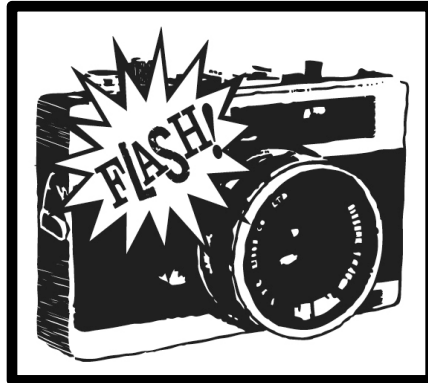




Sunset Park High School
Brooklyn, NY



[Snapshot]



Name: Sunset Park High School

Location/District: Brooklyn, NY/ Districts 15 and 20 priority

Grade levels: 9-12

of students: 1,300

When did the school open?: 2009

Regents/consortium: Regents

% or number of Title I students: 79%

Demographics of students: (According to *Inside Schools*) 7% Asian, 9% Black, 77% Hispanic, 7% White

Demographics of staff: Diverse, but many more white staff members than students

Mission/focus of the school: “Sunset Park HS is a diverse and inclusive school that prepares all students for college and for meeting the challenging demands of a changing world. SPHS is dedicated to growing future leaders and committed to: success for all students, partnership with the community, high expectations, and service to local and global communities.” Check out their website for details on these commitments.

Website: <http://www.sunsetparkhighschool.org/>

Scanning?: No

Number of SSAs in school: 4

When did your school begin its work with “restorative justice”?: Fall 2013

[Testimonial]

Author: Sara Beers (Teachers Unite Intern) and Sage Forbes-Gray (teacher at SPHS)



Sunset Park High School (SPHS) is a large public high school located in Brooklyn that strives for inclusivity among its diverse community. Within the school there are four separate learning communities that include almost 1300 students: three communities of 9th-11th graders and one community of 12th graders. During the 2013 school year, a pilot program launched with the support of the administration to implement restorative practices in all 9th grade classes in one of the four communities. Though the school was originally founded on restorative, non-punitive efforts, this pilot program was meant to encourage students to get more involved in fighting for restorative justice.

The first thing SPHS did to bring restorative practices into the school community was to create a fairness committee. Led by students and staff, this committee uses authentic discussion, not punishment, to determine the appropriate consequences when the school's core values have been challenged. Each community develops their own core values to base their restorative efforts on-- teachers initially come up with the core values and students add on to them. Then, once students and teachers apply to become facilitators as part of the fairness committee, they go through a four-part after school training session. This training consists of learning the purpose and mission of RJ, learning how to get people to talk in mediations, learning to deal with anger in conflict, and fine-tuning their skills as facilitators.

A lesson SPHS learned through the fairness committee is the inherent flexibility that is a part of restorative justice. It's easy to get caught up in a script for how to best facilitate peer mediations or circles, but SPHS found that being flexible and adjusting to each student's needs will create the best outcome. Depending on the situation, for instance, an untrained facilitator may work better than a trained facilitator in order to produce the most amount of community support. A strict script cannot be followed for restorative practices to truly succeed and encourage true community love, respect, and support.

Because of the founding principles of the school that encouraged non-punitive punishments, the groundwork for incorporating restorative practices in classrooms was already present. A strong advisory program already existed that pairs students with members of the school community for academic and socioemotional support. To gain more support with difficult conversations, the school worked with the Center for Family Life, whose mission is to: "get

young children off to a good start, launch youth into adulthood, stabilize and strengthen families and unlock potential for children and adults with special needs.” This program helped support community circles to ensure all voices were being heard.

The ideas behind restorative practices that take place at SPHS travel mainly by word of mouth, and since SPHS is such a large school, recruiting the largest and most varied amount of students and teachers to participate has been a challenge. Students play an important role in spreading R/J values, so coordinators made sure to recruit students from all different social groups in an effort to get the most amount of students involved. To get teachers involved, R/J coordinators planned an elective workshop on R/J during staff development day that is aimed at supporting teachers in not only understanding the goals of R/J, but also in becoming active supporters of R/J in the school community.

