

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES AS A PREVENTIVE INTERVENTION TO REDUCE THE
GENDER DISCIPLINE GAP IN SCHOOLS

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Abstract

The overuse of punitive discipline practices in schools for male students, particularly African American and Latino males, has likely contributed to the current gender and racial gaps in achievement. As the negative impact of exclusionary discipline policies in schools becomes increasingly acknowledged, schools are seeking viable alternative interventions. Restorative Practices (RP) is one such alternative intervention that is being considered. RP is comprised of a continuum of practices that range from intervention (after an infraction) to prevention (before an infraction). RP focuses on building community, improving relationships, and problem-solving to resolve conflict, while also holding students accountable for their behavior. However, little is known about the relationship between student gender and RP, specifically how male students relative to female students experience the RP intervention. This dissertation is comprised of two studies to address this knowledge gap. Study 1 assessed the relationship between teachers implementing RP and their use of office discipline referrals (ODRs) for misconduct/defiance behaviors with both males and females in the classroom. For study 1, students and teachers reported on the use of RP in the classroom. Study 2 assessed the perceived acceptability and benefits of participation in the RP intervention, known as informal conferences, for both male and female students with histories of repeated discipline referral and suspension. For study 2, students participated in interviews and completed a short survey. Findings from study 1 indicated that high fidelity of RP implementation was associated with a decrease in the gender discipline gap, as shown in school discipline records. Study 2 also underscored the need for high fidelity of RP implementation. When RP was implemented well, both male and female students tended to report strengthened relationships, increased perspective taking/empathy, and improved

problem solving skills. Implications are that well-implemented RP has promise for reducing gender disparities in school discipline.

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Introduction

Schools have used a number of methods to target students' misconduct in order to combat discipline problems and improve school safety. Whereas many schools have sought positive interventions to combat serious behavior problems, many other schools exclusively rely upon zero tolerance policies that mandate suspensions and expulsions (American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008). These policies have led to suspensions and expulsions for students for both violent and nonviolent offences (Fabelo et al., 2011). Among students, males, particularly African American and Latino male students, are most likely to receive discipline referrals and receive harsh punitive actions (Losen & Martinez, 2013; Skiba & Williams, 2014; Skiba, Michael, Nardo & Peterson, 2002). This finding has held, even when differences in the behavior of male and female students were accounted for, such that in one study males were 1.64 times more likely to be suspended than a female peer for similar behavior (Finn & Servoss, 2015).

The purpose of the current study was to better understand an alternative approach to punitive discipline practices within schools, known as Restorative Practices (RP). RP is a preventive intervention designed to improve relationships between teachers and students and teach students problem solving skills in order to foster a positive school climate and make schools safer. To this author's knowledge, there are few studies that focus on issues of gender in understanding RP. Further, few studies have highlighted the experience of students in identifying the potential promise of RP. This study sought to fill this gap through understanding the promise of RP for reducing the gender discipline gap in schools, particularly for minority students. Further, it examined male and female

students' beliefs about the acceptability of the RP approach to discipline. In addition, it aimed to understand if males found the RP approach more or less beneficial than females. Finally, this study explored student perception of RP's effectiveness in increasing knowledge of problem solving techniques and conflict resolution skills, while also improving relationships between teachers and students.

Gender and the Harmful Effects of Punitive Approaches to Discipline

Low achievement and drop out. In addition to failing to make schools safer for staff or students, suspensions and expulsions have been linked to a range of negative student outcomes (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2013). Students who are suspended from school lose out on valuable academic instruction. When this occurs repeatedly, or when a student is expelled, this loss of time in the classroom can lead to a host of long term problems. In fact, suspensions have been associated with an increased likelihood of academic failure and school drop-out (Balfanz, Brynes, & Fox, 2013; Balfanz & Brynes, 2012; Gregory, Skiba, & Noguera, 2010; Wallace, Goodkind, Wallace, & Bachman, 2008).

The academic achievement of male students, who are most at risk for receiving suspensions, has been falling behind the achievement of their female peers, in large part, due to differences in behavior and other non-cognitive skills. Examining data from an Early Childhood Longitudinal Study (ECLS), Cornwell, Mustard, and Van Parys (2013) found that beginning in kindergarten and persisting through the fifth grade, teacher-assigned grades of male students lagged behind teacher-assigned grades of female students in every subject. This gender gap in teacher-assigned grades occurred despite male students out-performing their female peers on national standardized math and

science exam. The study showed that, from the earliest years in school, teachers' ratings of male students' behaviors (i.e., engagement, self-control, internalizing or externalizing problems, and interpersonal skills) significantly impacted male students' overall teacher-assigned grades (Cornwell et al., 2013).

Additionally, the gender differences in educational achievement can be seen in national assessments. Compared with their female peers, more fourth-grade male students achieved below basic proficiency in 2013 national reading assessments (males 35% below vs. females 28% below) and those differences persisted through the eighth grade (males 26% below vs. females 18% below; National Center for Education Statistics, 2014). Departing from an exclusive focus on national assessment scores, Voyer and Voyer (2014) conducted an international meta-analysis of gender differences in teacher-assigned grades and found that females held an overall significant advantage across subject areas and grade levels (mean, $d = 0.225$). These authors found that males lagged behind females in non-language based courses, as well as language based courses (mean, $d = 0.374$), with a female advantage in mathematics (mean, $d = 0.069$) and science (mean, $d = 0.154$; Voyer & Voyer, 2014).

Using data from the Early Child Longitudinal Study – Kindergarten Cohort, DiPrete and Jennings (2011) found the gender gap in the social and behavioral skills of females entering kindergarten resulted in continued gaps in academic outcomes through the end of the fifth grade. Specifically, study results found that the greater social/behavioral skills for females at the beginning of kindergarten accounted for 46% of the gender gap in reading at the end of the fifth grade. In addition, even though males outperformed females in math on average, the gap between the math performance of

males and females would have been 28% greater, had it not been for better social/behavioral skills of females. Finally, student gender accounted for greater variance in academic scores relative to student socioeconomic status and race (DiPrete & Jennings, 2011).

