Restorative Practice

Responding to Adverse Childhood Experiences

Practical Approaches for Schools

This interactive workshop explores how schools can respond effectively and compassionately to the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) through a restorative practice lens. The session will prioritise practical, relationship-based approaches to creating safe, connected, and emotionally supportive school communities for both students and staff, fostering a culture of belonging and repair.

ippn Because leadership matters
The Network for Principals and Deputy Principals

CONNECT RP

1

Relational Check-in!

Which cat are you today?

What do you know about Restorative Practice?

What would you like to know about Restorative Practice?



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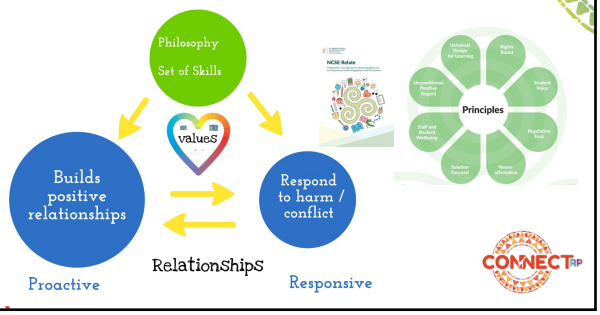
2

Values-Based & Needs-Led



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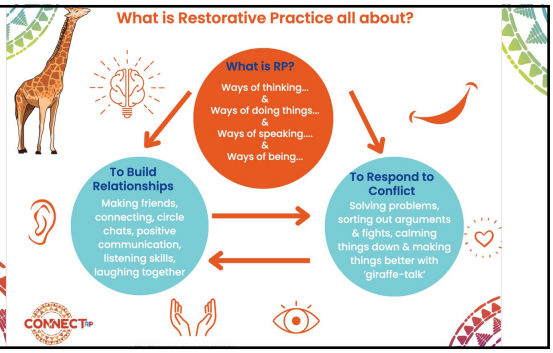
What is Restorative Practice all about?



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School Culture Partnership - Map

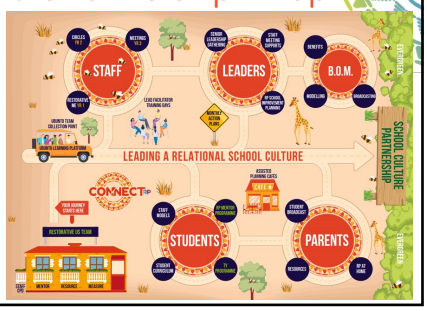
KEY AREAS OF WELLBEING

Culture and Environment

Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)

Policy and Planning

Relationships and Partnerships



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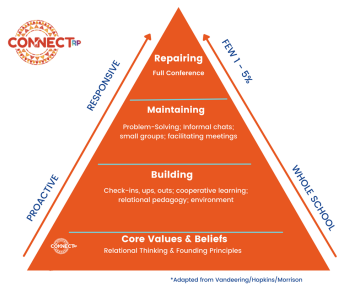
Hierarchy of Responses



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Trauma Informed?
RESTORATIVE PRACTICE
Key Tenets
Positive Relationships
We are profoundly relational. We flourish in environments when we feel seen and heard, where we know we matter.
We cultivate intentional spaces to connect, laugh and enjoy one another's company
Caring Culture
Our values and actions align to create an operational relational culture. We seek the best in ourselves and others
Connected Communities
We are interconnected.
This is the essence of UBUNTU and the restorative work we commit to.
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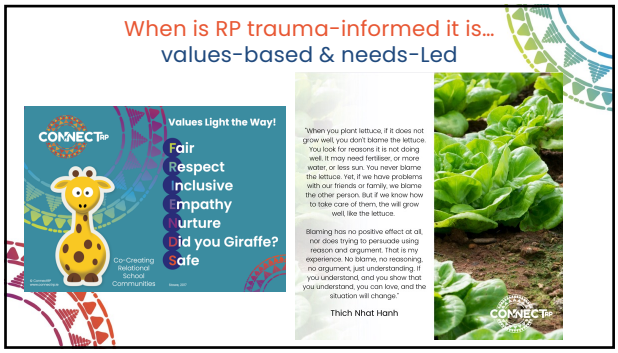
When is RP trauma-informed it is...
values-based & needs-Led
CONNECT RP
Values Light the Way!
Fair
Respect
Inclusive
Empathy
Nurture
Did you Giraffe?
Safe
Co-Creating Relational School Communities
"When you plant lettuce, if it does not grow well, you don't blame the lettuce. You look for reasons it is not doing well. It may need fertiliser, or more water, or less sun. You never blame the lettuce. Yet, if we have problems with our friends or family, we blame the other person. But if we know how to take care of them, the will grow well, like the lettuce.
Blaming has no positive effect at all, nor does trying to persuade using reason and argument. That is my experience. No blame, no reasoning, no argument, just understanding. If you understand, and you show that you understand, you can love, and the situation will change."
Thich Nhat Hanh
CONNECT RP

