ("I" Statements) and Circle Questions

Communicate with
I Statements
I Feel... When... Because...
What I want/need is...

Suggested Questions of the Day

I feel happy when...
I feel sad when...
I feel angry when...
I feel scared when...
The scariest thing is...
The biggest thing in the world is...
I'm bigger than...
I'm smaller than...
The smallest thing is...
My favorite toy is...
My favorite pet is...
My favorite food is...
My favorite T.V. show is...
My favorite song is...
My favorite book is...
My favorite color is...
My favorite weather is...
Rain makes me feel...
Wind makes me feel...
Sunshine makes me feel...
Snow makes me feel...
Fog makes me feel...
When I think of blue, I think of...
When I think of red, I think of...
When I think of green, I think of...
When I think of yellow, I think of...
When I think of orange, I think of...
When I think of black, I think of...
When I think of brown, I think of...
Today I feel...
What is something scratchy?
What is something soft?
What is something smooth?
What is something sharp?
What is something sour?
What is something sweet?
What is something cold?

What is something warm?
What is something hot?
If I were an animal, I would be...
If I were a building, I would be...
The first thing I want to do when I grow up is...
When I grow up, I want to be...
When I daydream, I usually think about...
Someday I want to...
Friends are...
Put downs make me feel...
When I am doing math I am most like what animal?

Relate to the curriculum:
The best/worst thing about this science project is...
The main character in the book we are reading is like/not like me when...
These math problems make me feel...

Note:
The best questions are those most relevant to the students' experiences, interests, and cultures. Create your own!

RESTORATIVE QUESTIONS I
When things go wrong...

- What happened?
- What were you thinking of at the time?
- What have you thought about since?
- Who has been affected by what you have done? In what way?
- What do you think you need to do to make things right?

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RESTORATIVE QUESTIONS II
When someone has been harmed...

- What did you think when you realized what had 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?

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Community Circles in the Classroom

Develop circle expectations

- ***Respect the talking piece***
- ***Speak from the heart***: share only your experiences, perspectives, feelings…not those of others
- ***Listen from the heart:*** let go of stories that make it hard to hear one another, be open and non-judgmental
- ***Trust you will know what to say:*** no need to rehearse
- ***Say just enough:*** be considerate of the time when sharing

Restorative Responses to Microaggressions Community Circle Questions

1. What is your understanding of racial microaggressions?

2. Do you believe that racial microaggressions have an impact on your and other students', belief in themselves to succeed in school? Please describe.

3. Do you feel that school attendance policies impact black students differently than other racial groups? Please describe.

4. Do you believe that student absences and related policies impact your and other students', belief in themselves to succeed in school? Please describe.

Restorative Practices in Action

- High schoolers describe what micro-aggressions mean to them and how they dealt with situations involving these types of comments

Questions

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