RESTORE
Activities to support secondary pupils during COVID-19
At the beginning of lockdown due to COVID-19, a group of organisations in the UK, passionate about peace and Restorative Practice, came together to think about how they could support schools during this time. The group produced a framework, RESTORE, as their contribution. RESTORE offers questions, methodologies and thinkpieces for school communities as they seek to re-build relationships between staff, pupils and parents and consider the social and emotional impacts this collective experience is having. The framework is structured around the letters of RESTORE:

- Recognition
- Empathy
- Safety
- Trauma
- Opportunity
- Relationships
- Engagement

Peacemakers is an educational charity working with adults and children, mostly in school settings, in the West Midlands. We are one of the organisations involved with RESTORE. We have over 30 years experience of running circles that support pupil's social and emotional wellbeing.

This resource is part of a series developed to support those in education. It is intended for staff working in and connected to secondary schools. Each resource is a collection of ideas that can be used as written or adapted to suit classes and groups – we expect them to be used as jumping off points for other ideas and activities. At KS3-4, these sessions might be used in RE, PSHE or form time.

Before you dive into the activities, we recommend you explore the RESTORE website, and particularly the section called Methods, so that you can reap the most benefit from using the ideas presented here. Please contact us or the other organisations involved, if you are looking for support with running circles and restorative practice, with pupils and/or staff.
Circles are the ideal space to bring people together. When underpinned by the values of positive peace, equity, equality, respect, dignity and inclusion, they can offer a space for building connection and community. Circles happen in schools for different reasons. They can be used for meetings, for inquiry, for restorative conferencing and for circle time. They can be used with the whole class or for small groups.

At Peacemakers, circles support the development of peace-building skills such as listening, collaboration, emotional literacy, empathy, cooperation, conflict resolution, assertiveness and affirmation. In circles, we don’t assume that adults are the experts. Enter into the space as a facilitator, recognising that people can be both the student-teachers and the teacher-students.

The circle is a space where everyone has the opportunity to practice some new skills, reflect on the experience, say what’s working well for them and what isn’t and know they will be heard. The RESTORE website describes different types of circle and has other activities you can do. We anticipate your circles to be small (between 6-12 pupils) so that you can effectively listen, respond and be as safely distant as you need to.

The ideas in this resource are there to inspire you. Those with pastoral, PSHE and/or curriculum responsibilities will see benefit in running some activities in the sequence presented so as to offer a more profound learning experience. There is potential to run all seven themes over one term taking a theme a fortnight. Extension activities are included to stimulate ideas for longer-term planning.

We had social distancing in mind when we put this together and you will have your own policies to adhere to. If setting up a circle inside is problematic then we encourage you to take your circles outside.
Structuring the Circle

1. Check In
This gives everyone the chance to speak. Go round the circle in turn. Check in can vary depending on how comfortable your group are with each other and people can choose to pass. Simpler check in questions can help build relationships in the group. Examples:
- What would you do if you won £200?
- What is the best performance or act you have seen live?
- If you could compete in the Olympics, what event would you be in?

2. Game/Activity
Use a game or activity to help mix up the group, create a positive, fun atmosphere and delineate space. If you need ideas, follow the link to these activities: Pass the plant pot; chatterbox; tongue twister; grounding activities.

3. RESTORE
Each session discuss one of the themes from RESTORE. See the following pages for ideas. The aim here is to encourage listening – without judgement and without trying to ‘fix’ things. This is a learning process for everyone in the circle – children and adults. Use the concentric circle diagram on page 6 to help reflect on the activity. Once you have gathered information, you can then decide how to take forward your learning.

4. Check Out
Go round the circle again. Choose one question. Simple questions may be:
- What did you learn today that was interesting?
- What have you enjoyed about today’s session?
- What are you looking forward to later on today?
More in-depth questions may be:
- What would next week’s you advise this week’s you?
- What one thing from today’s session will stay with you?
- What sound are you looking forward to hearing when you get home?