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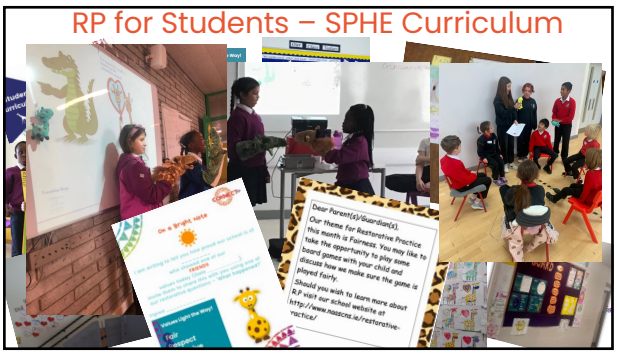
RP for Students – SPHE Curriculum
Dear Parent(s)/Guardian(s),
Our theme for Restorative Practice this month is Fairness. You may like to take the opportunity to play some board games with your child and discuss how we make sure the game is played fairly.
Should you wish to learn more about R.P visit our school website or http://www.hiascns.ie/restorative-practice/

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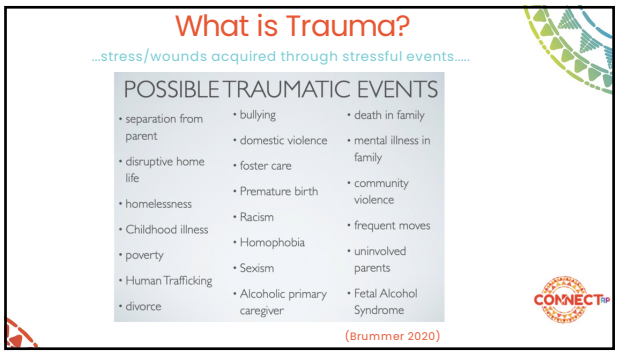
What is Trauma?
...stress/wounds acquired through stressful events.....
POSSIBLE TRAUMATIC EVENTS
• separation from parent
• disruptive home life
• homelessness
• Childhood illness
• poverty
• Human Trafficking
• divorce
• bullying
• domestic violence
• foster care
• Premature birth
• Racism
• Homophobia
• Sexism
• Alcoholic primary caregiver
• death in family
• mental illness in family
• community violence
• frequent moves
• uninvolved parents
• Fetal Alcohol Syndrome
(Brummer 2020)
CONNECT RP