Another longitudinal study data conducted by Malinauskiene, Vosylis, and Zukauskiene (2011) found significant gender differences when correlating behavior problems and the academic achievement of students in middle school. Overall, the study findings indicated that female students outperformed males across the middle school years. While students of both genders who demonstrated behavior problems exhibited lower academic achievement than their peers, the academic achievement for males exhibiting aggressive behaviors decreased from the sixth to eighth grade, whereas, the academic achievement of females exhibiting aggressive behaviors remained stable across the same years, as compared to their non-aggressive peers (Malinauskiene, Vosylis, & Zukauskiene, 2011).

The impact of behavioral differences extends beyond the early schooling years and may contribute to differences in on-time high school graduation rates, such that female students on-time graduation rate during the 2011-2012 school year was 85% compared to 78% for male students (National Center for Education Statistics, 2014). In fact, a study using data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS) demonstrated that behavior problems of eighth-grade students had a significantly negative correlation to high school graduation rates (Karakus et al., 2011). Also of concern, the gender gap in educational attainment held true for young adults who had

completed a bachelor's degree or higher (27% males vs. 35% females; National Center for Education Statistics, 2012).

Given that discipline referrals occur more frequently for ethnic minority males (Losen & Martinez, 2013; Skiba & Williams, 2014), the long term consequences on educational attainment may be especially profound for African American men. In 2010, the percentage of young adult African American males who completed a bachelor's degree or higher was 15% compared with 23% for African American females (National Center for Education Statistics, 2012). The significance of disciplinary practices on college enrollment can be seen in the results of the California Young Adult Study. In this study, authors, Terriquez, Chlala, and Sacha (2013) found that the achievement gap held true for males across socio-economic backgrounds. The authors found that males from low income backgrounds who had been suspended or expelled were less likely to enroll in college (10% for suspended males vs. 20% for males who were not suspended). A similar achievement gap was found for males from middle and upper income backgrounds with histories of exclusionary discipline practices (26% for suspended males vs. 42% for males who were not suspended; Terriquez et al., 2013).

Lower academic achievement is not the only consequence associated with students frequently suspended or expelled. The loss of time in the classroom and at school can lead students to increased feelings of alienation from school, such that students with discipline referrals have been found to be less likely to graduate from high school (Stewart, 2003). Previous studies have demonstrated that suspended students are more likely to have increased interactions with the justice system, and have decreased rates of steady employment (Entwisle, Alexander, & Olson, 2007; Mendez & Knoff,

2003). Substance abuse has also been strongly correlated with suspensions (Mendez, 2003).

Gender, Race, and Discipline

Deleterious effects of punitive discipline are broad, but some groups are potentially impacted more than others given disparities in discipline. Studies indicate that the referrals and resulting consequences of punitive discipline practices vary by gender. For example, in one study noting the reasons for discipline referral across twelve referral categories, including such minor and serious misconduct as spitting, gambling, fighting, and sexual acts; male students received more office referrals than females in all but the truancy discipline referral category (Skiba, Michael, Nardo, & Peterson, 2002). Another study found that across a K-12 sample, males received 3 times more referrals for aggression and 22% more referrals for attendance than females (Kaufman et al., 2010). The previously mentioned California Young Adult Study found that the gender gap in referrals held across socioeconomic status, such that males across all socioeconomic statuses were disproportionately suspended or expelled from school (35% for low income males vs. 24% for middle/upper income males; Terriquez et al., 2013).

While many studies have noted that males across all socioeconomic status and grade levels are disproportionately suspended or expelled from school, a study by Finn and Servoss (2015) found an exception in the male and female gender gap. These authors noted that while gender disproportionality in suspension rates held for all males and females, suspension rates for African American males and females were equivalent, and the suspension rates for African American males and females exceeded the suspension rates for all other groups (Finn & Servoss, 2015). Additionally, a study by Mendez and

Knoff (2003) also indicated that referrals were highest for African American males, followed by African American females, and followed then by White males. Another study found that third generation Latino students had increased likelihood of receiving punishment compared with White males and first and second-generation Latina and Latino students, despite demonstrating similar rates of misconduct (Peguero & Shekarkhar, 2011). This study also found that while first generation Latino students engaged in less misconduct compared with White male students, they were equally likely to be punished (Peguero & Shekarkhar, 2011). Other research has indicated that while males across racial and ethnic groups received higher office referral rates, African American, American Indian, and Latino males, followed by African American females received significantly more suspensions and expulsions than White or Asian American males and every other female racial or ethnic subgroup (Wallace, Goodkind, Wallace, & Bachman, 2008).

In sum, there are mixed findings related to patterns of discipline along race and gender lines. Whereas many studies have shown males of all racial groups received more disciplinary sanctions compared with their female peers (Bryan, Day-Vines, Griffin, & Moore-Thomas, 2012; Mendez & Knoff, 2003). Still, other studies have shown African American and Latino males received more sanctions than White males (Losen & Martinez, 2013). Overall, the pattern of findings suggests discipline rates for male students are of concern. The culmination of evidence across more than a decade of research shows that in most schools, and for most racial and ethnic groups, males are at a greater risk for disciplinary sanctions when compared to their female peers.

Explaining High Referral Rates of Male Students

Researchers have suggested a range of possible explanatory factors contributing to higher discipline referral rates for males. Specifically, scholars have speculated that a) aggressive behaviors leading to discipline referrals are normative for males, b) males may be delayed in the development of school-related behaviors, c) there may be a potential mismatch between the gender of male students and a largely female teaching population, and d) teachers may hold lower expectations for male students.

Aggressive behavior. In a meta-analysis examining gender differences, only moderate differences were found between males and females in the area of aggression, particularly physical aggression (Hyde, 2005). Specifically, males are slightly more likely to engage in aggressive behaviors than females, but the difference was moderate (Hyde, 2005). Additionally, it is noteworthy that most referrals and punitive punishments are given for a range of behaviors (e.g., aggression, attendance, and disrespect; Kaufman et al., 2010). This suggests that simply engaging in more physically aggressive acts may not completely explain why males are given more referrals and punitive consequences for their behaviors.

Most suspensions are given to males, particularly African American and Latino, for reasons such as defiance and classroom disruption, which are considered more subjective and discretionary, as adults must “read” student behavior and decide whether it constitutes misconduct (Butler, Joubert, & Lewis, 2009). In fact, a study of Oakland Unified School District found that 47% of out-of-school suspensions given to African American males were in the disruption/defiance of authority and obscenity/profanity/vulgarity discipline categories (Brown et al., 2012). Given that many of these studies

point out that males are receiving referrals across a range of aggressive and non-physical reasons, whether or not aggression is normative for males may not fully explain the gender discipline gap.