Also, in order to make sure the whole community is involved in incorporating restorative practices, teachers and deans have collaboration meetings. This serves to streamline responses to discipline and lean on one another to best meet the needs of the students.

After the first pilot year, it became clear that R/J had the potential to become an integral part of the SPHS community and needed to expand to all four communities. Now, in the third year of implementation, three communities of 9th, 10th, and 11th graders practice R/J through the use of a fairness committee and reentry circles and next year (2016), for the first time, the fourth community of 12th graders will take part in the effort (these were the students that took part in the initial pilot program). To expand R/J efforts across all learning communities, Sage Forbes-Gray, a teacher at SPHS, held a Restorative Justice Learning Community Meeting for each community to introduce teachers to the ideas of R/J and what efforts were being done within the school.

Spreading restorative practices across the communities that make up SPHS has been due to the willingness of students to create affective change. The youth empowerment program at SPHS gives students a voice to fight back against punitive measures. For instance, in combination with Teachers Unite, student leaders from each of the four communities attended a meet up with Eric Butler to specifically train youth in R/J. After this training, students decided that student facilitators work better than teacher facilitators for the school community, which is something that SPHS is working to accommodate for the upcoming school year.

Throughout the implementation process, SPHS has learned how to best adapt restorative practices to their school community. The school learned that the support and understanding of parents are an integral part of the process to implement R/J. SPHS has worked hard to bring parents more deeply into the conversation and has partnered with the PTA president and parent coordinator to expose parents to R/J practices and help integrate them into the work being done.

In the three years since SPHS has employed restorative methods, the sense of community at the school has only strengthened. The upcoming school year will see challenges as restorative practices are brought into the 12th grade community, but the process is ongoing and seeing progress.

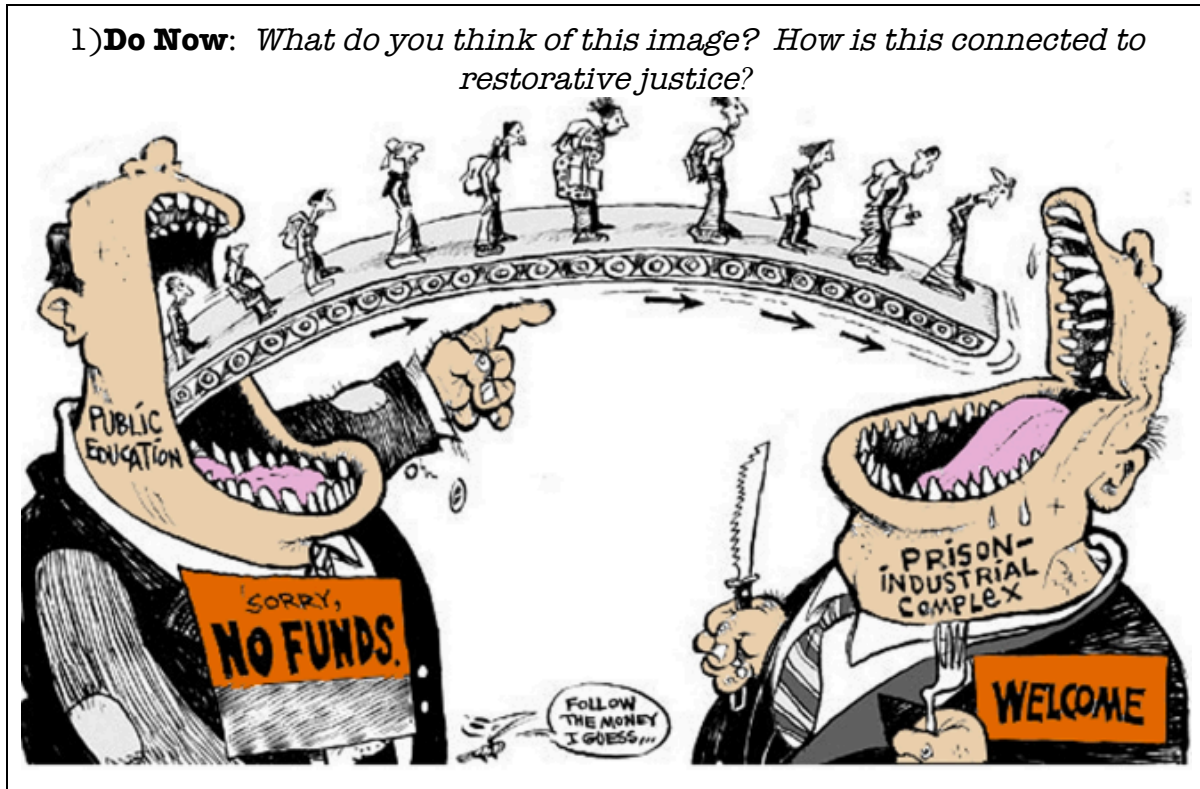
[Tools]