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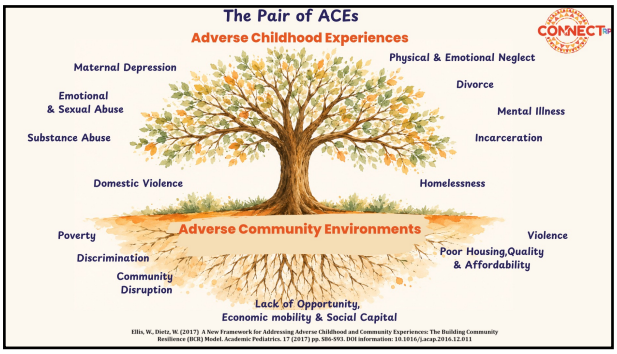
The Pair of ACEs
Adverse Childhood Experiences
Maternal Depression
Emotional & Sexual Abuse
Substance Abuse
Domestic Violence
Physical & Emotional Neglect
Divorce
Mental Illness
Incarceration
Homelessness
Adverse Community Environments
Poverty
Discrimination
Community Disruption
Violence
Poor Housing,Quality & Affordability
Lack of Opportunity, Economic mobility & Social Capital
Ellis, W., Dietz, W. (2017) A New Framework for Addressing Adverse Childhood and Community Experiences: The Building Community Resilience (BCR) Model. Academic Pediatrics. 17 (2017) pp. S86-S93. DOI information: 10.1016/j.acap.2016.12.011
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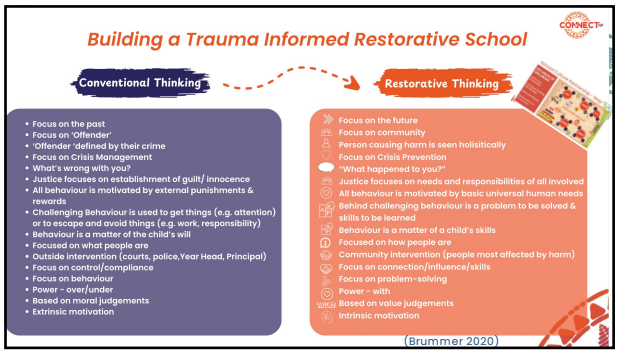
Building a Trauma Informed Restorative School
Conventional Thinking
Restorative Thinking
• Focus on the past
• Focus on 'Offender'
• 'Offender 'defined by their crime
• Focus on Crisis Management
• What's wrong with you?
• Justice focuses on establishment of guilt/ innocence
• All behaviour is motivated by external punishments & rewards
• Challenging Behaviour is used to get things (e.g. attention) or to escape and avoid things (e.g. work, responsibility)
• Behaviour is a matter of the child's will
• Focused on what people are
• Outside intervention (courts, police,Year Head, Principal)
• Focus on control/compliance
• Focus on behaviour
• Power - over/under
• Based on moral judgements
• Extrinsic motivation
• Focus on the future
• Focus on community
• Person causing harm is seen holisitically
• Focus on Crisis Prevention
• "What happened to you?"
• Justice focuses on needs and responsibilities of all involved
• All behaviour is motivated by basic universal human needs
• Behind challenging behaviour is a problem to be solved & skills to be learned
• Behaviour is a matter of a child's skills
• Focused on how people are
• Community intervention (people most affected by harm)
• Focus on connection/influence/skills
• Focus on problem-solving
• Power - with
• Based on value judgements
• Intrinsic motivation
(Brummer 2020)
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Relational Thinking (Bite Size CPD)

What's wrong with you?

versus

What happened to you?

Behaviour	Relationships
Why?	What Happened?
Attention seeking	Connection seeking
What's wrong with X?	What happened to X?
We succeed if we want to	We succeed if we can
Tell/Demand/Command	Ask/Request/Connect
React	Respond
Disruptive/Bad	Stressed Out/Coping
Misbehaving	Dysregulated
They're giving me a hard time	They're having hard time
Correction	Redirection
Compliance	Competency building
Punishment	Accountability
Outcome	Process
Who is to blame?	How are people harmed?
How will they pay for this?	What are the needs to make amends?

13

Need Under Trauma - Belonging

What is the difference between guilt and shame?

How does shame show up in behaviours?



