Restorative Justice In Education

What if your school stopped suspending students? What if instead of keeping problem students locked inside a room for days on end or restricting them from coming to school at all? What if that different solution yielded better results in terms of resolving conflicts and preventing students from repeating the same offence? What if the restorative justice approach was the new discipline? Restorative justice has been part of Canada's criminal justice system for over 40 years, and now are being brought into schools as a new result of disciplining students. Restorative justice is commonly defined as an approach to justice that focuses on addressing the harm caused by crime while holding the offender responsible for their actions, by providing an opportunity for the parties directly affected by the crime – victims, offenders and communities – to identify and address their needs in the aftermath of a crime. Restorative justice approaches are being used in schools across the province, restorative justice is a progressive approach for addressing bullying, vandalism, conflict and other discipline problems. Whether as an alternative to zero-tolerance or as a way to reduce repeat offences and keep students in school, these principles and techniques seem to be helping schools to be safer places for students and learning. The restorative justice approach in schools can help solves punishments that can cause a student to be either put into detention, suspension or even expelled from school.

Restorative justice is based on an understanding that crime is a violation of people and relationships. The principles of restorative justice are based on respect, compassion and inclusivity. As well as, encourages meaningful engagement and accountability and provides an opportunity for healing, reparation and reintegration. For example, if a student was bullying another student in the class. The restorative approach would allow the student who was bullying the other student to write a letter of apology to that individual and write a reflection paper on how it feels to be put down or gossiped about while reading their apology to that student directly. This approach doesn't punish that student with time in detention without reflection, this allows the student who's the offender to reflect their action while allowing the victim to understand why the student was bullying them. Restorative justice empowers students to resolve conflicts on their own and in small groups. Essentially, the idea is to bring students together in small groups to talk, ask questions, and share their grievances. It moves away from traditional discipline. By requiring the student to face their victims, consider the impact of their behaviour, and come up with a way to make amends, it holds them accountable for their actions as well as gives the victims a voice.

In addition, Restorative practices represent a significant paradigm shift from traditional school disciplinary practices, where students who engage in increasingly disruptive behaviours do not receive increasingly harsh punishments. Restorative practices require students to focus on the harm their misbehaviour caused, and what they can do to repair that harm and restore and strengthen relationships that may have been affected. Many students use to be suspended for harmful behaviour, with restorative practices, there's a shared responsibility among students and teachers to hold each other accountable for maintaining high behavioural expectations, and for creating a safe place of trust, safety, and mutual respect. With this in mind, another example is, if a student was caught fighting, instead of the school suspending that student, prepare and deliver a speech to a classroom or larger school assembly about how to negotiate with words rather than fists. Teach a class during detention on anger management and self-control. Allow

that student to apologize to the victim student. This also allows the students to know why they're being punished. That being said, when restorative justice is carried out correctly, students will be more likely to accept the punishment without any resentment this allows them to process and understand what they did. If the discussion was carried out beforehand, then the punishments tend to be more reasonable.

Lastly, by now, many schools know that traditional approaches to student discipline do not improve the student's behaviour. In fact, exclusionary discipline such as out-of-school suspension or even being expelled, linked to student disengagement, drop out, and entanglement criminal acts. Restorative justice is all about giving ownership of behaviour to students, both in those who are harmed and those who do the harming. Even so, if the student operates firmly on the punitive scale of discipline. For this reason, there are many models of restorative justice; the best practices in developing, implementing, or measuring the outcomes of these results are either peacemaking circles and/or mediation conferences that bring harmed parties together to talk about issues with the help of a skilled facilitator, and/or youth-centred juries composed of students trained to hear cases of low-level student misconduct. What unifies restorative justice programs is the goal of building strong relationships among students, staff, teachers, administrators, and parents while creating safe, productive learning environments for all. For example, if a student was caught using or possessing drugs the student would most likely be expelled from school, instead of expelling the student a suspension that allows the student to do community service in a drug rehab centre or hospital where addicts are being treated. This allows the student to realize the danger of drugs and reflect on their conduct. Ultimately, a restorative approach to discipline carves a pathway for students to follow. When punitive measures are taken, they have the odd effect of reinforcing the behavior by labeling and alienating the student. Restorative approaches give students a voice, a part in the community, and an ability to understand their decisions.

In conclusion, restorative justice gives students a chance to apologize, to understand their actions or potential actions from someone else's viewpoint, and to make amends. This method tends to be more productive far more than punitive methods. Restorative justice approach in schools can help solves punishments that can cause a student to be either put into detention, suspension or even expelled from school.

WEBLINK: https://hsb4uadeyontiamcclacken.wordpress.com/2019/01/13/lesson-15-task-4-what-do-i-believe-in/

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