- **Restorative Justice Training for Staff Members**
 - **Teacher and Dean Collaboration Meeting**
 - **RJ Learning Community Meeting**
 - **Fairness Committee Student Application**
 - **Facilitator Training Course (4 sessions)**

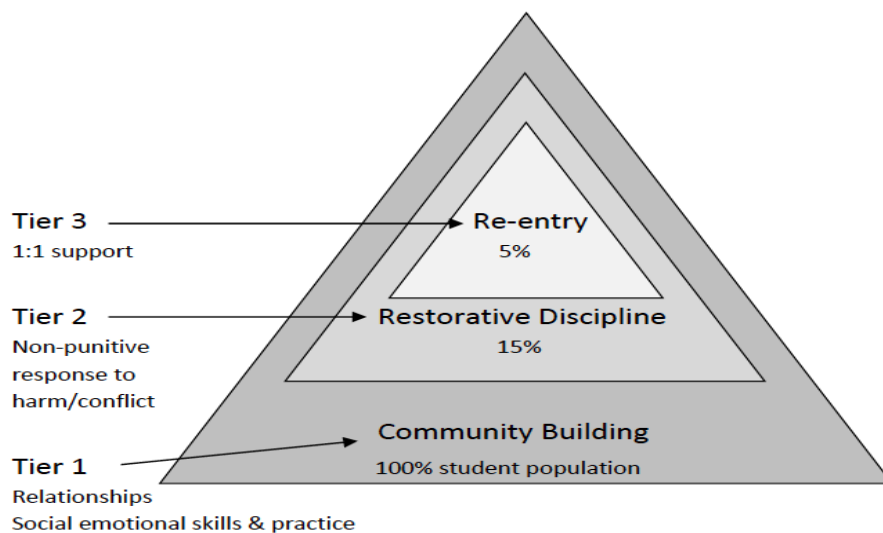
Restorative Justice Training for Staff Members:

* the following is an agenda of an RJ training for teachers on staff development day.
This was an optional workshop *



2) Presentation on the restorative work being done at SPHS:

3 Tiers of School Based RJ



What are we doing at SPHS?

Tier 1- Community Building: Student Leadership, CFL Partnership, Advisory and Classroom Interactions, Parent Interactions

Tier 2- Restorative Discipline: Fairness Committee- arts, health and business, lunch sessions, Dean Mediations- as needed,

Tier 3- Re-entry: Re-entry meetings- deans, AP, parents

3) **Guided Practice** (15-20 min) *Tier 1- Affective Language with Students- Article*

Look over the article and consider the following:

1. *What is affective language?*
- 2) *How does it come up in the classroom?*
- 3) *How does it impact students?*
- 4) *How do you use affective language in your classroom?*

Typical Questions for Students	Affective Version of Questions

4) **Break Out Sessions**

Option 1: Tier 2- Mock Fairness Session- *for people interested in becoming teacher facilitators, or deans already doing mediations*

Option 2: Tier 3- Re-entry Collaboration- *What can we do to make the re-entry meetings more inclusive of all stakeholders (including peers and teachers)? How can we streamline outcomes of the re-entry meetings to better support students?*

5) **Exit Activity: Reflection** (5-10 min)

Teachers complete the following reflection sheet. If there is time, share out.

*** This was a meeting between teachers and deans to try to streamline the response to discipline and lean on each other to meet the best needs of the students.*

Restorative Justice: Teacher & Dean Collaboration Meeting



Agenda:

Warm-up: What are our current re-entry and mediation efforts?