Lags in school readiness. In understanding the apparent differences in behaviors exhibited by males and females upon entering school, it can be helpful to understand why these differences arise. It is unclear whether gender differences in non-cognitive skills or school-ready behaviors are due to biological or socialization differences, or an interplay between both factors. A number of theories aim to explain gender differences. Rooted in evolutionary psychology, Wood and Eagly (2012) pointed to the impact of both biological and socialization influences that may lead to differences in male and female academic skills. They argued, from infancy, males demonstrated greater quickness and prefer more physical forms of socialization and play, whereas, females demonstrate greater self-regulatory skills. These differences are considered both biological and socialized, as males are encouraged to act in more physical ways and females are socialized as more submissive and regulated.

Other scholars have noted the role of socialization in gender differences as rooted in differentiated treatment from parents toward males and females, such that males are socialized to be more independent and autonomous, compared with the greater monitoring and controlling behaviors parents may exhibit towards females, potentially leaving females to seek out more help from others and engage in more regulated behaviors (Blakemore, Berenbaum, & Liben, 2009). In each case, these authors suggest that the socialization of male and female children may lead to the greater development of adaptive school-related behaviors for females, who tend to have greater self-regulatory

behaviors, follow directions, and conform to their parents' demands. Whereas, the socialization of many male children, as independent and active, may run in conflict with the expectations for students to sit for long periods of time in classrooms, listen to verbally-based instruction, focus on worksheets, and attend to teachers situated in the front of the classroom. Indeed, research studies have found that males arrive to the early school years with less positive classroom-related behaviors (e.g., paying attention, following directions, ability to work individually and within groups; Cornwell et al., 2013, Duncan et al., 2007). This delay in school-ready behaviors persists throughout the school years leaving males with increased likelihood of referrals for misconduct (Cornwell et al., 2013; Reinke, Herman, Petras, & Ialongo, 2008).

The developmental differences between the behaviors of males and females in the early school years may be linked to academic achievement from students' earliest school experiences onward. Researchers have noted a range of non-cognitive aspects of academic performance used in student evaluations, including: self-regulation skills, sustaining attention, working through difficult tasks, delaying impulsivity, and controlling emotional reactions (Duncan et al., 2007). These non-cognitive aspects of academic performance were found to be graded heavily during the early-school years, as teachers evaluated students on tasks that included a range of behaviors, such as the ability to work well with others, engagement in classroom activities, and the completion of assignments on time (Duncan et al., 2007). Given that several studies have noted that males lag behind girls in these non-cognitive aspects of education in schools, it may not be surprising that that males fall behind females in academic performance (Cornwell et al., 2013; Kleinfeld, 2009; Ready, LoGerfo, Burkham, & Lee, 2005; Rutter et al., 2004).

Two longitudinal studies examined the impact of teacher assigned ratings of student behavior on academic achievement and vulnerability to punitive consequences. A longitudinal randomized study by Reinke et al., (2008) tracked academic and behavioral differences of students entering first grade in nine Baltimore City public schools until their sixth grade year. This study used latent class analyses to categorize male students into four classes, including: academic and behavior problems, behavior problems only, academic problems only, and no problems (female students were categorized in three classes, as there were no groups of female students identified as “behavior problems only”). The study found that males who started the first grade with *only* behavior problems (as opposed to academic problems, a combination of academic and behavior problems, or no problems) were 3.42 times more likely to be suspended from school by the sixth grade and 4.63 times more likely to have high levels of conduct problems, as reported by the Teacher Report of Classroom Behavior Checklist, compared to males without teacher-reported academic or behavior problems in the first grade. Males who were classified in the first grade with both “academic and behavior problems” were the most vulnerable to disciplinary consequences as this group of males were 6.57 times more likely to be suspended from school and 11.21 times more likely to have conduct problems by the end of the sixth grade compared to males without problems in the first grade. Females with “academic and behavior problems” in first grade were 1.80 times more likely to have been suspended from school and 3.70 times more likely to have conduct problems in the sixth grade compared to girls without identified problems in the first grade. The results of this study demonstrated the stability of academic and behavior problems over the course of five years and demonstrated that students, particularly males,

identified with behavior problems early in school are at a much greater risk for suspension and conduct problems in later grades compared with their female peers (Reinke et al., 2008).

A follow-up to the Reinke et al. (2008) study by Darney et al. (2013) examined the twelfth grade outcomes of the same group of first grade students. This follow-up study found that in the twelfth grade, from the entire sample, a larger percentage of males received suspensions (22% males vs. 10% females), were affiliated with deviant peers (31% males vs. 22% females), were arrested (23% males vs. 13% females) met the criteria for a diagnosis of conduct disorder (21% males vs. 11% females), and did not complete high school (46% males vs. 36% females) compared with their female peers.

Further, relative to males in the “no behavior problems” category, males who began first grade with only “behavior problems” were 2.82 times more likely to have been suspended from school and 2.49 times more likely to meet the criteria for a diagnosis of conduct disorder by the end of the twelfth grade. Males who began the first grade with both “academic and behavior problems” were 4.49 times more likely to be suspended from school and 5.92 times more likely to have not graduated from high school by the end of the twelfth grade. Compared to females who were rated as “no problems” in the first grade, females listed as having “academic and behavior problems” in first grade were 8.34 times more likely to have been suspended from school, 2.78 times more likely to have not graduated from high school, and 1.61 times more likely to meet the criteria for a diagnosis of conduct disorder by the end of the twelfth grade compared to females without identified problems in the first grade (Darney et al., 2013).

Compared to the results of the 2008 study, Darney et al. (2013) results indicated that females develop behavior problems later in school and their behavior problems are often in tandem with academic problems. Further, these results indicated the stability of academic and behavior problems for males spanning eleven school years, demonstrating possible developmental gender differences in school-ready behaviors in the early years, which have a cascading effect across the years. In sum, it appears males who enter school with less developed prosocial behaviors continue through the school years with the delays and these delays lead to significant problems by the end of secondary schooling.

