



School Staff and Youth Perspectives of Tier 1 Restorative Practices Classroom Circles.

SUMMARY

In this qualitative study, researchers gathered perceptions from staff and students about the relationship between restorative practices, community-building circles, and social-emotional learning. Data included beginning- and end-of-year surveys about staff perspectives on implementation, semi-structured interviews with staff, and surveys about student participation. Results showed a strong association between community-building circles and social-emotional learning (SEL). The challenges mentioned included circle participation, equitable access, and conflict between discipline and restorative practices. This supports the idea that restorative practices need to be implemented school-wide.

IMPORTANCE

School counselors, especially in elementary schools, often deliver short lessons and can incorporate community circles into their curriculum. This is an important opportunity to advocate for equitable access to classrooms. Community circles are a proactive way of building strong peer relationships and strategies for resolving conflict.

EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS

- Ensure that all students have access to participate in the circle (e.g., alternative seating, multiple modes of participation)
- Carefully consider opening and closing questions that all students can connect with

PRACTITIONER TIPS

Community building circles have the potential to be a strong tool for improving **social-emotional competence** in students

Teachers can seamlessly **incorporate** such circles into **pre-existing group time** by setting a clear routine (ex. *greeting, opening question, SEL topic of the day, closing statement/activity*)

Teachers and students report **positive increases** in student **participation, communication,** and sense of **belonging**

Circles can be used among staff to develop a strong sense of **school community.**

Garnett, B. R., Kervick, C. T., Moore, M., Ballysingh, T. A., & Smith, L. C. (2022). School staff and youth perspectives of Tier 1 restorative practices classroom circles. *School Psychology Review*, 51(1), 112-126. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1080/2372966X.2020.1795557>