

Adapting the Australian Restorative Practice Framework to the Canadian School Context

Presenters:

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Adapting The Australian Restorative
Practice Framework To The Canadian
School Context

The Journey Begins – Preparing The Ground

- Bringing Family Group Conferencing to Northumberland County, Ontario – 1998
- Piloting Conferencing with the Courts and at Brookside Youth Centre – 1999
- A door opens – Opportunities for Restorative Practice at beginning stages

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The Journey Begins – Planting The Seeds

- A Growing Interest in Restorative Justice and Conferencing and the Birth of the Northumberland Restorative Justice Initiative (NRJI) – 2001
- A network of local stakeholders begin to create experiences in restorative justice
- Criminal justice based but other applications envisioned and strategized by NRJI

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The Journey Continues – Nurturing The Seeds

- Developing the Hosting model fosters grassroots familiarity and knowledge of RJ
- Reaching out to the education community recognizing roadblocks and opportunities
- Spreading the word through public awareness events, networking and advocacy

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The Journey Continues – Nurturing The Seeds

- Legislative support for restorative justice is anticipated in Youth Criminal Justice Act (April 2003)
- To the contrary, the provincial “Safe Schools” legislation advocates ‘zero tolerance’ approaches – an irony is born
- Policies and practices at Brookside begin to impact community efforts in restorative practice

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The Journey Unfolds – Encountering Fellow Travellers

- A broadening of horizons by attending IIRP and other Restorative Practice Conferences starting in 2000
- Learning from pioneering efforts of others—although in different “places”, a real sense of collegiality and sharing the exciting and challenging journey together
- A chance to see new opportunities in restorative practice

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The Journey Unfolds – Encountering Fellow Travellers

- Meeting Terry at Toronto IIRP Conference in 2000
- Reconnecting in 2002, and 2004 in Vancouver when Terry shared his evolving “Restorative Practice Framework” and maintaining contact
- Time with Terry in Spring 2005 after attending the IIRP Conference in Sydney, Australia

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The Journey Unfolds – Encountering Fellow Travellers

- A vital aspect to positive and growing developments in restorative practice has been “sharing the wealth”, a willingness to share experiences, knowledge and best practices
- A collaborative approach with an international dimension
- Continuing to journey, plan and work with local restorative practitioners and advocates in a mutual manner – i.e. Brookside and NRJI

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The Journey Unfolds – Spreading The Word

- Kawartha Pineridge District School Board experiments in conferencing using the RCMP model – interest and excitement is cultivated
- Sharing the “Framework” with key decision makers in Ministry of Children and Youth and and at KPR’s Safe Schools Committee
- Keen interest from school board to pilot the framework in identified schools

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The Journey Unfolds – Standings At The River's Edge

- Once the potential is envisioned, a key question is do we simply want to stand at the river's edge and look at what might be, or, do we want to jump in with both feet – the possibilities are overwhelming and the road feels scary and uncertain
- A leap of faith is necessary!

The Journey Unfolds – Getting Our Feet Wet

- Four identified pilot schools in four different geographic areas of the school district area:
 - Murray Centennial Public School (K-Gr.8)
 - Enniskillen Public School (K-Gr.5)
 - Roseneath Public School (K-Gr.8)
 - Peterborough Collegiate Vocational Institute (Gr. 9-12)

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The Journey Unfolds – Getting Our Feet Wet

So what is this Restorative Practice Framework?



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The Journey Unfolds – Getting Our Feet Wet

- Pre-engagement meetings with school administrators
- Strategizing with administrators and others about how to do it – working out the details and being respectful of school needs
- Day-long orientation to the “Framework” for all school staff over two days, combining schools

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The Journey Unfolds – Getting Our Feet Wet

- Orientation over one day at elementary schools with all students in grade grouping to familiarize the kids with restorative practice, the language and the plans
- Two-day orientation at the high school (PCVS)
- Parent Evening at each school to share the framework with application to parenting
- *Some stories from early days*

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The Journey Unfolds – Getting Our Feet Wet

- Involvement of Trent University in Peterborough Ontario in beginning research connecting emotional intelligence and RP
- Follow-up meetings with school administrators re next steps.
- Providing support to restorative practice schools and their administrators as possible (needs to be through board's support & resources including outside consultation)

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The Journey Unfolds – Getting Our Feet Wet

- Safe Schools Initiative, anti-bullying efforts, emphasis on student achievement continue to help drive these efforts
- In process of starting process of creating 30 more restorative schools this year, with a three year goal of all 100 schools
- Administrators Two-Day training at Pinestone

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The Journey Unfolds – Getting Our Feet Wet

- My secondment to school board for year as restorative justice advisor
- Terry's continued support and collaboration is critical including his two week visit to work with schools, senior administrators, trainers, research and evaluation people etc.
- A **Key** element will be commitment and follow through, building ongoing support at all levels – so far so good but will be an endless challenge!

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The Journey Unfolds – Looking Down the Road

What we like about the “Framework”:

- The Socratic Engagement approach
- The Restorative Questions
- The Restorative Aim Statement
- The involvement of teachers/staff, students and parents
- The idea of restoration instead of exclusion

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The Journey Unfolds – Looking Down the Road

What we like about the “Framework”:

- Continuum of Practice from Informal to Formal
- Restorative Language
- It emphasizes and builds “clear and explicit” practice
- Builds on existing good practice – is not really threatening on a whole and in fact it supports what already works

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The Journey Unfolds – Looking Down the Road

What we like about the “Framework”:

- Elements such as Social Discipline window and its application to teaching styles
- Incorporation of Fair Process
- Is a framework that is applicable in other settings such as Brookside Youth Centre where it also is being developed

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The Journey Unfolds – Getting Our Feet Wet

- What this is really about is ***changing school culture*** and we believe this framework and supportive material (including international resources and experiences/learnings from other contexts) will help us reach our goal
- We are trying to create a Canadian “model” drawing on the best of what is working elsewhere, respectful of the milieu and needs of our local school communities in Ontario

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