Teacher perception of male behavior. As previously stated, studies of teacher attitudes toward students indicate that from early in their school years, teachers report that males demonstrate poorer non-cognitive skills, such as being more active, less engaged, and less attentive relative to females (Cornwell et al., 2013). In fact, as early as kindergarten, teachers report male students exhibit less school ready behaviors and more oppositional, active, and disruptive behaviors. A study by Matthews, Ponitz, & Morrison (2009) found male students in kindergarten were rated as showing less self-regulation than their female peers. Additionally, a study of elementary school-aged children found males lagged behind females, as measured by teacher-report, on learning-related behaviors (i.e., working independently, accepting responsibility, seeking challenges, and paying attention; Stipek, Newton, & Chudgar, 2010).

Noting the impact of non-cognitive skills on academic performance, one longitudinal study (Flynt, 2008) examined whether IQ score or teacher-reported student classroom behavior were better predictors for reading and math achievement across the first through the eighth grades. Flynt (2008) found the results varied by grade level. For

example, in the first grade the teacher behavior ratings accounted for greater variance in reading scores compared to the IQ measures (43 to 21%), however, these results were not present during the third-grade. This study found that overall males were rated as more hostile, introverted, and distracted than females, and females were rated as more considerate than their male peers (Flynt, 2008). Other studies have also found a similar gender gap in teacher-rated behaviors of elementary school student, such that males were seen as more disruptive and less engaged (Ready et al., 2005). Further, Wasonga, Christman, and Kilmer (2003) noted that males received more rebukes and more negative attention from their teachers than their female peers, while another study noted males received significantly more redirections from their teachers in primary school, but not during secondary school (Harrop & Swinson, 2011). Taken together, the studies suggest that, overall, teachers tend to hold more negative perceptions of their male students relative to perceptions of female students.

Poorer relationships between male students and teachers may be present, regardless of the teacher's gender. In a study by Spilt, Koomen, and Jak (2012) of elementary school teachers in the Netherlands, both female and male teachers reported more conflictual relationships with male students than with female students. The authors found that male teachers had the most conflict with male students and posited this may be due to possible power struggles as male teachers and students are socialized to strive for independence and dominance. The study also found that female teachers reported less closeness in relationships with male students, as compared to female students (Spilt et al., 2012).

Another study examined the impact of teachers' gender-specific nomination of classroom helpers, a desired role in many early elementary classrooms, on academic achievement. These authors controlled for poverty and race in their analyses. The authors, Entwisle, Alexander and Olson (1997), found that 72% of teachers who were asked to nominate three students as reliable classroom helpers nominated more female than male students. The gender specific nomination of classroom helpers appeared to have an impact on the academic achievement of students within the classroom. For example, females in classrooms where teachers nominated female students over male students demonstrated a 39-point increase in achievement on standardized tests, versus a 32-point increase for males in those classrooms. In classrooms where teachers preferred males, the reverse was true, with males demonstrating a slight increase in points on standardized test scores over their female classmates. This study demonstrates the possibility that teachers in classrooms favoring one gender may have real implications on student achievement (Entwisle et al., 1997).

Further, teacher expectations of students may have important consequences for student outcomes, such that teachers with lower expectations for a student are more likely to issue discipline referrals (Bryan et al., 2012). As a result, male students, who have been shown to demonstrate more misconduct, may be increasingly accustomed to receiving redirection and negative consequences in the classroom. Receiving such negative attention from teachers may reinforce such misconduct and may lead some targeted males students to negatively attach to school. In fact, male students, as young as age 7, have reported feeling more discriminated against by teachers, compared with their female peers (Hartley & Sutton, 2013). Receiving negative attention from teachers and

feeling discriminated against may lead males to seek acceptance and positive attachments outside of the school with other delinquent youths. One study found that poorer teacher and school attachment led to greater rates of delinquency in males (Liljeberg, Eklund, Fritz, & Klinteberg, 2011).

Further evidence linking gender issues to academic achievement and school bonding comes from a study by Oelsner, Lippold, and Greenberg (2011), which focused on the school bonding of middle school students. This study found significant gender differences in school bonding beginning in the sixth grade and persisting throughout middle school, such that males experienced increasingly lower levels of school bonding from the sixth to the eighth grade. Other studies have found similar results, such that suspended or expelled students demonstrate lower levels of bonding to their school institutions, classmates, and teachers (Catalano, Oesterle, Fleming, & Hawkins, 2004; Sprott, Jenkins, & Doob, 2005; Way, 2011).

Another study based in Sweden that followed 14-year-old students over an 18-month span demonstrated that males' poor school attachment predicted delinquency for males but not for females. This study also found that poor teacher attachment was more strongly related to delinquency across time for males compared with females, indicating the crucial need for males to form positive attachments to school and teachers in order to prevent delinquent behaviors over time (Liljeberg et al., 2011).

Whereas studies indicate all males receive more office referrals and punitive punishments and lowered teacher expectations, this may be particularly true for African American males who may experience greater degrees of negative expectations due to gender and racial stereotyping. A number of studies have found that teachers' attitudes

and negative preconceptions of African American males negatively impact teachers' expectations for African American male students. These differences in teacher attitudes and expectations may lead to the academic achievement gap between African American male students and their White peers (Bennett & Harris, 1982; Lee & Bailey, 2006; Noguera, 2005). As many teachers may be female and White, they may harbor preconceived biases toward African American males (Skiba et al., 2011). Additionally, one study found that White teachers were found to misconstrue communication styles of African American males as overly aggressive, rather than understanding enthusiastic verbal exchange as culturally expressive communication styles (Weinstein, Tomlinson-Clarke, & Curran, 2004). The possible stereotyping of minority students by their teachers may, in fact, contribute to the overall achievement gap, as the culture of schools may tend to be in synch with behaviors more typical of female students and White or Asian students.

Synthesizing explanatory theories. Whether environmental or genetic factors lead to males lagging behind females in non-cognitive skill attainment, this delay appears to persist throughout schooling and impacts overall academic achievement. Negative behavioral ratings of males impacting student grades early in their educational career have a long term impact across student's educational experiences (Akey, 2006; Alexander, Entwisle, & Dauber, 2003; Cornwell, et al., 2013; Downey & Vogt Yuan, 2005; Entwisle, Alexander & Olson, 2006). Matthews et al., (2009) found that females begin kindergarten with greater self-regulatory skills (e.g., a combination of attention, inhibitory control, and working memory) and that it takes males until the end of the kindergarten school year to demonstrate similar self-regulatory skills female students

bring into kindergarten. This delay is associated with lower male student achievement in later years. Whereas females, demonstrate more of the expected behaviors associated with success in schooling, males seem to demonstrate delay in such behaviors resulting in more punitive exchanges with teachers. Due to male students breaking expected norms of rule-abiding behavior, educators may hold lower expectations for males' academic skills and consequently may interact with males in more punitive, less supportive ways (Harton et al., 2013).