Centrepiece
Prepare a visual focal point for the centre of the circle. This could be a collection of interesting rocks or sticks, a picture, some fairy-lights etc.

Agreement
Construct with the group the circle ‘norms’ needed for constructive discussion, learning and fun to take place. These usually include things like not speaking over each other, giving everyone a chance to speak if they want to, and passing if they don’t. You may disagree with something someone says but don’t put them down. No statement or answer is right or wrong. Try not to mention people outside of the circle by name and agree to only talk about your own issues – not someone else’s.

Talking piece
You can use a talking piece, if you wish, to help show who is talking and who is listening. However, an imaginary one might need to be invented during this time of no-contact. Ask the circle what shape the talking piece is, what it is made of, does it have a name?
Sensitive Issues

Lockdown will have affected people in different ways. There will be positive experiences that people will want to share, but there may be sensitive issues too. Bereavement, trauma, domestic abuse, depression and more will have affected people’s experiences. Any of these might be raised in the circle when you are exploring the RESTORE themes. This can be a daunting prospect for you as the teacher in the room, but it shows you have created an environment where pupils feel safe enough to be authentic and to express themselves.

As Peacemaker trainers we have seen emotions expressed in a variety of ways in training with adults and pupils, when a sensitive issue had arisen. The issue may be new and raw like the illness of a relative or a much loved pet, or a discussion may trigger an historic traumatic response [see the Trauma section]. We have witnessed people:

- leave the room either for a break or for the remainder of the session.
- become upset.
- share something personally difficult for the first time.
- say something, without realising it may be sensitive for someone else, who has then become upset.
- become defensive.
- go silent and opt out of discussion.

We are all human and sometimes our emotions leak out of us, or we become stuck with them. Imagine yourself in one of the situations above. What would you be feeling? What would you like to happen? What would you like the people around you to say or do? What would you need from the trainer? These feelings and desired responses are similar whether you are 13 or 43!

Things to say may be:
- I can see this is difficult for you. [Acknowledging the person]
- I can come back to you. [Giving space]
- Is there someone in the room who can be with.....now? [Offering trusted support]
- Nothing. Just allowing everyone to feel the moment and to sit with it can be enough. [Holding the moment to acknowledge the issue].

Things to do may be:
- allow friends to respond - they may want to offer some words or a hug.
- move on to a group or paired activity so you can go and check on them.
- acknowledge what has been raised, and ask the whole group if they would like to respond.
- move on to a game or activity to change the mood and check in on the pupil affected after the session.

If needed, or if you are not sure if an issue needs following up, consult your designated safeguarding lead.
During lockdown young people may have been talking about racism, the handling of the coronavirus situation, ‘right’ and ‘wrong’ behaviours, and so on. When your circles feel secure for everyone, you may want to plan circles to explicitly explore a controversial theme. This resource from Oxfam contains advice and activities for teaching controversial issues in the classroom.

It is important to create opportunities for young people to learn to communicate with each other by focusing on issues on which they share different viewpoints. By holding conversations in a safe space, young people can gain knowledge and understanding of issues and critically evaluate their own values and attitudes. By doing this, young people develop the skills necessary to build their capacity to cope with challenging circumstances in their own lives and communities.

But what do you do when a controversial issue arises unexpectedly, or a pupil says something that contradicts or is offensive to someone else in the circle? As facilitators we need to think on the spot and decide whether to ignore, smile, express anger or dismay, interfere, intervene, help a pupil, ditch the lesson or give more time to a particular activity.

Sometimes a difficult discussion is hard but necessary as “ignoring differences within groups frequently contributes to tension among groups” (Crenshaw, 2016). These critical moments can provide memorable and transformative learning moments.

**RESTORE** is a versatile framework. As well as a structure for whole school planning, and for exploring the issues we have experienced during lockdown in planned lesson time, it is a tool we can draw on in those moments when we find ourselves stuck.

