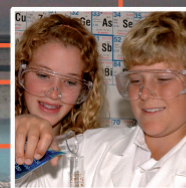




Government of South Australia

Department of Education and  
Children's Services

# South West Metro



Restorative Practice Journey  
2005-2008

# South West Metro Restorative Practice Journey



Restorative Practice began as a focus on building the capacity of our sites to respond to challenging behaviours and develop responsibility in students in a way that gave people hope and a way forward through re-integrative processes.

## THE TRIAL

In 2005, we began the journey as a trial in two schools William Light R-12 & Warriappendi using Terry O'Connell, Director of Real Justice as a catalyst. The model involved:

- Training & Development for staff
- Student workshops
- Parent workshops
- Leadership dialogue sessions

Schools from across our district were invited to observe and participate.

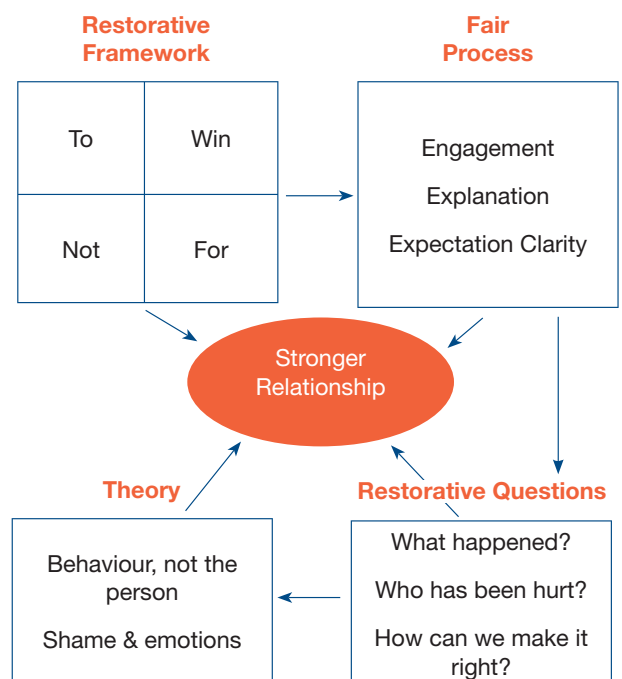
This stage culminated in Terry O'Connell presenting to all district leaders at the South West Metro District Day, where Terry spoke about his experiences of working in the trial schools, the Principals validated the practice & the District Director endorsed restorative practice as a district initiative. All sites were invited to commit to Training & Development in Restorative Practice for their whole site.

This training gave site staff the opportunity to investigate Restorative Practice and engage in rich dialogue around practice issues. Sites were encouraged to come together in clusters for Restorative Practice training and were able to support and encourage each other in implementing aspects of Restorative Practice.

Sites connected with the restorative message with its focus on:

- building relationships,
- being explicit about practice
- non-blaming and repairing harm

## Linking Practice, Theory & Values



Terry O'Connell, 2006



## STAGE ONE

By February 2006, 29 out of 48 sites had accessed professional development in Restorative Practice; including cluster wide seminars, whole school staff days, student workshops, and parent evenings.

The District Office leadership and service provider teams supported sites in their Training & Development and reflected on their own practice using restorative principles.

Follow up with schools by the Student Inclusion & Wellbeing Manager & Student Support & Disability Manager revealed the **Key Learning Outcomes from Stage 1 were:**

- Cluster groups valued the connections with neighbouring schools
- A common framework and language allowed people to communicate more freely and explicitly
- Structured dialogue sessions for site leaders allowed them to hear each others challenges and support each other

**Significant developments included:**

- The development of a Restorative Practice Checklist in collaboration with Terry O'Connell from Real Justice
- Clarity on the purpose of the student workshops and the development of teacher focus questions
- Changed conversations including the sharing of positive experiences and development of stories

## RESTORATIVE PRACTICE CHECKLIST

**Does your practice:**

- Show respect – distinguish behaviour from person?
- Use fair process (does it engage, explain and clarify expectations?)
- Focus upon repairing harm, restoring or building relationships?
- Help develop empathy? ( reflection, insight and learning)
- Enhance responsibility and accountability?
- Promote positive behavioural change?

## STAGE TWO

By August 2006, 42 of 48 sites had now trained in Restorative Practice and committed to it as a district initiative.