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Shame from a Trauma-Informed Lens

- Hardwired for connection
- Biggest casualty of trauma is vulnerability.... (Brené Brown)
- Dysregulated behaviour that is now being manifested in my classroom –

'they're giving me a hard time

versus

they're having a hard time'.. (& so am I)

- Not here to fix or to solve global issues just understand - can create a community of respect & regulation where connection is prioritised



Circle of Influence v Circle of Concern



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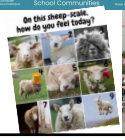
Need for Belonging – Therapeutic Moments



Triggers Vs Glimmers

- Creating spaces where we can take the armour off:
  - Power in little therapeutic moments (5:1 Ratio)
  - Relational & regulatory practices - Check-Ins / One-Word-Whizz -
  - Greet at door with smile
  - Personal scripts









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Maya Angelou's 4 x Questions!

1. Do you see me?
2. Do you care that I'm here?
3. Am I enough for you, or do you need me to be better in some way?
4. Can I tell that I'm special to you by the way that you look at me?







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Regulation First in Times of Challenge...

- Maintain the empathic bond:
  - 'Soft eyes turned to wonder'
  - psychological understanding versus moral judgement- not badness but struggle – unconditional positive regard
  - 'What's the most generous assumption I can make in this situation?
  - Protect the relationship



"Every behaviour makes sense when we understand the story behind it. This week I will try to understand the story behind 'Student/Situation X..."



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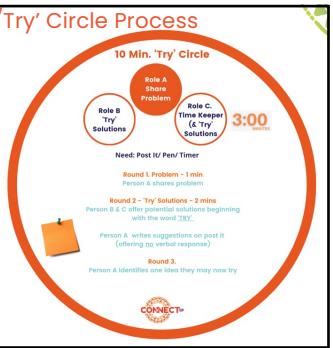
Peer Coaching - 10 min 'Try' Circle Process

Think:

Identify a live challenge you have regarding the impact of ACEs within your school context.





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Empowering your Team through Circle Process

(Values in Action)

- Growing empathy
- Making sure we contribute more than we criticise
- Cultivating psychological safety & an equity of voice
- Promoting accountability
- Making room for practices of connection
- Maximising a solution-focused lens
- Building trust





Circle of Influence v Circle of Concern



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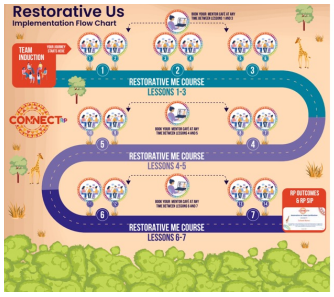
RP Team – Learning Journey





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Responding to Adversary Childhood Experiences

Seven Core Assumptions

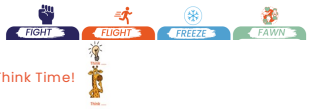
What we believe to be true



(*Adapted from Kay Pranis)

Trauma-Responses

Understanding Survival Responses



Think Time!

What Fight, Flight, Freeze, or Fawn behaviours can you identify when thinking of your students 'in trouble' = 'in struggle'?

How might these survival mechanisms show up for us?

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Understanding Survival Responses

(*adapted from Brummer 2020)

FIGHT	FLIGHT	FREEZE	FAWN
• Aggression • Arguments • Threats • Stillness • Defiance • Yelling • Cursing/ Vulgar Language • Sudden outbursts • Posturing • Pacing • Provoking Adults • Throwing objects • Talking Back • Slamming doors or lockers • Hands in fists • Refusal to sit in desk	• Walking out of class • Tardiness or Truancy • Ignoring • Avoidance • Head down, Hoody Up! • Cutting class • Leaving School • Hovering • Purposely getting kicked out • Withdrawing • Daydreaming • Seeming to sleep • Headphones or Earbuds • Mindless cell phone • Hiding under desks, tables	• Blank stares • Disassociation • Head on desk • Refusal to answer questions • Appears forgetful • Inability to move • Exhibiting numbness • Can't recognize faces	• Exaggerated People pleasing • Lack of Boundaries • Exaggerated Helping • Befriending Bullies

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The Roots of Anger

Roots of Anger



Anger as a Secondary Emotion.

List the observable characteristics of anger

Root emotions/feelings...?

