



THE RESTORATIVE PRACTICES --ADVOCATE--

VOLUME 6: ISSUE 5 – January 2026

A NEWSLETTER for EDUCATORS

Restorative Expression

"People are always blaming their circumstances for what they are. I don't believe in circumstances. The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want, and, if they can't find them they make them." - George Bernard Shaw

"Anything that's human is mentionable, and anything that is mentionable can be more manageable. When we can talk about our feelings, they become less overwhelming, less upsetting, and less scary. The people we trust with that important talk can help us know that we're not alone." - Fred Rogers

"To be yourself in the world that is constantly trying to make you something else is the greatest accomplishment." – Ralph Wado Emerson

"Violence produces only something resembling justice, but it distances people from the possibility of living justly, without violence." - Leo Tolstoy

"Peace is not the absence of conflict but the presence of creative alternatives for responding to conflict -- alternatives to passive or aggressive responses, alternatives to violence." - Dorothy Thompson

CALENDAR

FROM YOU!

SHARE RESTORATIVE EVENTS OF VALUE!

We'll promote them here. Write to:

rob.simon.rp@usd259.net.

For YOUR Information

*Ted Wachtel – internationally known as an originator of Restorative Practices – and his son Josh are hosting "Lunch Breaks" to discuss restorative attitudes, Skills and Knowledge. For details of how to register for **FREE** and join in while you eat your lunch, go here:*

<https://mailchi.mp/b581e3d957eb/scholarship-opportunity-for-leadership-training-17273412?e=732e5fe915>



By Rob Simon
RP Consultant/Advocate

Challenge + Support = Growth

In an article penned for Science of Mind magazine this past December, Rev. Dr. Michael Gott opened with this salvo:

"Psychologist Nevitt Sanford developed a theory of growth widely used in education. The theory says students need *challenges* to grow, but the challenges must be balanced with *support*. Too much or too little of either will limit a student's ability to learn and integrate."

The restorative practitioner should find this assertion resonant. It is, after all, just another way of expressing the two axes that structure the social discipline window (a.k.a. relationship window) ... **high expectations** and **high support**, which lands us squarely in the WITH quadrant of the window, the restorative box.

And with just a bit of searching, we can find that this insight from Sanford goes at least as far back as 1962 ... and comes with strategies to apply. In one source, essentially, Sanford asks:

What strategies do you use during advising appointments to find out about challenges students are facing and to provide support?.

And here are highlights of some recommended strategies:

1. **Focus on Interpersonal Relationship** - Build rapport, create welcoming space, promote mindfulness empathy/sensitivity/"non-judgement"
2. **Deploy Appropriate Communication Skills** – Use open-ended questions, active listening, coaching, recognize strengths, share appreciations, pay attention to non-verbals
3. **Offer Student-Centered Support** - Normalize situation, teach empathy/humility, promote selfcare, acknowledge basic needs, affirm privacy appropriately, focus on positive, and empower
4. **Model Affective Advisor Actions** - Acknowledge role as support, be credible and honest (know what you don't know), follow-up

We cannot overemphasize the primacy of approaching our work with others through these channels. Challenge and support, and...

We. Stay. The. Course.

Barriers To Belonging – Rev. Dr. Michael Gott

“[When] I am willing to be myself fully and openly, and celebrate my freedom, I belong.”

“We are social beings. We need relationships with other people to live healthy and full lives. In adolescence, we go through a natural stage of development where we shift away from the family group to find acceptance with peers. At this stage of life, we learn to fit in. We begin to alter our behavior in ways we think will help us be accepted by others. We learn to present a persona we think will help us fit in, rather than simply being authentic selves. And for many, this habit of editing the self to fit in continues through life.

But what we really need is not fitting in. Instead, it is belonging. When we find relationships and communities where we belong, there is no need to hide behind a mask. When we belong, all that we are also belongs.

It can feel risky to be so authentic. What if I'm rejected? What I have found is that if I'm willing to be myself, to be truly seen, I draw into my experience the people who like me for who I am, who love me with all of my quirks and idiosyncrasies, and who see my gifts. There is an ease. I don't have to try so hard. This is belonging.

The true risk is to never let people see your authentic self. Fitting in is the greatest barrier to experiencing belonging.

Trust yourself. You are an irreplaceable, unrepeatable expression of Spirit. Let yourself be seen and known and loved just for who you are.”

(SOURCE: Science of Mind, ISSN 0036-8458, December 2025, ScienceOfMind.com)

For your...

RESTORATIVE
TOOLBOX



A Restorative View of Teacher-Student De-Escalation

Not long ago, USD 259 delivered Part 1 of an on-going **De-escalation Training**. In part, the following brief definition was offered:

“De-escalation Techniques - refers to a progression of non-verbal (e.g., body language, physical cues, and allowing personal space), verbal, and environmental interventions used to prevent or moderate escalation of student behavior.”

This definition was then expanded with these clarifications:

- **Verbal** - The words used to send a message
- **Paraverbal** - The way these words are said, such as tone, volume, and speed used
- **Nonverbal** - Body language ... gestures, facial expressions ... eye contact, personal space, posture, and use of touch.

Here, we offer TEN (10) restorative colors (from *The **ASK** Framework*) to further simplify and enhance the absolutely critical skill of de-escalating negative behaviors or avoiding escalating behaviors in the first place.

1. Begin with the attitude that it's you working together WITH the student on the problem.
2. Generally, ask more questions; make fewer statements.
3. As in the scriptural injunction, **“A soft answer turneth away wrath,”** a calm tone of voice will almost always de-escalate a confrontation. Address your concerns quietly and privately. (Do not make a public show of your corrective conversation.)
4. Demonstrate a non-threatening physical posture such as crouching, bending down, or sitting with a student to have a quiet conversation.
5. You have more power than the student. Use the fullness of it as a last resort instead of the first strategy. (See point #1.)
6. Choose another time/place to confront problem behavior than when it first emerges.
7. Ask, **“What is your understanding of my expectations for ...”**
8. Ask, **“How can I help you be more successful right now?”**
9. Ask, **“What is happening with you, and is there any way I can help?”**
10. BRIEFLY clarify your expectations, insist on minimum compliance, and make clear what the consequence is for not complying. Then, be sure to unobtrusively follow through.