As Restorative Practice gathered momentum, new learning evolved. This included:

- The critical role of leadership teams in using Restorative Practice for whole school development
- The need for sustained District Director sponsorship
- The establishment of an accountability process for staff to inform leadership teams of “where to from here”
- The need for district service providers to model and engage in restorative processes when working with sites
- That Restorative Practice is not a behaviour management tool but a relational foundation for school culture
- Restorative Practice and good practice became interchangeable

A significant outcome of both Stage 1 and 2 was a booklet we published of shared stories, as sites documented aspects of their **Restorative Practice** journey – “The South West Restorative Journey: Stories & Resources” October 2006.

This can be found at [www.decs.sa.gov.au/southwest/](http://www.decs.sa.gov.au/southwest/)

## RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

Research and evaluation provided an added dimension. A qualitative and investigative approach was conducted by an independent researcher Gill Westhorp, Director of Community Matters, across 3 primary schools using interviews with focus teacher groups and leadership groups. The research and findings were published in a report titled “*Impacts on Teacher & Student Practice in Three Primary Schools in South West Metro District*” September 2006.

These are summarized below:

### Factors that supported changes

#### Research findings

- Context of perceived need.
- Supportive leadership.
- Discussions in staff meetings.
- Immediate practice after their training.
- Whole school approach.
- Related programs to support the approach.
- Terry working with students – credibility

### Barriers to change

#### Research findings

- Time and resources.
- Competing priorities.
- Lack of follow through by leadership.
- Perceptions of leadership not able to support it.
- Seeing it as not different from what we already do.
- What to do when you don't get the outcomes you.

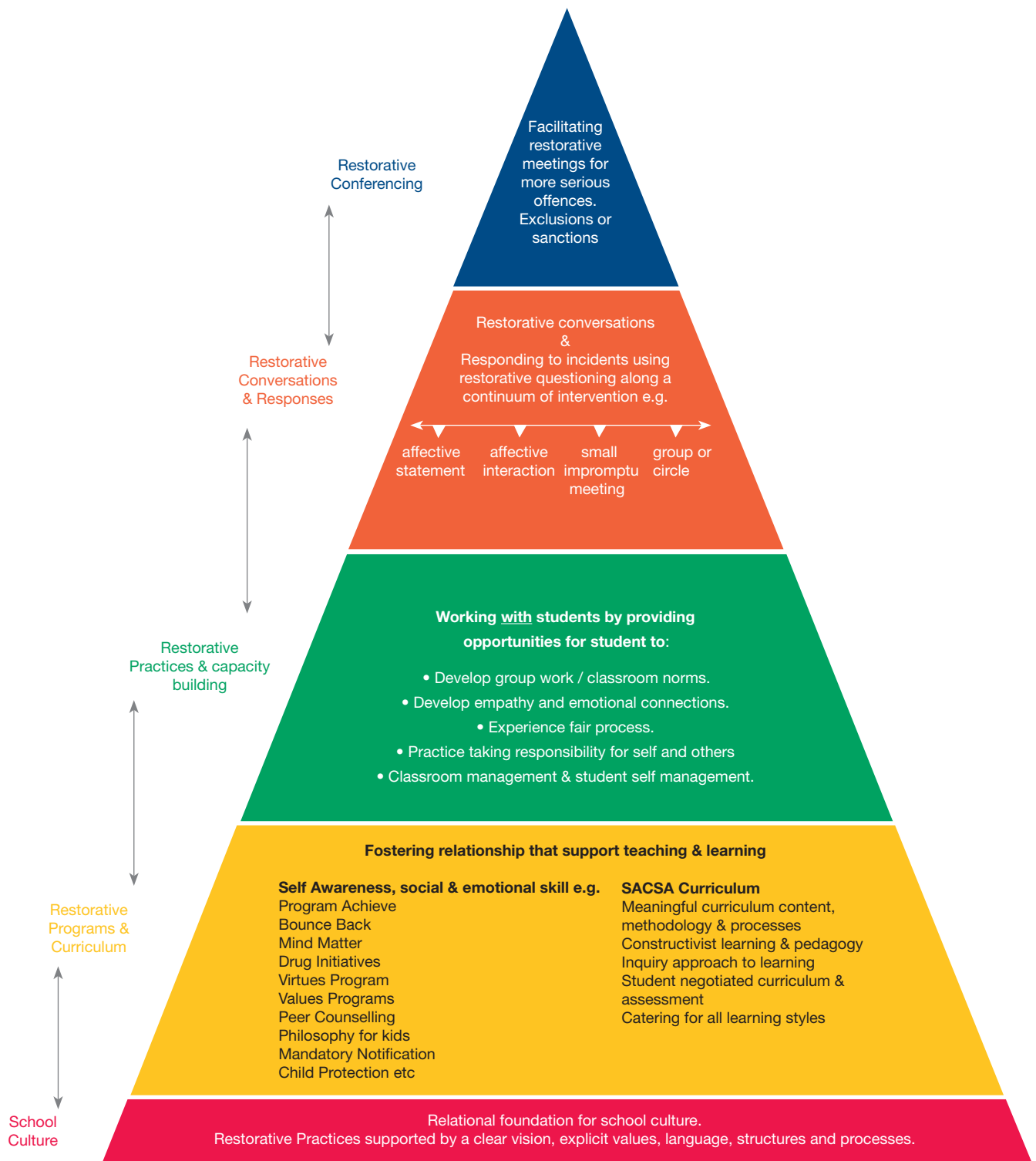
## RESTORATIVE PRACTICE AS AN AGENT FOR CHANGE

