

# CRESST News

For Heads,  
teachers,  
support staff,  
youth workers

For everyone  
interested in  
social  
transformation

Spring 2009

## Conflict Resolution Education in Sheffield Schools Training

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## Restorative Approaches to Discipline

Sarah and Lucy were good friends until both became interested in the same boy. Their relationship started to become tense and conflict developed. Sam declared his interest in being Sarah's boyfriend but also enjoyed Lucy's friendship who, was in the same tutor group. Sarah saw Lucy as a threat to her relationship with Sam.

Sarah and Lucy did not have the strategies to deal with the situation and conflict escalated. Angry clashes, name calling and spreading gossip about each other were taking place in school, there were nasty messages put on social networking sites and violent threats were sent in texts.

The school was unaware of this until Lucy's mother rang up very upset demanding that Sarah be excluded from the school. Fortunately the school had a restorative approach to discipline and after some preliminary discussions a mediation meeting successfully resolved the problem and relationships were restored.

This case study illustrates the first principle behind restorative approaches to discipline: "Misbehaviour is viewed primarily as an offence against human relationships and secondarily as a violation of a school rule" *Amstutz and Mullet "Restorative Discipline for Schools"*.

Restorative practices provide people with support while still holding them accountable to address the harm they have caused or experienced. Research, mainly from the USA, concludes that restorative practices, such as mediation and conferencing can repair harm and are viable alternatives to zero tolerance and suspension.

However, Belinda Hopkins, in her UK book "Just Schools" shares her concern that "certain schools were becoming involved in victim offender mediation and conferencing without appreciating the need for an environment conducive to restoration, rehabilitation and reintegration."

The idea of working on a whole- school approach which includes restorative theory and practices having classroom management and curriculum applications may seem overwhelming especially to large secondary schools. A place to begin may be to assess what restorative components are already being used, celebrate the successes and try to build support especially from senior management. As within the criminal justice system, the use of restoration in schools has been used variously, instead of sanctions, alongside sanctions or after sanctions. Although, without doubt, the most effective is a whole school approach. A view shared by Chris Straker - Head Teacher of Endeavour High School, Hull, who says ...

"Purely punitive methods in use in schools today are not working. Restorative practices help improve school climate, discipline and student attitudes. It has been shown to dramatically reduce behavioural problems, increase school safety and

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build a strong sense of community and connectedness. In my role as Head Teacher of a challenging urban high school, I have seen that restorative practices really helps students take care of issues themselves. It also builds relationships; it develops community; and it engenders enormous amounts of respect between everyone involved in the school. It has seen us reduce fixed term exclusions by over 50%; and attendance to rise by over 4%, in just over a year. It has been recognised by Ofsted as the key to transformational change in the school. – especially as we have tied it closely to teaching and learning.”

Ring the CRESST office and book an appointment with Cheryl Smart if you would like a consultation about Restorative Approaches in your school.

## What’s In a Name?



Dobcroft Juniors call their mediators Quarrel-busters, Parsons Cross Primary has Peacemakers. Lound Junior and Hucklow Primary train their Playground Friends in mediation techniques. Mediators by any name help others to sort out problems and repair harm to relationships. They promise not to take sides, not to tell people what to do and not to gossip. They help children to sort out their own disagreements and fall -outs without adult intervention (whenever possible).

Give CRESST a call if you would like to know more about training pupils as Peer Mediators. Schemes can be adapted to be right for your school.

The above picture shows some of the proud peer mediators with their certificates at Marcliff Primary School after the launch of their service. One of the parents on the back row said, “I am so proud. I think it is brilliant and helps the school develop good relationships”.

## Mediation Matters from Primary through to Secondary

CRESST first came into contact with Matthew when he attended Hinde House Primary School. He engaged well with the Conflict Resolution sessions but didn’t have the confidence to apply to train as a Peer Mediator then. Now he is doing a splendid job along with his fellow mediators at Seven Hills Secondary School. “I love being able to help others,” he says. “Peer mediators make a big difference on our yard.”



“Our peer mediators and playground friends have completely changed the atmosphere and behaviour on the playground and throughout the school. They have been brilliant role models to our younger pupils. They have also benefited personally by taking on new responsibilities which has consequently raised their confidence and self-esteem.”