In conclusion, it is still unknown why males, on average, perform worse than females in school. While research has noted that a combination of genetic and socialization factors may contribute to the differences between male and female academic performance (Wood & Eagly, 2012), such differences may also be due to the roles schools play in heightening those differences or that schools may provide a better “match” for female strengths. Next, we will consider the possible role that various school elements may play in closing the gender gap in schools and making schools a better learning environment for both male and female students.

Protective Factors for Male Students

In order to eliminate the well-documented gender gap in academic achievement and misconduct discipline referrals, it is essential for school staff to build relationships with students, in order to understand and support the developmental needs of vulnerable student groups, particularly for African American and Latino males. Scholars have noted a number of factors that may serve to protect males from punitive consequences and enhance the non-cognitive skills associated with this gender gap, including: students possessing empathy for others, school staff possessing an understanding of students'

cultural identities, and teachers providing students with high expectations and support (Akey, 2006; Irvine, 1990; Spencer et al., 2006; Wang, Haertel, & Walberg, 1998; Wasonga et al., 2003). Some studies have suggested the importance of empathy in the demonstration of prosocial behavior among males, such that caring about others serves as a protective factor against the development of conduct behaviors (Lahey, 1999). However, in a clinical sample of males, ages 12 through 18, Pollack (2006) found that males masked feelings of insecurity and vulnerability in order to portray more stereotypical masculine behaviors. The possible need for adolescent males to construct their identity around a hyper masculine image may make it difficult for males to demonstrate such behaviors as caring or empathy that run counter to masculine stereotypes of tough men.

Demonstrating caring, perspective-taking, or empathy may be especially difficult for highly vulnerable student groups. Some researchers have suggested that some urban African American males exhibit hyper masculine behaviors, such as toughness, promiscuity, risk-taking, or violence, in order to cope with feelings of powerlessness associated with structural racism and not being part of privileged groups (Cunningham, 1999; Harris, 1995; Spencer et al., 2006). While such hyper masculine behaviors may be viewed negatively by school officials, some researchers suggested that hyper masculine behaviors may, more accurately, be described as maladaptive coping mechanisms and a cry for help (Noguera, 2003; Osborne, 1999; Spencer et al., 2006). Increasing school personnel's understanding that hyper masculine behaviors serve as a coping strategy for some vulnerable students, may assist teachers and other school personnel in providing

males with the support needed for males to succeed in schools (Irvine, 1990; Luthar, 2006; Spencer et al., 2006).

Further, an understanding of cultural nuances in behavior and communication styles is necessary for teachers in order to guard against misunderstandings that delineate some cultural styles as misconduct or aggression. In order to increase teacher support of African American males, it may be important for teachers to understand cultural differences in communication styles (Irvine, 1990). Day-Vines and Day-Hairston (2005) suggested that school personnel develop cultural understandings of the nuances in behavioral and communication styles of African American males and develop an understanding of the stressors African American males are likely to encounter in their daily interactions. In addition, school staff should offer increased support to their students. Through offering increased support, school staff may enable African American students to increase feelings of security in school, thereby promoting African American male students to exhibit adaptive coping strategies (as opposed to hyper masculine attitudes and/or behaviors) in response to the stressors associated with school (Corprew & Cunningham, 2012; Spencer, 2006).¹

Restorative Practices to Reduce Discipline Referrals of Male Students

Given that a large number of studies have demonstrated the overuse of punitive practices and negative outcomes for suspended students, many educators are seeking more positive and effective school wide discipline interventions (Mendez & Knoff, 2003). Interventions that improve positive school climate, discourage misconduct,

¹ While some males adopt hyper masculine attitudes and behaviors, it should be noted that this is a generalization and many males, even those who do not receive support from others, do not exhibit hyper masculinity.

encourage prosocial behaviors, and address violations of school rules have been sought as alternatives to punitive practices. It is recommended that schools should go beyond simply responding to misconduct, and instead proactively teach students the non-cognitive skills (e.g., student engagement and self-control) necessary to excel in the United States educational system (Cornwell et al., 2013). With the focus on improving student problem-solving skills, teacher-student relationships, and students' perspective-taking or empathy skills, RP holds promise as an alternative intervention to the current use of punitive practices (Corrigan, 2012). Rather than reactively responding to the misconduct of students, RP provides a preventative approach to discipline (Wachtel, O'Connell, & Wachtel, 2010). Through addressing social and emotional skill building and promoting positive school climates, RP holds the potential to help males learn the non-cognitive emotional and behavioral skills related to academic achievement.

RP is a school-based preventative intervention with its roots in the restorative justice movement. In the restorative justice movement, offenses are viewed as a violation of a relationship and harm against a community (Bazemore, 1998; Braithwaite, 2002). In moving away from focusing on punishing offenders, Zehr (2002) explains that the restorative justice movement responds to offenses through inclusion of all those who were involved in the offense through collectively addressing harm caused by an offense and collectively identifying and addressing any needs that must be repaired as a result of the offense. The restorative justice movement has its roots in the indigenous cultures within New Zealand and Australia that focus on community-based approaches to resolving conflicts, which focused on reparation rather than on punishment (McCluskey et al., 2008).

Adapted for the schools, RP is focused upon improving relationships between school staff and students, promoting conflict resolution, and problem-solving skills (Morrison, 2007; Restorative Practices Working Group, 2014). In response to misconduct, students are taught to attempt to repair harm and restore relationships through encouraging mutual respect with all those involved in the problem (Zehr & Toews, 2004). RP encourages students to confront their misconduct and take responsibility for their behavior through participation in circles, restorative conferences, and informal restorative elements (Bazemore & Umbreit, 2001; Mirsky, 2011; Restorative Practices Working Group, 2014).