Introduction:

- Teachers introduce themselves
- Review goals for the meeting.

Goals:

1. Share out where re-entry and mediation efforts are happening at SPHS.
2. Discuss ideas of how to better utilize Fairness committee teachers and students to support dean's work around mediation and general discipline.
3. Explore the current re-entry procedures and how teachers can better support that work.
4. Plan out next steps.

Closing: Please feel free to email me or write down on a post-it note any feedback you have about this meeting.

Thanks for your time!

*** This year we expanded our efforts from one learning community at our school to 3. Sage Gray- Forbes did a learning community wide PD for each of the other communities to introduce the ideas of R&J and the practices that had been ongoing at SPHS.*

Restorative Justice Learning Community Meeting



Do Now: (5 min) What do you think restorative justice means? What does it include? What doesn't it include?

Goals for the day:

- Intro to Restorative Justice (R&J) - (5 minutes)
 - Tiers, DOE Discipline code, History at SPHS
- Mock Fairness Committee (15 minutes)
 - Intro to roles
- Fairness committee debrief and discussion of restorative justice (5-10 min)
- Goals for the year (5-10 minutes)
 - Recruitment, Training, Sessions, R&J Club

Exit Slip: Teacher survey: What does this mean for me? (5 minutes)

<http://tinyurl.com/...>

***BONUS* Check out the Growing Fairness documentary:**

<http://www.teachersunite.net/documentary>

*** Teachers broke into groups and did mock conversations using previous topics that R&J had addressed. Someone in each group had done R&J work before and acted as the lead facilitator.*

Mock Fairness Session

All scenarios are roughly based on real events from previous Fairness sessions.

Group 1- Background:

A student and a teacher come to Fairness.

A teacher has noticed that a student is alone a lot in the hallway. The group of friends he/she used to hang out with doesn't eat with him/her at lunch either. In class, the student interrupts class, refuses to take his/her hood off and only sometimes does his/her work. Some of the other students have told the teacher that they are frustrated with him/her but don't feel comfortable bringing him/her to Fairness. The student was recently told by one of his/her friends that s/he is ugly and that no one will ever love him/her. The student is really worried about his/her social and romantic life and doesn't feel like school is important.

Group 2- Background:

Two students come to Fairness.

The 2 students are friends but have been getting on each other's nerves in class. Student A is Mexican and immigrated here. Student B is African-American, whose family has been in the U.S. as far back as he/she knows. They often joke around about each other's identities. Student A makes jokes about Student B's race and Student B does the same about Student A's immigrant status. Both are not intending to hurt the other and believe they are just having fun. There have been a couple flare ups in class that resulted in the dean being class. The dean has referred them to Fairness.

Group 3 - Background:

Two students come to Fairness.

Student A is frustrated that the other is always distracting Student B in math class. They sit next to each other and when they do pair work. Student A feels like he/she does all the work. Student B does not like math and doesn't feel good at it. Student B thinks Student A is bossy in math class and is frustrated with Student A even though they are friends. They just received a low grade in math class this past week and a teacher suggested that they go to Fairness to work it out. They agreed.

Group 4- Background:

A student and a teacher come to Fairness.

The student has been coming late to school often missing some or all of the teacher's class which is always 1st or 2nd period. The student always does his/her work when he/she is in class but has a very low grade. The student thinks this is unfair. It's really hard for the student to wake up even with an alarm. The teacher is worried that the student will not be prepared for his/her regents. Despite calling home and having several one on one conversations, the student continues to arrive late. The teacher doesn't feel like the student is taking enough personal responsibility.

*** This survey was given out to teachers after introducing RJ to gauge interest, understanding, and future involvement.*

Restorative Justice Teacher Survey

* Required

First Name: *

Last Name: *

Grade Level: *

Email: *

1) Would you like to train to become a teacher facilitator? *

- Yes
- No
- Maybe, I need more information.

2) Would you like to help recruit students? *

- Yes
- No
- Maybe, I need more information

3) Would you like to help train students to become facilitators? *

- Yes
- No
- Maybe, I need more information

4a) Can you imagine calling a student to Fairness? *

- Yes
- No
- Maybe, I need more information

4b) If you answered no to question 4a, what are your concerns?