**R** - What do we notice is happening in this moment?
**E** - What feelings are emerging?
**S** - Given the climate in the group right now, is it safe to continue?
**T** - Do individuals need time to regulate, and/or time to connect with others before we can talk about what has happened? Can we do this as a group?
**O** - What positives can I draw on?
**R** - How can I build connections between everyone right now?
**E** - How can I gather thoughts, feelings and ideas from everyone? How do I feedback to people?

What do we tell the children?, by Angela Gluck-Wood is a useful resource offering further support.
Recognition

RECOGNITION of what's happened, and that our experiences during lockdown have all been different, life-changing for many and significant for us all. How do we encourage everyone to share their story of what's happened and their experiences of the pandemic so far?

The word recognition has two meanings:
1. To identify someone or something from a previous encounter. Related to the ideas of acknowledgment or discovery.
2. To give meaning or validity to something. Related to the ideas of appreciation and affirmation. In both senses, people can give recognition to themselves, their experiences and other people.

Discussion
What happened over lockdown that might need acknowledging, discovering, validating or affirming? For example: Y11 leaving without exams, leaving parties, end of year performance, mum losing her job, significant birthday. Use the concentric circles diagram to explore individual and collective experiences.

Extension - The Photo Project
Give pairs a device to take photos. What have they noticed has changed around school? Set a time for them to take images of the following, then upload and save for the next circle.
1. Something that has changed.
2. Something that has always been there, but you've only just noticed it properly.
3. Something you have missed seeing

Click here and here for a selection of images from lockdown. Choose some with people in and try to represent a diverse range of people and experiences. In pairs or threes, ask what might be happening in the images. What might people be thinking and feeling in each picture? Does a particular one stand out to you? As a set of pictures – what do they say about what we have been through? Which images are missing? Do people want to add their own? What do the pictures we took in school say about the changes that are happening?

The Memory Project
Ask the group if they would like to record their shared experiences of lockdown [they may or may not want to]. Is it important to create a group record of this time? How might we look back on this time in 20 years? What would we like to remember? Would words or images or both work? Could a group image be created? Each person draws one experience of lockdown on one sheet of A5 paper and these are cut out to create a single image. Or an archive box made and stored for the pupils in school to open in 2040.
Empathy

Empathy for the mix of emotions that we have in response to events at home, in school, the community and in the wider world. How can we respond with empathy, compassion and self-care, whether we are staff, students or parents? Ideas for the circle are:

Building an Emotional Vocabulary

Write each of the 6 main feelings on a piece of flipchart paper and blu-tack up around the room. These are the basic emotional states we are all born with. The feelings are normal and natural. You can explain how a baby will react to each of these or use pictures.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feeling</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Happy</td>
<td>(when a baby's caregiver comes into view, her eyes light up, she smiles, she may wave her arms in excitement)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>(when a baby can't see its main caregiver, it feels fear. The eyes widen to look around and the baby will start to feel distressed)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sad</td>
<td>(when the baby realises its main caregiver hasn't responded to her cries just yet - she feels sadness. Her eyes water, her mouth turns downwards)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anger</td>
<td>(when a toy is taken away from the baby, she will feel frustration. Her eyebrows knit; her mouth goes into a line. She may cry)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surprise</td>
<td>(if a loud bang goes off - the baby will momentarily be shocked. Her emotions are 'blank' for a microsecond. How her emotions change are affected by those around her. If a caregiver smiles and reassures the baby (a balloon popped), the experience of surprise is a positive one. If the caregiver is scared (a bomb exploded), the experience of surprise is a negative one)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disgust</td>
<td>(if a baby tastes lemon juice, it will experience disgust and recoil from the experience).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Split into pairs to carousel around each feeling sheet and come up with as many synonyms for the feeling as possible. Music can be used to create different moods. Grow the emotional vocabulary. In discussion ask: Which category was easier to fill? Why might that be? Do we have times when we experience more than one feeling? Do some feelings lead into other feelings? Why is it important we build an emotional vocabulary/literacy for ourselves?

