

Implementing Restorative Justice at Edgemont

Establishing Readiness

How Does It Fit Together?

Brief overview::::::::::

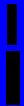
The term *Restorative Justice in Education* can be defined as *facilitating learning communities that nurture the capacity of people to engage with one another and their environment in a manner that supports and respects the inherent dignity and worth of all.*

The mission of Edgemont school is *educating the whole child to the fullest potential through the Montessori principles of student-centered/learner-friendly practices in a peaceful academic environment that fosters the cognitive, social, physical, and emotional development of the child.*

History Repeating Itself

Edgemont is a great pilot for Restorative Justice because.....

- Maria Montessori believed that the future of the world depended on educators explicitly teaching our children the importance of peace and this belief is still reflected at Edgemont. Our educators and Parent Teacher Association (PTA) place a great emphasis on community, the classroom, Edgemont School and Montclair Community; In addition, resources are provided daily to students to assist with expressing their emotions in an appropriate manner, dealing with social interactions as well as conducting mediation peacefully through conflict resolution.
- Early history of RJ in Education has incorporated peacebuilding and conflict resolution to assist with solving problems in the community. As mentioned in *The Little Book of Restorative Justice in Education*, Katherine Evans indicated many schools are including a focus on social-emotional learning (SEL) as a part of their restorative justice approach, of course recognizing that many students need explicit teaching about how to recognize and respond to emotions.



Restorative Approaches at Edgemont (Students)

- The RJ approach with students will allow for community building and appropriate responsiveness to challenging situations through authentic conversations leading to understanding and appropriate actions to repair and RESTORE damaged relationships
- Use of restorative circles within the instructional program at Edgemont is a significant prevention and intervention strategy
 - Helps to build relationships
 - Creates a sense of community
 - Learn how to make decisions collaboratively
 - Resolve difficult issues
 - Develop agreements for the mutual good
- Helping to create and sustain a safe and supportive school environment

Restorative Approaches at Edgemont (Adults)

- Allows for community building and responding to challenging situations through authentic conversations leading to understanding and appropriate actions to repair and RESTORE damaged relationships
- Allows staff and community members to have a sense of safety and trust to connect with one another
- Strengthens a supportive dialogue of sharing thoughts and feelings (RESPECT)
- Community members feel understood, valued and respected
- Sense of empowerment

How Will We Assess Staff Readiness:

- Staff survey (culture and climate)
- Initial RJ peace circle would be open for everyone to attend.
- Continued communication with the School Safety Team on past practices and appropriate language that has proven to be beneficial.

Additional ways Edgemont Fosters RJ through SEL

Beginning in Kindergarten, classroom teachers introduce a Problem solving script that assist students with resolving everyday peer conflicts.

“Do 3”

1. *I didn't like it when you* _____
 - a. I am listening to you....
2. *It made me feel* _____
 - a. I understand you....
3. *I want you to fix it by* _____
 - a. I apologize....

Monthly Character Education themes:

- September: Responsibility
- October: Respect
- November: Compassion
- December: Generosity
- January: Perseverance
- February: Kindness
- March: Honesty
- April: Self-Control
- May: Citizenship
- June: Sportsmanship

Community Support of Restorative Justice

Edgemont PTA is interested in educating parents and caregivers on the Restorative Justice practice to give support to the roll-out of this program school wide.

We intend to do this by first introducing circle practices in the Executive Board of the PTA. The best way to move this program forward, we feel, is by having parental participation in circles. Our Executive Board will be the base from where we will start promoting circle practices to the rest of the parent community.

Our hope is to add a circle PTA meeting for the general community next year. We will invite the community to participate in a circle and find out more information about Restorative Justice.

We feel, as with any other aspect of education, parental involvement and understanding are essential for the success of this program.

Questions/Comments

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