5a) Would you like another community meeting on restorative justice? *

- Yes
- No
- Maybe, I need more information

5b) If you answered yes to question 5a, what would you like to be included?

6) What ideas do you have to promote restorative justice among the students?

7) What challenges will we face when helping students utilize restorative justice?

*** We used this for students to apply to become trained facilitators.*

Fairness Committee Student Application

Name:
Cohort:
Advisor:

The Fairness Committee is a group of students and a teacher that help students deal with problems. During Fairness committee, a teacher or student will invite another student who is having trouble in school and the committee will listen to their situation and think of ways to help the students improve their situation. All Fairness Committee members, including the struggling student, will agree upon solutions.

A Fairness Committee member should be a student who cares about his/her classmates and wants to help them. He/she should be a good listener and a creative problem solver. Also, he/she should enjoy working as a team and have leadership skills.

Previous experience:

1. Why do you want to be a part of the Fairness committee?

2. What experiences have you had that would make you a good leader?

Written responses: Sample situations

3. A friend of yours seems really down. He/she tells you that she doesn't want to be in school. What ideas do you have to help your friend personally and academically?

4. What kind of student behavior is the most damaging to our community? What ideas do you have to make it better?

Recommendation:

5. If you were to ask someone for a recommendation, why would they think you would be a good member of the Fairness committee?

FACILITATOR TRAINING COURSE:

Written by Sarah Crichton with help from

http://umaine.edu/peace/files/2011/01/PEER_MEDIATION_FINAL_11.pdf

Session #1:

Purpose and Mission

- 1) Activity reading article or watch Growing Fairness Documentary
- 2) Understanding the purpose and limitations of Fairness Committee
 - a. Students look at a list of goals, and select what they think is important and possible
 - b. Explain that the goal is not to "get the truth," punish people or fix people's' problems for them
 - c. As a group, craft a mission statement. Students will need this later, to articulate to their peers and to disputants what FC is all about.
- 3) Discuss how we can build trust in this program
 - a. Contract
 - b. How does the way we act outside FC affect our credibility with our peers?

List of possible goals:

Be a good listener

Achieve justice

Find out the truth

De-escalate a conflict (calm people down)

Fix the problem / solve the conflict

Get the wrongdoer to admit what he/she did that was wrong

Get the wrongdoer to apologize

Make the wrongdoer feel ashamed of his/her behavior

Stand up for someone who has been treated unfairly

Open up communication between people engaged in a conflict

Session #2:
Getting People to Talk

1. Empathy building activity-- How would you feel if you were called to fairness committee? How can we make this process non-threatening? How can we make people feel comfortable and encourage them to talk?
2. Active Listening skills
 - a. Restating/Paraphrasing
 - b. Practice asking open-ended questions (understand the difference between leading and open-ended)
 - c. Iceberg activity -- thinking about how superficial conflicts may just be the tip of the iceberg. How can we ask open-ended questions to get disputants to reveal more of the iceberg?
3. Discuss possible solutions (using approved list) that they can guide disputants toward
4. Mock fairness committee with a script
 - a. Script is mostly a model of a successful FC
 - b. Disputants' stories don't agree (we want FC members to think about what they will do in this situation)
 - c. Students can reflect on whether the fairness committee in the script was successful, provide feedback

Session #3:
Dealing with Anger in Conflict

*** Mock FC – students read scenario, teachers play disputants, students lead FC, starting with intro and using cool-down strategies

1. Anger escalator activity (Building empathy, thinking about why conflicts escalate)
 - a. Cool-down strategies
2. Have students help to craft "ground rules" that they can establish with the disputants before they tell their stories. FC members will also be accountable to the same ground rules.
3. Practice a scenario without a script (the scenario is written ahead of time, and the 2 mock disputants have a 1/2 sheet of paper that explains the conflict from their points of view -- use POV scenarios from the Kreidler book)
 - a. Give them a "Mediation/Reentry Conversation Protocol" for the opening of the FC session, which is really important. The checklist can be modeled on the CFL checklist for leading games, which they are already familiar with.
 - b. FC members have to improvise using the strategies they have learned so far.
 - c. Feedback from other students and teachers.

