

The background of the cover is a photograph of a classroom with wooden desks and orange chairs. A large orange diagonal shape covers the top right portion of the image, and a teal diagonal shape covers the bottom right portion. In the top right corner of the orange shape, there is a white semi-circle containing a series of white dots.

# Restorative Practices Project

Pilot  
2018/2019

The Mediation &  
Training  
Collaborative

# 2 Restorative Practices Project Overview



**Training and consultation** - As requested, provide consultation and train staff, students and parents on restorative practices, peer mediation, etc.

**Share information** - Create reports and events highlighting local schools' strengths and raising awareness of needs and available resources

**Mapping** - Document local resources and needs, gather stories and data from local schools to support medium- and longer-term planning

**Professional Learning Communities** - Create regional community promoting collaboration, sharing best practices, developing skills and knowledge



## PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS:

- All grade levels (elementary-high school)
- Public and private schools
- All Franklin County schools with select schools in Hampshire and Hampden Counties
- Participating schools contributed with written surveys, interviews, training and consultation work together, and participation in the professional learning communities

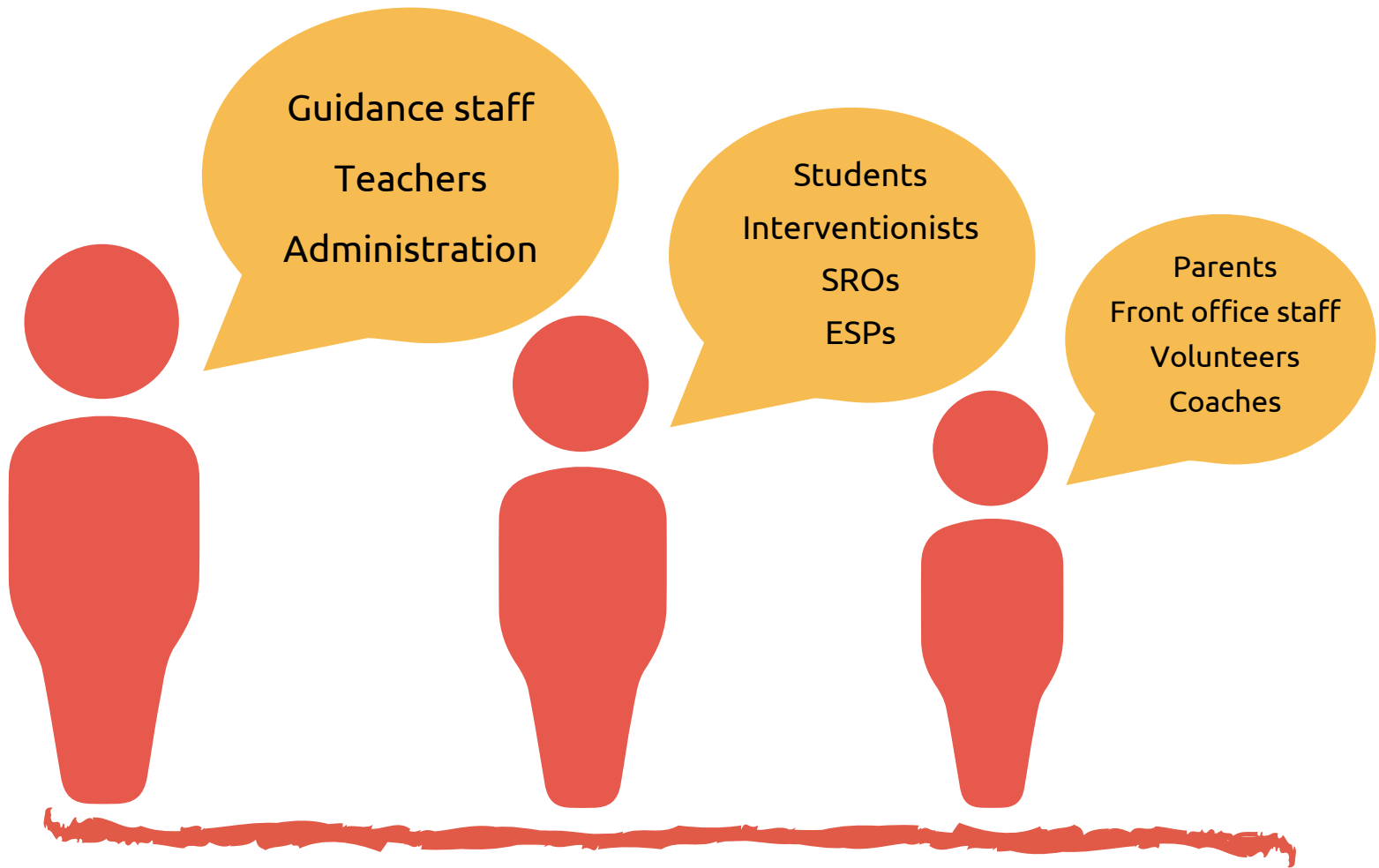
# 3

## Who Is Involved?

*A whole-school restorative approach is not just about doing processes or practices. It is a philosophy, a way of being. It changes how people relate to one another.*