According to Wachtel (2005), the relational approach of restorative justice is effective when fair process is demonstrated. Translated into the RP intervention in schools, fair process is demonstrated when educators offer high support and high control. In this way, restorative approaches are done *with*, rather than *to* or *for* students (Wachtel, 2005). Such theoretical underpinnings of the intervention are similar to the authoritative parenting style described by Baumrind (1979), which differs from authoritarian and permissive parenting styles (Macready, 2009)

In order to implement this model in schools, the International Institute of Restorative Practices (IIRP) has developed and implemented a schoolwide program called Safer Saner Schools (Wachtel, Costello, & Wachtel, 2009). The IIRP model is comprised of 11 RP essential elements for school-wide change (See Table 1). The elements range from informal (e.g., the use of affective statements to express feelings) to formal restorative interventions (e.g., the use of formal conferences, which involves the “wrongdoer” and victim in confronting a harmful situation). All staff in the school are

trained to use affective statements, restorative questions, small impromptu conferences, restorative staff community, fair process, reintegrative management of shame, and the fundamental hypothesis of understanding. Teachers and administrators are trained to use proactive and responsive circles, as well as restorative approaches with families. Finally, the most formal of the interventions is known as restorative conferences, which are implemented by a select, highly trained team (Mirsky, 2011).

Table 1

*Elements of restorative practices**

Domain	Elements	Description
Prevention (building relationships and developing community)	Affective Statements	Use in response to negative or positive events in the classroom and school
	Proactive Circles	Run on daily or weekly basis (e.g., students sit in a circle and discuss a topic that helps build community).
	Fair Process	Engage students in decisions, explain the rationale.
	Restorative Staff Community/ Restorative Approach with Families	Model and use restorative practices with one another and with student families
Intervention (Repairing harm and restoring community)	Restorative Questions	Address negative behaviors using questions (e.g., “Who has been affected by what you have done?” “What do you think you need to do to make it right?”).
	Responsive Circles	After a moderately serious incident, students sit in a circle and address who has been harmed and what needs to be done to make things right.
	Small Impromptu Circles	Address negative behaviors by asking the wrong doer and those harmed to answer restorative questions in front of each other.
	Restorative Conference Circles	Respond to a serious incident using a scripted approach to facilitate accountability and repair harm.
	Reintegrative Management of Shame	Acknowledge the emotions of the wrongdoers and those impacted by the wrong doing.

*Reproduced from Gregory, Clawson, Davis, & Gerewitz, 2014.

Circles. RP includes “circles” during which students, teachers, and staff have an opportunity to openly address one another. Circles may both proactively build community or reactively address problems within the classroom. Proactive circles can be

used to teach students social skills necessary for use within the classroom (e.g., listening, appropriate turn taking, problem solving, and respect towards teachers and peers). Circles can be done reactively as a response to address problems within the classroom, such as conflicts and disrespectful behaviors (Mirsky, 2011; Restorative Practices Working Group, 2014).

Informal restorative practices. RP approaches can occur throughout the school and classroom through the use of affective statements and questions, which provide a vehicle for emotional expression within the classroom (Restorative Practices Working Group, 2014). Included within informal RP are the affective statements, which assist all members within the school to discuss their feelings about how a behavior impacted others (Mirsky, 2011). In response to conflict, staff would ask, for instance, “How did the behavior impact the other student?” Following an act of disrespect, a teacher might state, for instance, “I felt disappointed when you interrupted me.” Such comments and questions from school personnel may help students to better understand how their behavior impacts others.

Conferences. Conferences in RP involve restoring relationships through repairing the harm that was committed. The process includes teaching students problem solving techniques, confronting students for their misconduct, and encouraging students to understand the perspective of all those involved in the misconduct (McCluskey et al., 2008). Students are encouraged to make reparations for their misconduct in this intervention. Additionally, both the student committing the misconduct, students who were victims, and all other essential persons impacted by the event are given an

opportunity to voice their concerns during the conferences. Participants are also given a chance to jointly develop a solution to the problem (Gonzalez, 2012; Mirsky, 2011).

Conferences involve the use of structured questions presented to the offenders and victims. Examples of restorative questions asked of offenders, include: “What happened? What were you thinking about at the time? Who do you think has been affected by your actions? How have they been affected (O’Connell, Wachtel, & Wachtel, 1999)?” Questions are used to allow offenders a chance to express their point of view, explore how the incident impacted themselves, and think how their actions have impacted others. In addition, victims are also asked questions to reflect upon the incident and allow them a chance to express their point of view. Victims are asked multiple questions to review their side of the story. Questions include: “What was your reaction at the time of the incident? How do you feel about what happened? What has been the hardest thing for you? How did your family and friends react when they heard about the incident? What would you like to be the outcome of the conference (O’Connell, Wachtel, & Wachtel, 1999)?”

Research on RP is still in its initial stage. Studies thus far, however, have shown the program is linked to improved school climate and reductions in punitive disciplinary practices (Gordon, 2011; Sumner, Silverman & Frampton, 2010). One study of Scottish schools implementing RP, found improvement in school climate, reductions in suspensions, and some improvement in students’ conflict resolution skills (McCluskey, 2008). This study also examined the implementation of RP and noted the benefits of the intervention often lay in the commitment and investment of school staff members and administration (McCluskey, 2008). Another case study in New Zealand found reductions

in the use of exclusionary discipline practices and improvements in school culture (Gordon, 2011). Further evidence from a middle school showed an 87% decrease in suspensions (Sumner et al., 2010). Further, a study in Donegal found that through the use of RP, ten post-primary schools demonstrated a decrease in the use of suspensions from 186 to 140. This study noted a decline in referral reasons, including continued disobedience (reduced by 73%) and verbal assaults on other students (reduced by 88%). However, this study noted there was a 17% increase in verbal assaults on staff (Campbell, Wilson, Chapman, & McCord, 2013).

In addition to demonstrating reductions in the use of suspensions in schools, researchers have demonstrated that students in schools where the RP intervention is implemented demonstrate the student self-reported increased ability to handle conflicts, while building relationships. Studies utilizing case studies found that the most targeted of the RP interventions, the use of formal restorative conferences, decreased over time as school personnel utilized more informal restorative elements to address conflicts within schools (Hines & Bazemore, 2003; Stinchcomb, Bazemore, & Riestenberg, 2006). In a study of the use of formal restorative conferences in schools in Queensland, 90% of participants reported feeling they were able to express themselves during the conference and 80% of the “wrongdoers” reported feeling bad as a result of how the victim was hurt. This study also found a reduction in the re-offenses of “wrongdoers” four months after the conferences, such that only 6% of wrongdoers were referred again (Queensland Education Department, 1996). Another international study found similar results, with 92% of restorative conferences resulting in agreement, 89% of conference participants reported they were satisfied with the outcomes, and 93% reported the conference was

“fair” (Youth Justice Board of England and Wales, 2004). Further, educators have reported that students, in schools where the RP intervention has been implemented, begin to self-initiate the use of RP, such as requesting the use of circles to address conflicts and repair relationships with peers (Stinchcomb, Bazemore, & Riestenberg, 2006). Self-initiation of RP by students may indicate that students attending schools, where the RP intervention is utilized, demonstrate increased conflict resolution skills and acceptability of the RP intervention.

