



“Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.”

- Leo Buscaglia

Relationships Matter

The Restorative Justice Newsletter of Downtown Magnets High School

October 2016

Nine Key Restorative Justice Practices: Affective Statements and Restorative Questions

Part of LAUSD’s strategy to implement restorative practices includes the understanding that such an implementation must be comprehensive and school-wide. This means that all school stakeholders play a part in using and reinforcing restorative practices, from teachers to administrators, campus aides to bus drivers and other transportation personnel, and parents and guardians. This year my focus will be on building capacity and making sure that everyone in the Downtown Magnets High School community knows the Nine Key RJ Practices, how to use them, and why they work.

Affective Statements: In terms of building empathy, Affective Statements are perhaps the most powerful ways available to tell someone how we feel. And conversely, by using and hearing affective statements, we gain a better understanding of how our words and actions affect people, and exactly why. Affective statements follow this format:

- “I feel _____ when _____ because _____
(emotion) (occurrence)
_____.
(reason)

Let’s say you have been invited to a concert by a friend of yours. You’re not a big fan of this artist, but your friend thinks she’s the hottest thing since sliced bread...and you both really like each other. As soon as you decline the invitation, your friend’s affective statement makes you realize just how much you hurt his/her feelings:

- “It really hurts my feelings that you won’t go to the Carly Rae Jepsen show with me because I went to see One Direction with you, and I can’t stand them.”

Affective statements provide claim, evidence and detail all in one clear statement. We can all benefit by expressing ourselves clearly because we say what’s on our mind, backed up by a clear reason....and it’s clear to others how we feel. It’s a win-win.

Restorative Questions: Restorative Questions focus on the whys and hows of something, rather than on the event or its consequences (Restorative Questions focus more on accountability than on the event itself). Let’s say Tiffany storms out of class after an argument with another student. On the way out, she angrily pushes off the teacher’s desk a basket full of graded student work. The teacher is irritated, but instead of focusing on anger and the student’s consequences, he/she uses Restorative Questions to help Tiffany begin to reflect on the event, rather than what she did wrong.

- “What happened?” – “I was upset and I pushed stuff on the floor as I walked by.”
- “What were you thinking at the time?” – “I was thinking about what’s going on at home with my mom and dad.”
- “What have you thought about since?” – “I was thinking that my stuff at home isn’t an excuse to take it out on people here.”
- “Who has been affected by what happened?” - “My boyfriend, because I was mean to him, and you, because I took it out on you, and that wasn’t fair.”
- “What about this has been hardest for you?” – “Breaking up with my boyfriend is really hard, it’s like my world is ending!”
- “What needs to be done to make this right?” – “I need to pick up all the stuff I knocked over, and I need to talk to someone about this.”

Here, restorative questions leave the door open for Tiffany to discuss her situation, which is an important consideration.

Your Downtown Magnets HS
Restorative Justice Team

Mr. Lieberman – Restorative Justice Teacher Advisor
Mr. Ahn – Intervention Coordinator/Dean

Your LAUSD Central District
Restorative Justice Team

Marco Flores – Restorative Justice Advisor
Deborah Brandy – Director of Operations / Restorative Justice Coordinator

Teacher Feature: Catherine Shieh (World History, American History, Ethnic Studies)



Ms. Shieh has used community building circles as part of her practice even before she joined the faculty at Downtown Magnets HS in August 2016. "As one teacher mentor said to me, 'when students are with you, they'll do anything for you.' I do my best to internalize this concept every day...another thing that helps me implement circles is process and routine. I use the same talking piece and do a quick check for understanding, and students chose their norms in the beginning of the year...at this point in time this semester, I can just make a finger motion and students will automatically set up for circle time." Wisely, Ms. Shieh notes that using circles in the classroom can have negative and positive connotations. "If students only get into circles when they are off task, then circle time has a negative association. I use circles for learning, games for community building, and unproductive/disrespectful behavior so they don't always think they're in trouble."

EduCare ACE Fieldtrip to CSULA

On September 28 and October 5, I was lucky enough to chaperone students to Cal State Los Angeles for the ACE (Achievement, Character, Excellence) character-building field trip sponsored by EduCare, and coordinated by Mr. Ahn and Ms. Campos. We spent the day doing team-building exercises, including circles and trust exercises. I was reminded again and again that I work with some of the finest mentors, educators and students in LAUSD!



Community-Building Circle



Trust-Building Activity

EduCare Builds Community...in the faculty cafeteria!



Cooking is probably the ultimate community-building activity...at a party or get-together, who doesn't gravitate to the kitchen to chat and eat? I was pleased to conduct a community-building circle with Ms. Campos and EduCare, right before she and her students prepared Macho Nachos. Before embarking on the culinary adventure, we used the circle to share memories of favorite foods, family chefs and food holidays. Mr. Ray Lee (Physical Science, Biological Science) joined us, and may become a regular feature of the EduCare cooking lessons.

Nora Efron on Food and the Ties That Bind:

"And so, Thanksgiving. Its the most amazing holiday. Just think about it -- it's a miracle that once a year so many millions of Americans sit down to exactly the same meal as one another, exactly the same meal they grew up eating, and exactly the same meal they ate a year earlier. The turkey. The sweet potatoes. The stuffing. The pumpkin pie. Is there anything else we all can agree so vehemently about? I don't think so." *Nora Efron, quoted in the Huffington Post, November 2010*