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## Restorative Justice

### What is it?

Restorative Justice (RJ) is presented as an alternative to traditional school discipline. Instead of suspending or punishing students for disruptive or violent behavior, RJ focuses on “repairing harm” through dialogue, mediation, and conflict resolution. Advocates claim that this approach creates a more compassionate school environment and reduces racial disparities in discipline.

In practice, however, RJ undermines authority, eliminates consequences for bad behavior, and makes schools unsafe. Rather than holding students accountable for their actions, RJ prioritizes the feelings of the offenders while ignoring the needs of victims and the rights of teachers to maintain order in the classroom.

## What Does It Teach?

Restorative Justice is based on several ideological assumptions that shift the focus away from discipline and accountability and instead prioritize social justice narratives that redefine criminal behavior as a product of systemic oppression rather than personal responsibility. These assumptions lead to policies that fundamentally alter how schools respond to misbehavior, often creating an environment where discipline is seen as an injustice rather than a necessary safeguard.

- **Punishment is oppression.** Holding students accountable for their actions is seen as reinforcing systemic injustice. Rather than treating misbehavior as an issue of personal responsibility, RJ frames it as a symptom of broader societal oppression, requiring “healing” rather than discipline.
- **Feelings matter more than consequences.** Instead of deterring bad behavior, RJ focuses on making the offender feel understood. Schools encourage restorative “dialogues” where students discuss their emotions rather than facing meaningful consequences, which reinforces the idea that discipline is optional and that all behavior is excusable if explained in the right way.
- **The justice system is inherently racist.** Traditional discipline is dismissed as a tool of systemic oppression, and suspensions or expulsions are seen as acts of discrimination. Many RJ policies push for racial quotas in disciplinary actions, leading to situations where some students face harsher or more lenient treatment based on identity rather than behavior.
- **Victims must forgive.** Those harmed by misbehavior are

pressured to accept apologies and “move forward” rather than seek real justice. Victims are often told that their role in the restorative process is to help “rehabilitate” their aggressor, leading to an environment where bullies, disruptors, and even violent offenders are prioritized over those they harm.

- **Authority figures are the problem.** Schools that implement RJ often portray traditional discipline as outdated and authoritarian, encouraging students to view teachers and administrators as enforcers of oppression rather than protectors of a safe learning environment. This erodes respect for authority, making classroom management even more difficult.
- **Criminal behavior is redefined as a social failure.** Instead of recognizing that some students engage in dangerous or violent behavior that must be stopped, RJ reframes misbehavior as a failure of society to properly support the student. This shifts blame away from the offender and onto institutions, teachers, and even parents, reinforcing the idea that those in authority are responsible for criminal behavior, not the individuals committing it.

By embedding these ideas into education, Restorative Justice replaces accountability with ideological excuses, shifting blame away from offenders and making schools more dangerous and chaotic. Rather than protecting students and teachers, RJ rewards misbehavior, weakens authority, and normalizes disruption as a necessary part of an “equitable” education system.

## How Does It Show Up in Schools?

Restorative Justice (RJ) has completely reshaped how schools handle student discipline, often leading to chaotic and unsafe learning environments. Rather than focusing on consequences and accountability, RJ shifts the focus to restorative conversations, mediation, and social justice frameworks that prioritize the offender's feelings over maintaining order in the classroom. As a result, schools have become less disciplined, teachers are left powerless, and students are subjected to increasingly disruptive behavior with little recourse. RJ appears in schools in several ways:

- **Talking circles instead of discipline.** When students misbehave, they are placed in “restorative circles” where they discuss their feelings instead of facing consequences. These conversations do not deter future misconduct and often serve as performative exercises that waste valuable instructional time.
- **Suspensions and expulsions eliminated.** Many schools have drastically reduced punishments for violent or repeated offenses, allowing disruptive students to remain in the classroom. Policies that eliminate suspensions in the name of “equity” have led to increased violence, teacher assaults, and general disorder in schools.
- **Teachers forced to accept abuse.** Teachers are often required to mediate with students who have physically or verbally attacked them, rather than having those students removed. In some cases, teachers are expected to apologize for “triggering” the student's outburst, reinforcing the idea that authority figures are the problem, not disruptive

students.

- **Victims are ignored.** The priority is always on “rehabilitating” offenders, not protecting students who were bullied, assaulted, or harassed. Victims are often encouraged to “understand the pain” of their aggressor rather than receive justice or support. This dynamic teaches students that bad behavior carries no real consequences.
- **Racial quotas override behavior policies.** Many RJ policies impose racial quotas on school discipline, meaning that some students are given lighter consequences or outright immunity based on their identity rather than their actions. These policies do not reduce misbehavior—they encourage it by sending a message that some students are exempt from discipline.
- **Parental authority is undermined.** Schools implementing RJ often downplay or ignore parental concerns about safety and discipline, reframing them as an outdated mindset that does not align with modern “restorative” approaches. In extreme cases, parents are labeled as an obstacle to their child’s rehabilitation and are excluded from disciplinary discussions altogether.
- **Academic standards suffer.** Classrooms where students face no meaningful consequences for disruption or violence become hostile learning environments. Teachers spend more time managing behavior than teaching, leading to a decline in student performance, focus, and overall academic achievement.

By embedding Restorative Justice into education, schools have abandoned traditional disciplinary structures in favor of ideological experiments that prioritize social activism over safety

and learning. Instead of holding students accountable for their actions, RJ policies normalize chaos, excuse misbehavior, and erode the authority of teachers and administrators.

### Why Is It a Problem?

Restorative Justice makes classrooms more dangerous by removing consequences for bad behavior. Instead of deterring misconduct, it encourages it by signaling that students can break rules without facing real penalties. Schools that have adopted RJ policies have seen rising violence, increased classroom disruptions, and declining academic performance as a direct result of the removal of meaningful discipline.

Disruptive students quickly realize that there are no real consequences for their actions, leading to an increase in fights, bullying, and even assaults on teachers and staff. Schools that have eliminated suspensions in favor of restorative practices often experience chaotic learning environments where bad behavior spreads unchecked. When offenders are allowed to return to class without accountability, victims are left feeling vulnerable and teachers lose control of their classrooms.

Many educators are resigning from the profession because they are no longer allowed to enforce order. Teachers are expected to mediate with students who have attacked them, rather than having those students removed. The result is a breakdown of authority, where teachers are forced to tolerate verbal and physical abuse without administrative support.

Meanwhile, students who want to learn are left struggling in an environment where instructional time is constantly interrupted. As more energy is spent on managing behavior than on teaching, academic standards collapse, and students graduate

without the knowledge or discipline necessary for success.

The larger consequence of RJ is a complete erosion of authority in schools. Students learn that rules do not apply to them, discipline is optional, and those in power are afraid to enforce order. Rather than fostering responsibility, RJ creates an environment where misbehavior is tolerated, learning is secondary, and safety is sacrificed in the name of “equity.”