In October 2006, we were invited to present the South West Metro Restorative Practice journey at the International Institute for Restorative Practices Conference in Pennsylvania, USA. Lesley Oliver & Cheryl Bevan developed a presentation titled “Using Restorative Practice as a catalyst for change in the South West Metro district, Adelaide, South Australia”.

After being exposed to world's best practice, the multi-faceted nature of using Restorative Practice become evident. Some sites began implementing Restorative Practice by reviewing their values and vision, others looked at their policies and processes and some sites began trialling the use of restorative meetings to address difficult situations. It was clear that a hierarchy of implementation was beginning to emerge.

The triangle was developed as a means of illustrating the multifaceted nature of restorative practice.

### A relational foundation for school culture.





## AUDIT December 2006

By this time, the majority of sites had been trained in Restorative Practice. There was a wide range of knowledge and skills being developed. The district leadership team reflected on how sites could share their journey, learn from each others experiences and build connections. We agreed that we needed to scope the district to discover the breadth and depth of implementation. To achieve this, all sites were audited using a Crosby Grid which mapped them against a set of criteria, from the perspective of the stage that they were at in implementing Restorative Practice.

### Crosby Grid

- 5 Restorative Practice used confidently and appropriatel part of the school culture.
- 4 Have developed a systemic way of working with Restorative Practice.
- 3 Trialing some aspects of Restorative Practice.
- 2 Understanding and committed to Restorative Practice.
- 1 Introduced to Restorative Practice.
- 0 Not aware of Restorative Practice.

Each site was asked to verify the stage assigned to them by the district. Following this audit, the top 4 secondary and 4 primary sites were invited to participate in a summit to harness the collective knowledge and develop strategies to move RP forward in the South West District. The identified sites were Allenby Gardens Primary School, Warriappendi Aboriginal Secondary School, Thebarton Senior College, Findon High School, Underdale High School, William Light R-12 School, West Beach Primary School and Warradale Primary School.

## SUMMIT 1 March 2007

The district office team organized and hosted 2 summit days; one for primary schools and one for secondary sites. Each site was encouraged and funded to bring key site staff to the summits to share knowledge and expertise with colleagues and district office staff.

### Self Review

A key component of the Summit was to enable the representatives from each site to reflect on their journey & the impact of Restorative Practice on their school. This created the opportunity for sites to engage in gathering self-perception data which could inform their way forward.

The pyramid of “A Relational Foundation for School Culture” was used as the basis to develop a rubric.

The rubric used the pyramid with each stage of the pyramid being used as part of the review process.

Restorative Conferencing			
Restorative Conversations & Responses			
Restorative Practicing & Capacity Building			
Restorative Programs and Curriculum			
School Culture			

## THE RUBRIC:

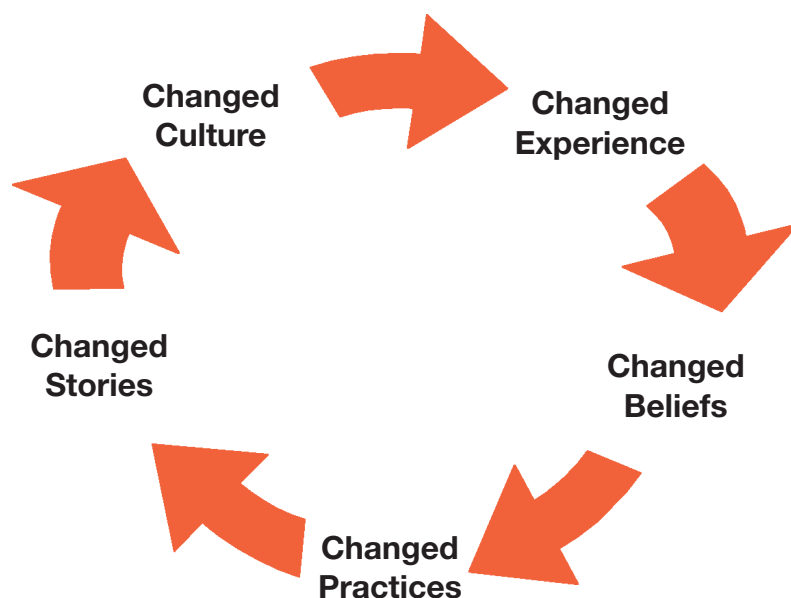
Leaders reviewed where their school communities were in relation to each of the five dimensions & what steps they had taken to arrive at this point.

