



Restorative practices and the integration of social emotional learning as a path to positive school climates.

SUMMARY

This article highlights the benefits of integrating social emotional learning (SEL) practices with restorative practices (RP) and promoting educator buy-in, ultimately shifting school climates towards relationship building and away from punitive punishments. This synthesis of research offers alternative practices to racially discriminatory zero-tolerance policies that promote RP through rebuilding, repairing, and affirming relationships through developing SEL skills. The article emphasizes the success of RP and looks toward the future by integrating RP and SEL development to create a more inclusive and sustainable restorative school culture.

IMPORTANCE

- Mental health professionals play an integral role in developing and fostering a comprehensive school climate while training teachers and other personnel on how to promote and educate students on SEL
- Understanding the positive correlation between RP and positive behavior outcomes supports the work of reducing punitive punishment and discipline that is inherently racist
- Promoting the integration of SEL and RP provides students and faculty with the opportunity to build healthy relationships and foster SEL skills that can be used during conflict processing
- Using RP in schools and fostering teacher buy-in reduces discipline and overall creates a more equitable school environment for students

EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS

It is important to recognize that the educational system is inherently racist and current systemic discipline practices disproportionately punish black and brown students more than their white peers. When considering implementing RP, it is also important to consider other student identities such as students who identify as LGBTQ+, students with disabilities, and students with previous trauma. Implementing RP and SEL should be done with a holistic approach and should be student-centered around building and fostering relationships.

PRACTITIONER TIPS

Those who are successful in implementing RP are **student and human-focused**, trusting of colleagues and students, willing to recognize mistakes, and creative.

It is imperative to **invest time and money** into training educators in RP to promote buy-in and allow space and time for administrators to integrate RP into existing school structures...**patience and persistence** are key.

Relationship building is essential to school climate, student success, and teacher retention. Stronger relationships allow for hard and restorative conversations.

SEL and RP are **rooted in PBIS** and focus on **tiered interventions** and naturally incorporates **trauma-informed** care.

Restorative practices have been shown to **reduce racial inequities** in discipline.

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