Fairness Committee Skit

FC Member A: Welcome everybody. As we are starting this mediation, I want to say something about the purpose of Fairness Committee and lay down some ground rules. The purpose of our meeting is not to assign blame or punishment. Our goal is to open up communication between Amanda and Steven so they can work things out between each other.

FC Member B: Yeah, the important thing is that this is a safe place for you to talk, and anything you say here will stay here, unless there is a threat to someone's safety that we have to report to a guidance counselor. Otherwise, everything else stays confidential and private.

FC Member C: I can go over the ground rules. We are going to give both of you time to tell your side of the story. We actually weren't even there. So we want to hear from both of you what happened. The ground rules are (1) don't interrupt each other, and (2) try to use "I" statements. What I mean by that is just tell things from your own point of view. "I saw this..." "I heard this..." "I felt a certain way..." Just speak for yourself from your own point of view, and don't try to speak for the other person.

FC Member A: Any questions?

Steven: What happens after we talk?

FC Member A: It will depend on what you decide is a fair solution. Can we get started? Amanda, why don't you go first. Start off by explaining why you called Steven to Fairness Committee.

Amanda: Okay, I called Steven to Fairness Committee because of something that happened in Art last week. I got up to put my supplies away, and Steven wrote “bitch” on my project.

FC Member C: Can you make that an “I” statement?

Amanda: I came back and I saw that someone wrote “bitch” on my paper. I knew it was Steven because he was laughing about it, and he always messes with my stuff. Like he takes my pens when I’m not looking.

Steven: How do you know it was me if you’re not looking?

FC Member A: Let’s stick to the ground rules and not interrupt. You’ll get a chance to talk after Amanda.

FC Member B: How did you feel when you saw that written on your project.

Amanda: I felt like it was disrespectful. Because it’s a project I had to turn in for a grade, and I worked on it for two days. Like he doesn’t even work, and he just wants to mess other people up, who do their work.

FC Member C: “I” statements...

Amanda: I see him not working, and he’s distracting people. And I feel like it’s unfair that he is doing stuff that messes up my grade. Like if he doesn’t care about his own grade, that’s okay. But he’s acting a certain way that is messing up other people’s work.

FC Member A: It sounds like this is about more than just writing “bitch” on your project. Can you say more about what you mean?

Amanda: Like, sometimes the teacher is trying to get the class to be quiet, and he’s still talking. Or like he tries to start arguments with people. Like he said something mean about Alicia’s shirt the other day. I don’t think he means it, but it’s like he’s starting something just to start something.

FC Member B: Steven, do you want to tell us your side of what happened?

Steven: I guess when she got up someone wrote “bitch” on her project. But I don’t know who would do a thing like that.

FC Member B: It wasn’t you? Then why did you laugh?

Steven: I don’t know. I guess I laughed because it was funny. And then she got all angry and red, and I had to laugh.

FC Member B: Do you think it’s okay to laugh at someone because she’s upset? How would you feel if someone did that to you?

FC Member C: Actually, I have a question. How would you respond to what Amanda said about you affecting the people around you?

Steven: I passed Art with a 65. If other people listen to me instead of the teacher, that's their problem. It's none of their business what I do.

FC Member A: I think we're all here because a lot of us feel like it *is* our business, because we're all in the same community together. We're not trying to accuse you or punish you, but we want to tell you how we feel about it. Because it does affect us when we're in the same classroom with you.

Steven: You're acting like I'm the only one who did anything wrong! Amanda said I was retarded, and you're not talking to her.

Amanda: Okay, I did say that. But I was mad. I shouldn't have said that. I just said it because I was mad. I didn't mean it. I just wish you would listen to me. Like in the beginning of the year we didn't fight, but now I can't talk to you.

FC Member C: What do the two of you think you could do to avoid something like this happening in the future.

Amanda: I'm not gonna call names in the future. I will try to talk to Steven, and if he doesn't listen, I'll get an adult to help me.

FC Member A: Steven, do you think you can listen to Amanda when she asks you to stop doing something that is distracting?

Steven: Sure.