Extension - Secondary Emotions

Secondary emotions are emotional reactions we have to other emotions. For example, a person may feel angry as a result of becoming jealous. In this case, jealousy would be the primary emotion with anger coming later. Secondary emotions turn emotions into complex reactions. They increase the intensity of your reactions – they get stronger over time. Differentiating between primary and secondary emotions provides powerful coping skills. Begin a discussion about secondary emotions and use the feelings wheel as a prompt. Create starter sentences such as ‘When ... happens, I initially feel ... but, underneath, I could also be feeling ....’.

Try the sentences but with someone else in mind. Ask the circle to think about someone they know who sometimes has some behaviour that makes them stop and think. They might find it odd, or disrespectful, or funny. Without naming names, can they think what other feelings that person might have? For example, ‘When someone laughs a lot in PE, they might initially feel silly but, underneath, they could also be feeling embarrassment.’

Peacemakers
**What do we need?**

In this session we are talking about physical safety and emotional safety. Use a set of needs cards – remove the word safety from this set. Lay out the cards in the circle and ask – what do you need to feel safe in school right now – today – this week? [choose a time-frame]. Place a few blank sheets in the circle as well for needs that may be missing. In turn ask pupils to select the one that is most important to them. As you will have smaller classes you could ask for 2 each. You can use their responses to create a learning agreement – eg 'We recognise that many of us need friendship right now. We will show friendship by chatting to people who we might not usually spend time with'. Come up with it together so the class feels ownership of the agreement.

**Physical Safety and Emotional Safety**

Physical safety and emotional safety are connected. For example, if I am looking after someone at home who is vulnerable to Coronavirus, then I might get upset, angry or irritable if someone stands too close to me. In that moment I might need co-operation and/or empathy. Download the Emotional and Physical Safety Cubes from the Peacemakers website. Either make a large version of the cubes that you can use for the whole class, or smaller ones to use in group work. Each time, throw the physical safety cube and one of the emotional safety cubes. How are the two needs on the uppermost faces connected?

Eg. Here, patience is the emotional need and social distancing is the physical need. How are they connected? "If I accidentally get too close to someone, I would like them to be patient with me and politely ask me to keep my distance?"

What happens to our bodies and our brains when we feel unsafe? What norms (ways of behaving/doing things) might need renegotiating? What can we do in this circle to help people feel safe to take risks and talk a bit more openly in front of each other?

**Mapping activity**

Provide a map or blueprint of the school grounds. Encourage people to help orientate – ask where the hall is, where the science block is etc. Agree a key for the map to help symbolise places we feel a) Emotionally safe b) Physically safe. You could include spiritually safe. Extend this by asking: When do you feel safe to express what you really think? eg In the whole circle, in pairs, in small groups, with a friend, anonymously in a written activity. As a group do you think we are brave? Cautious? Fearful? Respectful etc. What kind of group would we like to be? How can we get there? Does the environment we are talking in matter?

**Wellbeing Walls**

In New Zealand, there is a way to understand health based on the Māori concept of ‘te whare tapa whā’ – the four walls of health and wellbeing. We can think about ourselves as a house that has four walls, that need to be strong for wellbeing: spiritual, physical, social, mental & emotional. These aspects are deeply interconnected. If our walls are wobbly in one area, another wall is also likely to suffer. Click here for more information on te whare tapa whā.
Trauma

TRAUMA is now a collective as well as an individual experience, how does the school community process this? And how do we support people who have experienced very particular traumas during lockdown or as a result of facing an even more uncertain future? On this page we have explained what happens to someone where they experience trauma. You may see this as challenging behaviour, defiance or zoning out during lessons. Click here for a list of Regulate, Relationship, Reason activities you can do.

Rituals

We have all been through a shared experience and some people may be feeling hurt or emotional pain. As a community you may feel the need to put some rituals in place. Rituals invite contemplation, witnessing and acknowledgment. They can be quiet, such as a minute’s silence for those who are ill or have sadly passed away. They might be about memories and so a memory board or a memory tree could be created. Or they can involve the creation of music, and/or dance.