(Vermont Agency of Education, Whole School Restorative Approach Resource Guide)

### THOSE WHO USE IT MOST:



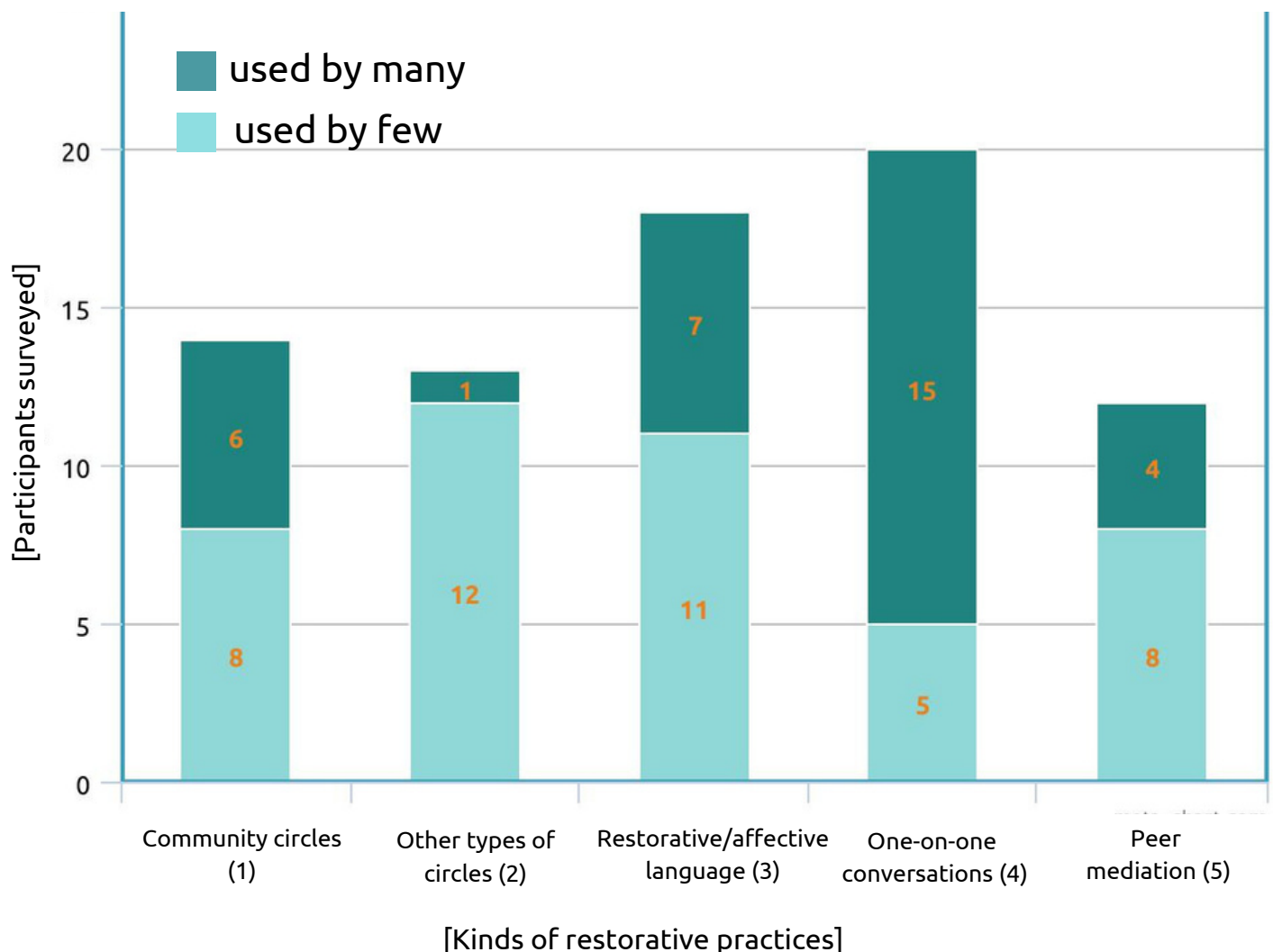
"We need to make sure teachers and staff have the same access to restorative approaches as students do."

- staff

"Open community circles to anybody; they build better bonds, a better outlook on people." - student

# 4

## Which Restorative Practices Are Used?



### Key definitions:

**(1) Community circles** are used proactively to develop relationships and build community - questions invite people to share thoughts or feelings, and may be fun or serious.

**(2) Circles** are a versatile facilitated restorative practice guided by group norms that encourage participation where multiple perspectives are welcomed and all voices equally important. Other kinds of circles in this context includes circles used to develop common norms, explore issues, address problems, respond to wrong-doing or harm, or welcome students back into the school community. While these other kinds of circles are quite distinct from each other, research responses related to usage were common across these categories.