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Anger from a Trauma-Informed Lens

ACEs model - symptoms we see as a result of trauma or outrageously imbalanced nervous system:
Trauma returns as a reaction not just a memory

- Hyper vigilant & high alert
- Anger quickly - nervous system doesn't regulate well
- Corrupted thinking
- Emotional dissonance - pool of blame
- Disassociated (feels like relief but looks like don't care (anxiety relief)
- Smile (serotonin release)!

Attack to despair

Smaller window of tolerance - sunburn



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Trauma & The Brain

Hand Model of Brain (Dr Daniel Sielgal)

Children with traumatic stress are often operating within the mode of "survival in the moment."

When in 'survival in the moment', higher order brain functions are temporarily put on hold.

- appraise threat
- sacrifice context for speed of response
- make decisions outside of consciousness
- mobilise the body for fight, flight, freeze or fawn.
- Verbal encoding stops.
- Actions and responses are generated at lower brain levels (limbic system) Pain is suppressed or ignored.

(Wolpow et. al., 2016)



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Need for Safety - So Now What?

Predictability – warm- up / structure/ classroom agreements

Rhythmic activity:
- Relational pedagogy - present & in the body
- Music/ sensory breaks/ fidgets/ mindfulness

Nurture rooms/approach

Calm is superpower:
- We are social beings - outrageously contagious
- Be co-regulator – step back/lower voice
- Who do I want to be in this situation?
- Regulation First Approach





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Emotional Literacy

Antidote is Empathy:
- 'I' versus 'you' (modelling affective language)
- Connection before correction

'A child seldom needs a good talking to as much as a good listening to…' (Robert Brault)





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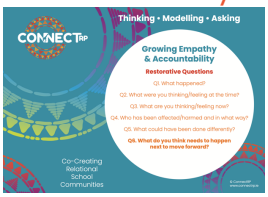
Conflict literacy - Relational Inquiry





Trauma-informed questioning– *Bonus Restorative Qs:
- What's not working among us?
- What needs to change in each of us to take care of all of us?
- What's the hardest thing for you about the situation?
- Tell me what you want me to know?
- What really matters to you?

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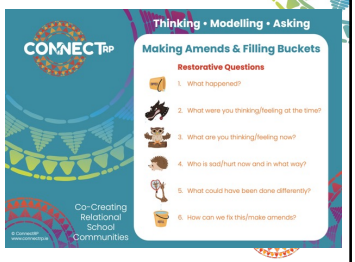
Restorative Conversations – 3 X Rs

Regulate
Calm is a superpower!

Relate
Say it like you are on their side

Reason
Is 'The Wise Owl' online?



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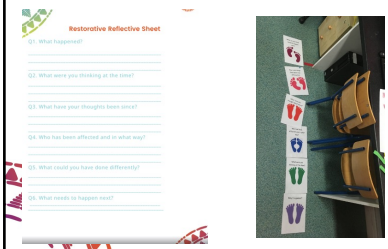
Timing is Key!!

Bruce Perry's 3 x Rs – Regulate, Relate, Reason





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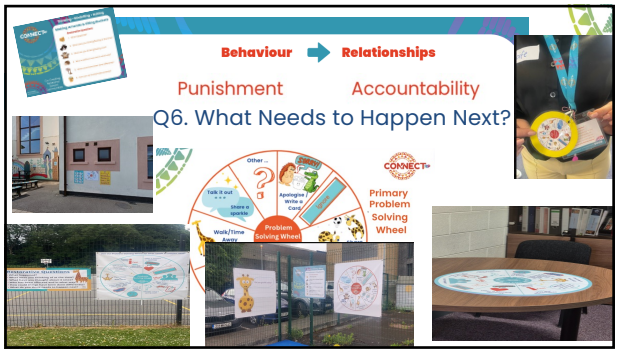