With the exception of one study, there is a dearth of research related to issues of gender and RP. The one study used student records from the Denver School District and found that restorative conferences, circles, and mediations may be particularly powerful for reducing the gender gap in out-of-school suspensions (OSS; Gregory et al., 2015). The authors found that males were as likely to receive RP interventions as their female peers. Further, the authors found that after accounting for student demographics, reasons for ODR, school characteristics, and participation in restorative conferences in the fall semester of the school year, the gender gap in suspensions was eliminated. These results point to interventions within RP, such as restorative conferences, circles, and mediations, as having the potential to reduce the over-use of suspensions to address misconduct in male students (Gregory et al., 2015). Additional research is needed to identify the promise of RP for reducing the gender discipline gap and to identify the degree to which interventionists should consider gender issues when implementing RP with male students. The current study addresses these needs for additional research, as described in detail below.

Summary

The current achievement and disciplinary gap between male and female students appears to begin as early as kindergarten and persists throughout the secondary school years. This gender gap has led to notable differences in the acquisition of high school diplomas and college enrollment. Factors contributing to this gap may include the possible developmental delay in non-cognitive skills of male students at school entry that persists throughout the elementary and secondary school years and are too often addressed through punitive disciplinary action. Further, as students receive repeated disciplinary actions from teachers, males bonding to school may decrease and demonstrations of misconduct may subsequently increase. Given that such disciplinary actions for behaviors include suspensions and expulsions, males not only miss valuable academic opportunities in the classroom, but also their relationships with teachers and peers in schools may suffer. This cycle may be especially pernicious for African American and increasingly for Latino males, as these students may be the subject of implicit racial bias or may exhibit behaviors and cultural communication styles, which may be misinterpreted by teachers of different cultures as hostile or aggressive, leading to an increase in punitive responses to their behaviors.

Interventions are needed to improve school safety, while addressing academic and behavioral differences for both male and female students. If males are developmentally delayed in possessing the non-cognitive skills related to success in schools from kindergarten to high school, a universal intervention that includes skill-building may be necessary for their success. As a school-wide approach to discipline and skill-building, RP targets all students within schools. Males involved in schools where RP are

implemented are provided the opportunity throughout the school day to engage in a range of restorative elements (See Program Overview at <http://www.safersanerschools.org/>). More specifically, in RP, males are afforded opportunities to build necessary school-ready and self-regulatory skills (e.g., listening, turn-taking, problem solving, and attention), build relationships, and restore relationships harmed through misconduct. Teachers may use RP elements, like circles, during class time to both proactively or reactively address problems in the classroom. For instance, teachers may proactively use circles to teach specific non-cognitive skills, such as listening and raising your hand. Other aspects of the intervention are informally presented to students throughout the day, as teachers use affective statements or questions to enhance students' emotional expression and awareness.

Using RP elements when students demonstrate serious and less serious misconduct, teachers, school staff, or peers are able to address the problems through informal and formal conferences. This intervention provides students multiple opportunities to learn problem solving skills and prosocial behaviors. Through teaching students how to express themselves appropriately, listen, and respect their peers and teachers, RP has the potential to teach students the non-cognitive aspects of schooling necessary for academic and behavioral success within schools. Additionally, restorative approaches, like circles, conferences, and affective questions, have the potential to enhance teacher and student relationships by increasing opportunities for each to increase knowledge of one another, decrease cultural misconceptions and stereotypes, restore relationships after conduct, and ultimately promote students' positive school bonding.

The current inquiry encompasses two separate studies. The first study is a follow-up to the Gregory, Clawson, Davis, and Gerewitz (2014) study, which examined whether RP was linked to reduced racial gaps in discipline referrals. Gregory et al. (2014a) found that teachers in classrooms with student-reported greater RP implementation were associated with better teacher-student relationships and a lower racial gap in misconduct/defiance referrals. The prior research did not, however, examine whether higher RP implementation was linked to lower gender gaps in misconduct/defiance referrals. For Study 1, using data from the Gregory et al., (2014a) study, the present study examined whether RP implementation at the classroom level was associated with reduced gender gaps in misconduct/defiance discipline referrals. Study 2 further examined whether males, like their female peers, who had experienced conferences within the RP intervention, reported acceptability of the intervention, improved relationships with school staff, and increased problem-solving skills.

Study 1: Gender and RP Implementation

Research question 1:

Is greater implementation of RP, as perceived by students and teachers, associated with teachers issuing fewer misconduct/defiance discipline referrals to male and female students?

The hypotheses are as follows:

Hypothesis 1: It was hypothesized that high RP implementing teachers would issue fewer exclusionary discipline referrals to male students, relative to teachers who were lower RP implementers, thereby reducing the gender discipline gap.

Methods

Participants

Study 1. Teachers and students who attended two large and diverse public high schools in a small city located in the Northeast of the United States voluntarily participated in the research study. As reported by Gregory et al. (2014a), prior to the implementation of RP in both high schools (2010-2011), misconduct/defiance discipline referrals accounted for 30.3% of all discipline incidents. During 2010-2011 school year, across all racial groups, a greater percentage of males were issued one or more misconduct/defiance referrals. Specifically, more African American males than African American females were issued at least one misconduct/defiance referral (47% male vs. 24% female), more Latino males than Latina females were issued a misconduct/defiance referral (42% male vs. 20% female), similarly, more White males than White females were issued a misconduct/defiance referral (13% male vs. 7% female), and more Asian males compared with Asian females were issued misconduct/defiance referrals (5% male vs. 3% female).

Surveys were administered during the initial year in which RP was implemented within the high schools. Thirty-one teachers agreed to complete the surveys during the 2011-2012 school year. From their schedule, one class was randomly selected to participate in the study. Two teachers returned substantially incomplete surveys, so the final sample consisted of twenty-nine teachers. Within the selected classrooms, 412 students consented to participate, obtained parent/guardian consent, and completed surveys. Student participants were 53% male and 47% female, 44% White, 21% Latino, 3% American Indian, 2% Asian, 5% African American, and 25% Multiracial (45%

reported they were partially African American and 73% reported they were partially Latino).

