**RESTORATIVE INTERVENTION TO SOLVING PROBLEMS AND**

**REPAIRING RELATIONSHIPS**

**Harry Bowes Peacemakers**

**Mission**

To enable students who have been trained in problem solving and conflict resolution to assist peers and younger students to establish a peaceful settlement to issues that arise on the schoolyard.

**Guiding Principles**

An effective Peacemakers program:

* Is guided by the Board and School mission statements.
* Is a component of our school-wide discipline plan.
* Aims to resolve conflict between students in a non-judgmental, fair and empathic manner.
* Requires some training in problem solving.
* Requires an understanding of restorative approaches.
* Is a strategy that attempts to de-escalate and prevent re-occurrences.
* Contributes to the safety and well-being of all.
* Needs to be reviewed regularly.

**Purpose and Benefits**

Problems, disagreements and conflict are inevitable on the schoolyard. It is a natural part of growing up, and is common in games for students of all ages. When we accept that conflict will happen, we then look to support students to ensure that they are able to resolve their conflicts in acceptable ways. Students do not all have the tools to resolve all the conflicts they may encounter. The Peacemakers program:

* Will help to give students a greater ability to deal with the conflicts that arise.
* Helps create a more positive tone and culture in the school: when students accept responsibility for their actions and work to resolve them through guidance by their peers, attitudinal changes are internalized more readily.
* Empowers students to help other students resolve issues. This is a powerful life-long skill which benefits both the Peacemakers and the many students they help.

**Goals**

The Goals of the Peacemakers initiative are:

* Create a more positive school climate characterized by cooperation and collaboration.
* Empower students to take responsibility for peacefully resolving conflicts without the intervention of staff.
* Create a culture of students supporting students.
* Further develop positive relationships between all students.
* Prevent disputes from escalating into more serious incidents.
* Build conflict problem solving skills for all involved – leaders and peers.
* Develop character.
* Create a calmer, more student-friendly school yard.

**The Program**

Peacemakers are students, trained in a restorative resolution process, who offer help to students who are experiencing a problem, whether it is a disagreement during a game, an argument or a more involved conflict. Peacemakers do not solve the problems themselves, but rather help guide students to seek their own solutions. They act as a neutral third party. By redirecting the student’s attention to this neutral party, anger can more easily be diffused and a calmer, more rational conversation can take place. It is important to give students a role in resolving their own disagreements or conflicts. This will have the most profound impact on their future ability to solve problems for themselves. Peacemakers are there to lead others in the right direction.

**Solving Problems using Restorative Practices**

Peer support in solving problems is a means of improving the school climate by having students take on the responsibility for helping their fellow students resolve issues. The responsibility allotted these young people allows them to develop and demonstrate many of the character traits adopted by the Board, builds their own toolbox of resolutions and leadership skills, and serves as a preventative measure to decrease future conflict.

Peacemakers use a restorative approach, meaning they work with their peers and other students to come to a resolution to a problem. They use questioning to help guide the students towards an acceptable outcome, rather than tell them what will happen, or solve the problem for them. Restorative practices is about creating, maintaining or repairing relationships. This is ultimately what the Peacemakers do.

**Training Day**

Activity 1. - Orientation

* Get-to-know-you activity – large circle – begin by asking opening questions
  1. What are you looking forward to today?
  2. What do you think the role of a Peacemaker is? Why do you think Peacemakers is important?
  3. Why do you think you will be able to make a difference?

Activity 2 – Exploring Peacemakers – what are they, what do they do.

* Break into small circles – 5-6 each
* Respond to the following statement:

1. “The responsibility of Peacemakers is to solve problems for conflicting students.”
   1. How do you feel about this statement?
   2. Does this adequately describe the role of Peacemakers?
   3. What is wrong with this statement?
   4. In your group, revise this statement to address what think the real role of Peacemaker are.

* Have you even been in a situation when you didn’t feel that you were treated fairly? Describe the situation and why you didn’t feel you were treated fairly. What would have made you feel better?

Activity 3 – Restorative Practices – what is it

* Introduce Social Discipline Window – emphasis in the WITH quadrant
* Talk about the TO quadrant – “what are some TO examples and what are some WITH examples”

Activity 3 – Yard Conflict and Problems

* What are some of the usual problems that students get into on the yard? Make a list.
* Divide your list into things that you feel you could deal with, and things that you feel should me referred to an adult, or sent to the office.
* Large group reflection.

Activity 4 – Solving Conflict

* Describe how you would solve the following problem.
  + Two boys, Johnny and Abdul are arguing about a goal in soccer. Johnny says it was a goal, Abdul says it wasn’t. They go from yelling to pushing each other. A student gets you to come over and help. What would you do?
  + In your groups, outline the steps you would take to solve this problem.

