

# Restorative Justice Conferencing

## January Newsletter

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### **Why students must accept their part in the situation?**

Lying and position shifting is a problem for the use of Restorative Justice Practices. Well before the option of conferencing or a circle process is even offered, the administrator needs to be sure they are getting a very real admission to the student's equity in the incident. Even though the process touts that we are not deciding who is good or bad, the lack of honesty and truth in assessing obligations diminishes the ability to assure accountability or really understand what is actually going on. This confusion creates frustration for all parties and is likely to leave participants stuck in positions rather than moving to solutions and healing.

The first meeting with the offender or the potentially conflicted students, is crucial because this initial meeting with the administrator is the best time to discuss and react to the facts before there has been time to consider consequences and spin yarns about their involvement and defray responsibility. This isn't a place to haggle. Due to the chance of re-victimization the RJC option should not be considered, let alone provided, if there is any doubt as to the validity of the claims and acceptance to the student's behavior.

Now, situations of prevention (prior to incident) are slightly different. In these instances, there has not yet been a breach to the code of conduct. It still is just as important to have the students provide a truthful recount of the disruption and accept their part in the situation. Failure to

do so will not allow the conference to provide the healing benefits that it touts without having the facts straight (as straight as possible).

It is also very important to assess where the conflict originates. If this is an ongoing dispute from the neighborhood or carrying over from the previous school, grade or class, it is important to talk it back as far as it may go. Taking all the information into account, we can be sure that the process addresses the concerns and finalizes all conflicting variables that brought us together. Once the facts are divulged and acknowledged, it is onward to healing and agreement.

### **Check out the latest blog article**

Please sign up for update emails to catch new posts, sharing ideas and developments.

<http://rjcconferencing.wordpress.com>

#### **RJC Moment**

Tension was extremely high when the question of bullying was raised to the offending student. When asked "what happened?" She went on to confirm her bullying behavior and accept responsibility for her actions. The tension in the room immediately disappeared and the anger changed to gestures of support and healing for all parties. Truth is key in all healing.