Understanding the brain

Knowing about these parts of the brain can help us understand ourselves and each other better. During times of high stress and anxiety (when there is a perceived threat), we generally register this in the primitive parts of the brain. A threat sets off the amygdala which triggers our fight/flight/freeze responses. When we are in fight/flight/freeze mode – we can’t always respond well to questions, manage our feelings, control impulses, or make plans.

Bruce Perry’s Regulate, Relate, Reason triangle can help people who may have experienced trauma, stress, or an adverse experience. When someone’s behaviour is challenging, we often jump to reasoning. This involves asking questions in order to understand what is happening for them. It’s a good idea to stop and look for ways to regulate first. This can be done best through movement or breathing. Do something physical. This can include singing or dancing. If you are busting to demo your lockdown lTikTok moves with them – do it! Play games or do activities.

Only when we are regulated, can we effectively relate to others. A regulated person can support someone who is dysregulated using the relationship to connect with them. You’ve sensed something’s not ok so use your empathy to name it “I can see things are really hard for you right now”. Comfort them however it’s appropriate to do so.

All this regulating and relating will be doing great things inside the brain to calm the freeze/ fight/ flight response. You are literally helping them to form positive neurological pathways they can revisit the next time something happens. By feeling safe in the relationship, their brain will send hormones into the body, with messages to the muscles helping them to relax and breathe.

Only now can you effectively move to reasoning, to talking and planning what they might do the next time the behaviour happens. Only at this point might they be able to recognise their behaviours and actions and the impact they might be having on others. Click here for a short film of Dan Siegal explaining how the adolescent brain develops.
To change what needs to be changed, to reflect on what matters to us and if we’d like to do anything differently. How do we learn from this experience, now that we know we can question even seemingly fixed aspects of our world? Ideas for this circle are:

- What did you enjoy from doing things differently for a while during lockdown, that you think we should learn from?
- What did you miss about school?
- What are you enjoying about doing things differently in school now?
- What things are really important to you about our school?
- Based on what’s really important, how can we make our school even better?

Thoughts, feelings and ideas about these questions will change over time. The activities can be used as part of ongoing discussions with pupils and staff.

**Discover, Dream, Design, Destiny**

You can do this as a structured discussion or use flipchart placed around the room for people to write on.

**Discover** What works well in our circle, in our school? When are we at our best?

**Dream** What could our class, circle, school be like? What stories do we want to tell/be known for? If we were to open an app in 2040 and read a good news story about our school – what would be the headline?

**Design** What needs to happen to get us there? What is the ideal?

**Destiny** How can we empower others to get onboard? What do we still need to learn or adapt?

![Diagram](diagram.png)
Guide Talk and other Cooperative Games

The purpose of these games is to have fun, work together and build relationships. Problem-solving activities can also serve this purpose. Process the game or activity afterwards asking what went well and what could be better. To play Guide Talk, one person is blindfolded. A small object is placed in one part of the circle and a flowerpot or container in another part of the circle. The aim of the game is for the blindfolded person [eg Ella] to pick up the object and place it in the container, with the help of everyone in the circle. Each person gives Ella one instruction, and must use her name and say please. For example, 'Ella, please take 3 steps forward'. The next person in the circle continues, 'Ella please turn 45 degrees to your left'. This continues until Ella has placed the object in the container. Other games like Greetings your Majesty can be found on our website.

Desert Island

Explain that the school trip has gone horribly wrong and you are stranded on a desert island with 5 mins to rescue an item from the list before the boat you were on sinks. Show a list of items such as those pictured, on the whiteboard. Each person chooses an item to save – go around the circle and hear everyone justify their choice. After everyone has shared their object, split into threes and ask everyone to work together to improve their chances of survival by combining the various objects that they saved. If necessary, you can add more objects, but be sure to use all the objects that everyone mentioned. Encourage people to be creative.