FC Member B: What can we do about Amanda's project? I think Steven should have to tell Ms. Cleary that he wrote "bitch" on her paper.

FC Member C: Well, if Steven did it, then that would be a good idea. But none of us saw Steven write it on the project. Maybe Amanda can explain it to Ms. Cleary. In the future, I think Steven should just work on listening to Amanda and his classmates as long as they're giving him feedback respectfully.

FC Member A: Thank you all for attending this mediation. I want to remind everyone that everything we said in this session will remain confidential and private.

This protocol is used for mediation circles (before/during a conflict) and re-entry circles (after a conflict and/or a punishment has been given).

Mediation / Re-Entry Conversation Protocol

1. Opening the Circle

Welcome everyone and introduce the talking piece. Facilitators explain and summarize purpose, confidentiality and group agreements.

a) Purpose

The purpose is for ALL participants to take responsibility for their actions, repair any harm that was done, and express what they need to move forward in a positive way. We are here to help you solve your problems.

b) Confidentiality

This conversation is confidential and the intention is to create a space of safety and trust. What is shared in this room should not be shared elsewhere, except if we discover that you or someone else is in danger. We are all going to sign a paper that says that we will not repeat anything said in this conversation today.

c) Group Agreements

To a safe space for people to talk, we ask that you:

- Take turns talking and listening, so we can allow for quieter voices to be heard.
- No unnecessary electronics so that you can be fully present and listen well.
- Treat everyone with respect- no yelling, name-calling, cursing or bullying of any kind.
- Communicate proactively working towards a solution not putting someone down.
- We do not speak for others or make assumptions. Use “I Messages” to express your needs from your own point of view. For example: “When I saw _____ I felt _____.”

2. Current Situation/Questions

Lead facilitator explains the situation as they understand it based on conversations before hand. Is there anything to add? Do you have any questions before we continue?

3. Express your needs/Summarize

Everyone will share, one at a time what they need to move forward in a positive way. Let each person speak for themselves, if we interrupt each other we will not get very far. Lead facilitator may summarize at times what needs are being stated.

4. Questions & Reflections

Facilitator, ask open-ended questions to find out how best to meet these needs. Reflect back what you are hearing back, for example “It sounds like what _____ needs is _____.”

5. Brainstorm Restorative Actions

The repair could be focused more on one person, multiple or a project that all agree to do. Ideally, the restorative project will benefit all parties and the school community.

6. Closing the Circle

Thank everyone for participating. Remind everyone what was agreed upon and to maintain confidentiality.

Session #4:
Fine-tuning and Practice

1. Students will meet their assigned subcommittee (groups that will actually facilitate conflict resolution together)
 2. Review checklist/protocol for the opening of a new FC session (modeled on the checklist they used to lead activities on the service learning trip).
 3. Have groups assign who is responsible for which role. Have them rehearse their roles in the opening.
 4. Each group will have a chance to facilitate a mock FC (we made need to divide the group in half in order to have enough time) and get feedback from another group and a teacher
- * Students will be invited to shadow a 'real' mediation/re-entry meeting before being called to facilitate one themselves.

*** These organizers help us have conversations with students before circles and after circles to most efficiently use the short lunchtime we have to carry out restorative circles and to check-in after the fact.*

Lead Facilitator: _____

Pre-conferencing:

1. Who is involved?
2. What happened?
3. When/where did it happen?
4. Why did it happen?
5. What do you need to move forward?

Person A _____

Person B _____

--	--

Post-conference:

Time: _____

1. How are you doing?
2. What do you remember that we talked about at the meeting?
3. Are things working?
4. Do you need any other support for the situation?
5. Has anything else come up that you need help with?

Person A _____

Person B _____

--	--

***The notetaker is to memorialize parts of conversations during sessions and to be used in case of repeated related circles.*

Mediation / Re-Entry Conversation Note-Taking Form:

People in Conversation: _____

Lead Facilitator: _____

Facilitators: _____

_____ **Time:** _____

Notes on conversation:

As a result of the conversation we have agreed:

The lead facilitator will check in with both parties on _____.

I agree to the following resolution and will try my very best to make it possible.

Person A signature

Person B's signature

Lead Facilitator Signature

Facilitator Initials