**(3) "Affective" language** involves acknowledging and asking about emotional responses, using open-ended questions and non-judgmental language.

**(4) One-on-one conversations** are face-to-face conversations, utilizing "affective" language to discuss behaviors or an issue(s).

**(5) Peer mediation** or related peer intervention programs are processes where students of the same relative age-group facilitate a problem-solving conversation between two people or small groups.



# 5

# What Affects Schools' Ability to Integrate Restorative Practices?

## Factors:

- District-level support
- Student and all-staff involvement
- Time within school day
- Professional development, new staff orientation (ongoing)
- Patience (it takes years to shift cultures)
- Attention to social justice dynamics or issues
- Integration with other behavioral response approaches
- Clear communication within school system

**"It's a big moving part and everyone needs to be on the Ferris wheel ... and I think we're going in the right direction."**

- Professional Learning Community participant

***"Focus on your core group...you may have nay-sayers, let them go. We're doing this, it's critical!"***

- Administrator

***100% of participants' reported their disciplinary practices, classroom management and administrative actions support the integration of Restorative Practices in their schools.***



# 6

## What Are the Impacts of Using Restorative Practices?

**Conflict Resolution** *Empathy*  
*Communication*

**FEWER  
DISCIPLINE  
REFERRALS**

*Skills*

*School Climate*

*Faculty Connectedness*

**COLLABORATIVE  
APPROACH**

**STUDENT CONNECTEDNESS**

*Academic Performance*

**"SINCE WE HAVE BROUGHT THE [RESTORATIVE PRACTICES - RP] PROGRAM  
HERE OUR DROPOUT RATE HAS DECREASED. FOR OUR STUDENTS WHO ARE  
MOST AT RISK WE WERE ABLE TO REALLY CREATE SOME SUPPORTIVE  
CLASSROOMS BASED IN THE RP PHILOSOPHY. THOSE STUDENTS ARE STAYING  
IN SCHOOL AND THEY'RE GRADUATING ON TIME."**

*- school staff*

**75% of schools reported positive impacts on school  
culture in areas of communication; collaboration,  
conflict resolution and empathy.**

**"I think by participating in this group I have  
stronger leadership skills because we are  
trained in supporting other people through  
challenges."** *- student*

# 7 What We Have & What We Need



## We have, in varying degrees:

Passion, commitment  
Trained school administrators, staff  
Malleable and supportive discipline  
policies and practices  
Supportive classroom management  
approaches  
Team, supervisor support

## We need:

Whole-school restorative  
approaches  
Regional connections,  
networking  
Books, library of  
resources  
Professional development  
Training of trainers  
Program support (peer  
mediation, etc.)



## Initial TMTC Reflections on this Pilot Project:

- **Regional collaboration is valuable** - we need to find ways to continue to support sharing of knowledge and best practices
- **Training and professional development are needed** - schools want cost-effective ways to continue to support student, staff and administration orientation and skill-building
- **Schools need ongoing support** - working to develop healthy school climates, balance support and accountability, and build trust in ways that decrease the risk of harm and violence requires a whole-school commitment and at least initially, support from outside resources.
- **There is more to know** - as we work together to plan for the future of restorative practices in our region we want to know of other schools' and organizations' experiences, and to hear youth voices to a greater degree



# TMTC's Restorative Practices Project Team Appreciations



The Mediation & Training Collaborative (TMTC, a program of Community Action) is very grateful for the many different kinds of support we have received for this pilot Restorative Practices Project:

## Schools

- Gill Montague Regional School District (Turners Falls High School, Great Falls Middle School, Hillcrest Elementary School, Sheffield Elementary School, Gill Elementary School)\*
- Pioneer Valley Regional School District (particularly Pioneer Valley Regional High School)\*
- Four Rivers Charter Public School\*
- Mohawk Trail Regional School\*
- South Hadley High School\*
- Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School\*
- Coburn Elementary School
- Greenfield Middle School
- Franklin County Technical School
- Hawlemont Regional Elementary School
- Sunderland Elementary School
- The Bement School

\* Restorative Practices Professional Learning Community participant

## Funders, legislators, supporters, partners

- Massachusetts Office of Public Collaboration, based on funding provided through the Massachusetts state legislature for Community Mediation Centers.
- Western Massachusetts legislators have played a critical historic and ongoing role in advocating for this important work. We are particularly grateful to Senator Adam Hinds (a legislative lead for Community Mediation Center funding), Senator Comerford and District Attorney Sullivan for speaking at our Celebration of School-Based Restorative Practices event, and for other supportive legislators who attended.
- Franklin Regional Council of Governments, Partnership for Youth - and through them, the Communities That Care coalition and its Regional School Health Task Force
- Community Action Pioneer Valley, Planning and Resource Development and Community Services Departments

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