RELATIONSHIPS

RELATIONSHIPS are key, as they always have been. How do we reconnect, and (re-)build inclusive, responsive relationships at all levels in school? Ideas for this circle are:

Storytelling

Start with a sentence [eg. ‘The boy stepped off the bus...’, ‘We had just arrived on the island...’ ] and each person adds another sentence as and when they feel ready. You could use Dixit cards as prompts.
**Engagement**

**Engagement** in our own health and well-being and with the issues that affect us: our teaching, learning and community. How do we foster a culture that enables staff and students to have ownership of and agency in their lives? Ideas for this circle are:

**Peace in School**

Peace is a broad concept that usefully captures lots of other ideas such as ‘ways of being’ including relationships, connection, belonging, friendship, being understood, self-determination (agency), dignity, freedom and much more.

Ask the group what peace means to them? There is no right or wrong answer. Peace can include images and symbols, phrases and people. Prompt discussion with questions using the concentric circles framework.

- **Is peace always quiet for you?**
- **Is it something you experience on your own?**
- **When do we experience peace in this class/group?**
- **What does peace in this group look and sound like?**
- **Can you find peace in school?**
- **What can we do to build a more peaceful school in these times?**
- **Who is responsible for peace?**
- **How can we nurture personal peace, peaceful relationships and peaceful communities?**

**Stakeholder Analysis**

Who are the people connected to our school? List all the roles people have such as teachers, student, cleaner, support staff, Governors, volunteers etc. Aim to capture as many people as possible who are connected to the school and may, in some way, feel disconnected from it at the current time. How can we engage people in our class/circle to help shape the direction of the ‘new normal’ for our school?

**What Next?**

These questions might inform an action plan or set of ‘next steps’ for the group:

- What might the people you identified in the stakeholder analysis need from us as we move forward to the next term? (They might have a need for more information via the website, a short film. They might have a need to know things are still ok’ and learning is happening.)
- What could we do to involve them in the developments being made?
- What gifts do we have that could help engage others? (TikTok skills, secret knitter, public speaking, poets).
Weblinks & References

Web addresses for the embedded hyperlinks:

www.restoreourschools.com
This website is home to the papers and blogs relating to each of the themes of RESTORE.

https://peacemakers.org.uk/resources#free-classroom-resources
Games, Regulate, Relate and Reason activities and other free resources can be downloaded here.

Teaching Controversial Issues: A Guide for Teachers. This resource from Oxfam can be downloaded here.

www.npg.org.uk/hold-still/
National Portrait Gallery, Hold Still competition. Images taken during lockdown.

www.bbc.co.uk/news/in-pictures-52462204
More pictures of lockdown.

https://rcaufman.files.wordpress.com/2015/07/cj6ha97umaacu5p.jpg
The Feelings Wheel can be downloaded here.

http://lifeworldslearning.co.uk/lfp/Resources/2.6%20Needs%20cards1.pdf
Needs cards can be downloaded here.

www.peacemakers.org.uk/resources#activities-to-help-build-connection-in-these-times
Story Cubes can be downloaded here.

Information about Maori health models.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0O1u5OEc5eY
Dan Siegel and The Adolescent Brain.

www.libellud.com/dixit-resources/?lang=en
Dixit storytelling cards for download.

References


https://www.childtrauma.org/
Find out more about the work of Dr Bruce Perry here at the Child Trauma Academy

https://appreciativeinquiry.champlain.edu/learn/appreciative-inquiry-introduction/5-d-cycle-appreciative-inquiry/
Read more about Appreciative Inquiry [Discover, Dream, Design, Destiny] here.

Peacemakers offers training for pupils and adults. Visit our website for more information.
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This resource has been put together by Peacemakers using the RESTORE framework

The RESTORE framework has been developed by a collective of researchers, practitioners and school leaders including:
Andy Williams Consultancy, Carr Manor Community School, Conexus Conflict Consultancy, Restorative Practice in Gloucestershire, Iffley Academy Teaching School, Leeds Learning Alliance, Peacemakers, Restorative Now, RJ Working, Transforming Conflict