	1 Undeveloped	2 Developed	3 Functioning	4 Strategic	5 Embedded
Restorative Conferencing					
Restorative Conversations & Responses					
Restorative Practicing & Capacity Building					
Restorative Programs and Curriculum					
School Culture					

## STORYTELLING

The schools involved agreed that it was important to develop the journey they had taken in restorative practice & record the change process.

This was underpinned by the concept that any change process is always a journey with a story, and that as you change the stories, you change the culture



Each school was encouraged to find a variety of ways in which to tell their story and were supported in this process by the District Leadership team and each other.

## SUMMIT 2

In June, 2007, a second round of summit meetings was held. Each school presented & discussed their journey. Presentations varied from PowerPoint presentations, DVDs, CD-Rom's to promotional packages.

Presenter Gill Westhorp, Director of Community Matters addressed the group in relation to plans to expand on her research, into 3 secondary schools (Underdale High School, Findon High School and William Light R-12 School) and 2 primary schools (West Beach Primary School and Allenby Gardens Primary School).

Gill outlined her proposal to investigate the role of '*Supportive Leadership*' and '*Whole School Approaches*' in relation to the impact they have on the implementation of Restorative Practice. Lyn Doppler, Principal, Rozelle Public School NSW, spoke of her research and experience of Restorative Practice in relation to student achievement and world best practice through her Churchill Fellowship findings.

A reference group was formed from a representative of each summit school to plan a South West Metro **Restorative Practice Directions Day** and to collaborate with District leadership to further RP across the district.

### RESTORATIVE PRACTICES DIRECTIONS DAYS

Two Restorative Practice District Directions days will be held in November 2007 (primary & secondary) & all district schools will be invited to attend.

At the Restorative Practice District Directions Days the promotional package containing each school's restorative journey will be launched. The findings of the research will be presented & each school will select an aspect of their restorative journey to share with others by facilitating an interactive workshop to demonstrate different facets of restorative practice.

### FURTHER DATA AND RESEARCH

In 2007 further research is being undertaken by Gill Westhorp in 3 secondary schools & 3 primary schools. The research will follow similar methodologies to the evaluation report "Restorative Practice in the South-West Metropolitan District: Impacts on Teacher and Student Practice in Three Primary Schools" (Community Matters, 2006), and will further investigate two 'enabling factors' identified in that report "**supportive leadership**" and "**whole school approaches**" – with specific reference to the implementation of restorative practice.

Data on exclusion & suspension is also being collated & reviewed, as well as school data on detentions, time out of class & yard in order to ascertain the nature of the impact of restorative practice in schools.

### LEADING AND LEARNING BEYOND THE DISTRICT

In May 2007, Thebarton Senior College staff represented South Australia & presented their journey in restorative practice "Our village: A Whole School Approach to Relationship Building" at the National Safe Schools Conference in Brisbane, Qld.

In September 2007, Lesley Oliver shared aspects of the South West Metro District Restorative Practice journey at a forum for Sydney District leaders, Sydney NSW

In October 2007, 3 South West Metro sites will present at the "Inaugural Restorative Justice International Conference" Queensland, Australia.

- Allenby Gardens Primary School – "The impact of restorative processes on the school community of AGPS with particular emphasis on playground support strategies"
- Warriappendi School – "Restorative Practice with students at Warriappendi School"
- Lesley Oliver & Cheryl Bevan from the SWM District office will present: "Research and evaluation on Restorative Practice: What are we looking for?"

### WHERE TO FROM HERE?

At the conclusion of the Restorative Practice Directions Days in November 2007, schools will be asked to identify an aspect of RP they wish to further in their site, with district office and project funding support. This will include engaging in an accountability framework to document processes & outcomes and in turn sharing good practice across the district. This stage will culminate in a district conference in 2008, with workshop demonstrating best practice, and incorporate evaluation done at both a site and district level.

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