Activity 5 – Introduce Restorative Problem Solving

* Introduce the question – distribute the cards, show the posters.
* Discuss the difference between asking “why did you do that” vs. “tell me what happened”
* Discuss the different questions you would ask the Victim vs. the Offender
* Demonstrate a situation with two students acting as offender/victim (scenario 1)

Activity 6 – Scenarios

* In groups of 4 work through the scenarios – 1 victim, 1 offender, 2 facilitators

Activity 6 – Scenario Reflection – whole group

* Challenges that you found
* Things to work on – next steps

Activity 7 – Implementation

* Create groups, create a schedule
* Review reporting/recording procedure – how will you make notes
* Plan next meeting date to review progress, issues, problems

**What Peacemakers do**

1. Steps to take when facilitating a conference.
   1. Withdraw those involved to a private location – ask others to leave.
   2. Explain what your role is – to help them find a solution.
   3. Ask questions of all involved – just the main people – not all the witnesses. Have each side tell their story.
   4. Clarify what happened by repeating the questions or paraphrasing.
   5. Express your own feelings if necessary by using affective statements.
   6. Identify the underlying problem and find out what each side wants.
   7. Ask for solutions to repair the harm. If stuck, make some suggestions. Perhaps identify the advantages and disadvantages of each option.
   8. Have both sides agree on the solution.
2. Use the Restorative Questions on the card
   1. For the Victim
      1. What did you think about when you realized what had happened?
      2. What impact has this had on others
      3. What has been the hardest thing for you to deal with
      4. What do you think needs to happen to make things right?
   2. For the offender
      1. What happened?
      2. What were you thinking about at the time?
      3. What have you thought about since?
      4. Who has been affected by what happened and how?
      5. What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

**After you are done….**

Reflect on your practices and approaches.

Is my practice:

* Respectful (separating the behavior from the person)
* Fair (engaging, with explanations)
* Restorative (by repairing the harm and building relationships)

Does my practice:

* Develop Empathy (through reflection, insight and learning)
* Enhance responsibility and accountability.
* Support positive behavioural change and the strengthening of relationships.

**PEER HELPERS**

Some General points about peer helper programs…

* Peers helping peers is a process by which a neutral third party brings two or more students experiencing conflict together and provides a structured approach that enables those involved to negotiate an agreement.
* The process respects all involved by ensuring that it is the students in conflict who ultimately work with each other to determine the outcome. Any information arising from the conflict will remain confidential unless someone is in danger.
* A win-win outcome is the goal of any process. This process is based in the understanding that each party involved has their own interests to be fulfilled, and those must be articulated before a solution can be found.
* The students involved in the dispute will hopefully observe and learn the principles and techniques used so they can better deal with any future conflicts they may be involved in.
* All students involved in a peer process gain valuable skills. The peers who facilitate the process will learn valuable skills in listening, responding, negotiation and mediation, which will be invaluable to them in future.

**Qualities of a good peer helper**

1. remain Impartial
   * Avoid taking sides and be aware of your own personal biases.
2. Listen with empathy

A good listener will:

* Stop talking and listen – they should do most of the talking
* Relax – give the impression that the speaker is free to talk
* Show the speaker that you are interested in what he/she is saying
* Remove distractions (other people or move away from the activity)
* Put yourself in their position (empathy)
* Be patient – allow the speaker to plenty of time to speak

a peer helper must use the following active listening skills:

* + **Attending**: using non-verbal behaviours to indicate that what the speaker is saying and feeling is of interest and has been understood. These may include tone of voice, eye contact, facial expressions, posture and gestures.
  + **Summarizing**: restating facts by repeating the most important points, organizing interests, and discarding extraneous or unimportant information. This may also include a listing of the feelings each person is experiencing.
  + **Clarifying**: using open-ended questions and statements to get more information.

1. BE RESPECTFUL

* Allow each person an opportunity to speak and avoid interruption.
* Allowing both sides to have their say

1. Be Trustworthy

* Any information that comes up should be between the participants and possibly administration, but should not be talked about with other peers and friends. If someone is in danger, then information must be shared with an adult (ie. under a threat from someone else).

1. help people work together

* You are responsible for facilitating the conversation, not finding a solution to the problem. The students having the problem need to work together to find a solution – you just guide the conversation.
* If students are struggling to find solutions, you may present some possible outcomes choices they may make. The participants will ultimately decide on the solution.
* If necessary, record the decision. You may also decide as part of the outcome to check back in with the two sides later on to see if all is going as agreed.

**ACTIVE LISTENING SKILLS**

**PARAPHRASING**

***Encourage*** - to convey interest “Really, what happened next?” “Tell me more”.

***Clarify*** - to show understanding “When did this happen”, “Can you tell me more about that”, “Are you telling me that….”

***Restating*** - to show that you understand “From what I hear, this is what happened” “First, then, finally…”

***Reflecting*** - to show interest and empathy “How did that make you feel?”

***Validating*** - to make them fell worthy “I appreciate your willingness to talk about this”, “you both did a good job of explaining your side”

**Passive Listening techniques**

**F** Face the person

**E** Eye contact – gentle, not staring

**L** Listening – lean in a bit to show you are involved

**O** Open posture – watch your arms, feet placement

**R** Relax – helps to calm everyone down when you show you are relaxed.

**Questioning Skills**

There are two types of questions you can ask.

* 1. Closed Questions: These are ones that require a “Yes” or “No” answer. For example:
     + Is it raining today?
     + Did you kick the ball over the fence?
     + Did you watch TV last night?
  2. Open-ended Questions: These are questions that require an explanation. For example:
     + When did this happen?
     + How did you feel about it?
     + Why are you so upset?
     + What happened?