Lucy Atkins at Phillimore School

## Peer Mediation Conference: another big success

The conference was held last October at the Quaker Meeting House in Sheffield. Schools from across the city that have pupils volunteering as mediators were invited to send representatives. Over 60 volunteer mediators attended.

The attendees had the opportunity to take part in three separate workshops. The first was a creative writing workshop which focused on the power of words run by David Seddon. We then took part in a session which looked at the roots of conflict run by LEAP. Finally to get us all moving we looked at conflict resolution using Hip Hop dance, run by Hype Dance.



Everyone enjoyed the entertainment provided by Maynard Flip Flap at the end of the day and a good time was had by all!

Don't let your school miss out on this year's conference to be held on **22<sup>nd</sup> October 2009**. Register your school with the CRESST office if you have trained pupils acting as mediators.

## Gifted and Talented: Doing It for Themselves!



Maddy and Georgia have been given the role of Senior Mediators at Arbourthorne Primary School.

"We try to do as much as we can ourselves but we can always go to our boss Miss Carter if we need any help. We run peer mediation by rota and everyone gets to choose when they want to be on".

On March 18<sup>th</sup> 2009 Maddy and Georgia were interviewed by Andy Kershaw for Radio Sheffield's breakfast show about their roles and how Peer Mediators help to reduce bullying.

Lorna Culloden, Head teacher at Ecclesall Junior, wanted her Playground Buddies to help when younger pupils fell out at playtime. CRESST delivered training in Peer Mediation and many were keen to take on the role. Lorna didn't feel she could impose any more work on already busy staff to coordinate a formal scheme so is giving her gifted and talented pupils a chance to shine. A "Buddy Council" has been selected, with a Chair and other officials, and its aim is to consider how it can "Help the school be a happier and safer place where conflict can be managed without aggression and violence"



## Dates for your Diary

### **24<sup>th</sup> April 2009** – An Introduction to Conflict Resolution Education

**Time:** 9:15 to 4:00

**Venue:** Scotia Works, Leadmill Road, Sheffield S1 4SE

**Cost:** £50

Conflict Resolution Education aims to reduce unnecessary and damaging conflict and teaches the skills needed to make appropriate resolutions for the benefit of all.

This day's workshop will develop an awareness of the nature of conflict and explore the key skills of communication, empathy, cooperation, problem solving, mediation and other restorative practices. The vital question of how these concepts and skills might be acquired by the younger generation is also addressed.

### **19<sup>th</sup> June 2009** - Conflict Resolution with a Global Perspective

**Time:** 9:15 to 4:00

**Venue:** Scotia Works, Leadmill Road, Sheffield S1 4SE

**Cost:** £25 reduced price due to CPD funding

CRESST and Decsy are joining forces to deliver a day's training in conflict resolution with a global dimension. The days training will help us to define conflict, understand the impact it has on the world and what can be done to bring about peaceful resolutions.

Suitable for teachers or youth leaders with an interest in development education and citizenship. Places are limited so book early.

### **25<sup>th</sup> June 2009** – Network session for Peer Mediation Co-ordinators

**Time:** 12 – 3pm

**Venue:** Scotia Works Leadmill Road Sheffield S1 4SE

**Cost:** FREE (light lunch provided)

*"Fantastic- it's great to hear ideas from other schools and be able to network. Great to know there is support when it is needed."* Jacqui Cottom deputy head at Dobcroft Junior School

*"We really enjoyed ourselves and the information and suggestions will help really us."* Senior Mediators at Arbourthorne Primary School

### **8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> July 2009** - Peer Mediation: Training the Trainers

**Time:** 9:15 to 4:00pm

**Venue:** Scotia Works Leadmill Road Sheffield S1 4SE

**Cost:** £120 per person

Two days training to learn how to train Peer Mediators and introduce a scheme into your school. Recommended that at least two members of staff attend.

Course requirement: Previous attendance at "An Introduction to Conflict Resolution Education"

Places on all the above are limited so book early.

To get a booking form contact the CRESST office on 0114 241 2745

or email: [admin@cresst.org.uk](mailto:admin@cresst.org.uk)