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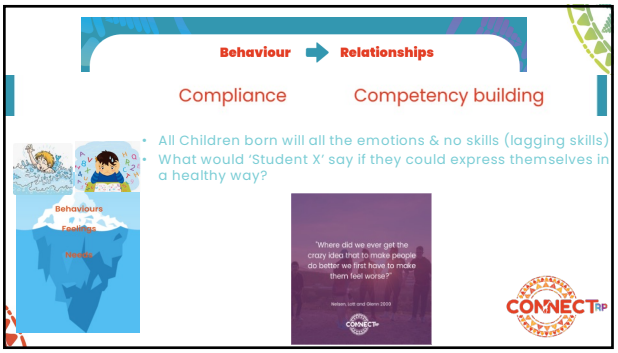

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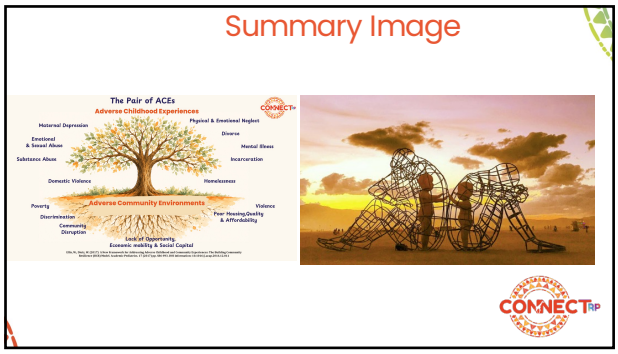

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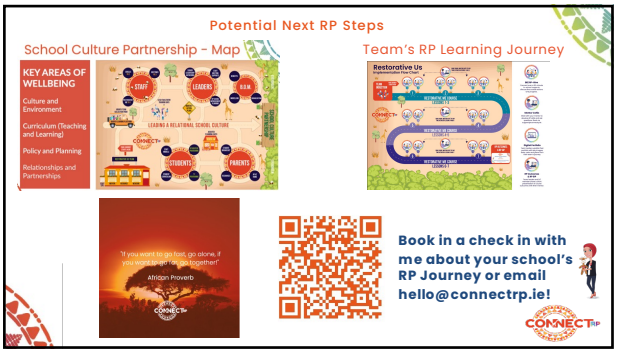
Potential Next RP Steps
School Culture Partnership - Map
Team's RP Learning Journey
KEY AREAS OF WELLBEING
Culture and Environment
Curriculum (Teaching and Learning)
Policy and Planning
Relationships and Partnerships
Restorative Us
"If you want to go fast, go alone, if you want to go far, go together"
African Proverb
Book in a check in with me about your school's RP Journey or email hello@connectrp.ie!

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Thank You & Stay in Touch!
www.connectrp.ie
Michelle Stowe, Restorative Practice
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@mstowerp
connect_rp_
hello@connectrp.ie

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What needs to happen next?



Co-creating Relational School Cultures

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Our Restorative Switches; the Heart of Relational Thinking!

Co-creating Relational School Cultures

Behaviour	Relationships
Why?	What Happened?
Attention seeking	Connection seeking
What's wrong with X?	What happened to X?
We succeed if we want to	We succeed if we can
Tell/Demand/Command	Ask/Request/Connect
React	Respond
Disruptive/Bad	Stressed Out/Coping
Misbehaving	Dysregulated
They're giving me a hard time	They're having hard time
Correction	Redirection
Compliance	Competency building
Punishment	Accountability
Outcome	Process
Who is to blame?	How are people harmed?
How will they pay for this?	What are the needs to make amends?

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Values Light the Way!



Fair
Respect
Inclusive
Empathy
Nurture
Did you Giraffe?
Safe

Co-creating
Relational
School
Cultures

Stowe, 2017

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Nurturing Relationships Through Positive Communication

5:1 Relationship SCALE

- **S**mile
- **C**onnect
- **A**sk
- **L**isten
- **E**ngage

Co-Creating Relational School Communities

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Thinking • Modelling • Asking

Making Amends & Filling Buckets

Restorative Questions



1. What happened?



2. What were you thinking/feeling at the time?



3. What are you thinking/feeling now?



4. Who is sad/hurt now and in what way?



5. What could have been done differently?



6. How can we fix this/make amends?

Co-creating Relational School Cultures

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