Procedures

Study 1. Members of the Rutgers research team presented Study 1 and invited teacher participation during Restorative Practice trainings at the selected school during the summer of 2011. Thirty-one teachers across the two schools provided consent. In randomly-selected, focal classrooms of each consented teacher, research staff presented the study and invited student participation. Consented students were administered a survey about their experiences in the focal classroom throughout the 2011-2012 school year. Rutgers University Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the school's administrator approved the proposed study. Approval for the proposed study was granted by the Rutgers IRB on July 14, 2011.

Measures

Study 1. The student RP implementation and the teacher RP implementation surveys used in this study were developed by the International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP). The surveys were closed format containing scalar questions (e.g., A – not at all to E – always. See Appendix A). The survey contained six scales rating the degree to which teachers implemented a range of RP elements, including Affective Statements Scale (3 items, alpha = .59), Restorative Questions Scale (4 items, alpha = .81), Proactive Circles Scale (4 items, alpha = .75), Fair Process Scale (4 items, alpha = .73), Responsive Circles Scale (6 items, alpha = .72), and the Management of Shame Scale (3 items, alpha = .71). Internal consistency of the items for the student RP

implementation survey was established in a study by Gregory et al. (2014a), with the Cronbach's alphas ranged from fair (.59) to good (.81).

Teachers within the study completed parallel RP implementation surveys to the student RP implementation surveys. Teachers completed surveys that included six scales, measuring the degree to which they implemented a range of RP elements, including: Affective Statements Scale, (8 items, $\alpha = .80$), Restorative Questions Scale (7 items, $\alpha = .90$), Proactive Circles Scale (8 items, $\alpha = .59$), Fair Process Scale (6 items, $\alpha = .93$), Responsive Circles Scale (10 items, $\alpha = .76$), and the Management of Shame Scale (7 items, $\alpha = .93$; See Appendix B). Internal consistency of the items for the teacher RP implementation survey were established in a study by Gregory et al. (2014a), with the alphas ranging from fair (.59) to good (.93).

Due to a small sample size of teachers, Gregory et al. (2014a) conducted a principal component factor analysis using the student and teacher implementation survey scales. Given missing data from the Responsive Circles scale and the Management of Shame scale, Gregory et al. (2014a) used four of the six scales (Affective Statements, Restorative Questions, Proactive Circles, and Fair Process) in the factor analysis. The factor analysis of the four student-reported RP implementation scales, determined that the scales loaded onto one factor that accounted for 69% of the variance (factor loading greater than .654). Using the single factor, a single factor score was given to each teacher. The student-reported teacher factor scores were normally distributed. A principal component factor analysis was also completed for the four teacher-reported RP implementation scales. The factor analysis of the four teacher-reported RP implementation scales loaded onto one factor that accounted for 62% of the variance

(factor loading greater than .707). The teacher-reported RP factor scores were also normally distributed.

Discipline referrals were gathered from a school-wide database for each school for the 2011-2012 school year. The database referenced all discipline referrals to any students by the teachers who participated in the study. As in the Gregory et al. (2014a) study, the misconduct/defiance category was created using the following reasons from the school district: disrespect, insubordination, profanity/obscenity, misconduct, and disorderly conduct (Gregory et al., 2014a).

Data Analysis Plan

Study 1. Descriptive statistics were examined using means, ranges, and standard deviations. As previously reported in Gregory et al. (2014a), all of the misconduct/defiance referral data were at the teacher level, given that the released school discipline data was not linked to individual student identifiers. Rather than conducting multilevel analyses, multiple linear regression in SPSS 20 was used predicting a) the referrals of male students and b) the referrals of female students. Teacher-reported RP implementation were entered into the first block, followed by student-reported RP implementation. Percent variance explained for each block was offered a measure of effect size. Then, models were re-run to examine patterns of referral for both student race and gender. It was hypothesized that higher RP implementation would be associated with the lower discipline referrals for both males and females, which has implications for narrowing the gender gap in referrals. Exploratory analyses also examined race by gender patterns in discipline referral.

Study 1 Findings

Descriptives. Teacher participants ($N = 29$) issued a total of 54 misconduct/defiance referrals to female students and 167 misconduct/defiance referrals to male students (See Table 2). A majority of the male referrals were issued to African American and Latino students (84%). Similarly, a majority of the female referrals were issued to African American and Latino female students (82%).

Table 2

Teacher issued misconduct/defiance referrals by Race and Gender

<u>Race</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
African American/Latino	140	44
Asian/White	27	10
Total ($N = 227$)	167	54

RP implementation and teacher use of misconduct/defiance referrals. The regression analyses demonstrate that student-reported RP implementation, but not teacher-reported RP implementation, was a significant predictor of misconduct/defiance referrals issued to female students ($\beta = -.42, p < .05$) and male students ($\beta = -.40, p < .05$; See Table 3). For both males and females, student-reported higher implementation of RP was associated with lower use of misconduct/defiance referrals. In terms of effect size, the student-reported RP implementation measure explained 18% of the variance for both female and male school recorded ODRs.

Table 3

Regression Models for Number of Defiance referrals

	Female Referrals	Male Referrals
R ²	.18 ⁺	.18 ⁺
Standardized Betas		
-Teacher-reported RP Implementation	-.02	-.06
- Student-reported RP Implementation	-.42*	-.40*

+*p* < .10; **p* < .05; ** *p* < .01

The regression analyses were then run to examine the link between RP implementation and referrals by race and gender. Student-reported RP implementation significantly predicted defiance/misconduct referrals for three student groups, including: African American/Latino males ($\beta = -.41, p < .05$), African American/Latina females ($\beta = -.40, p < .05$) and Asian/White females ($\beta = -.39, p < .05$). It did not significantly predict defiance/misconduct referrals for Asian/White males (See Table 4).

Table 4

Regression Models for Number of Defiance referrals

	Asian/White Male Referrals	Afr-Amer/Latino Male Referrals	Asian/White Female Referrals	Afr-Amer/Latina Female Referrals
R ²	.12	.18 ⁺	.14	.17 ⁺
Standardized Betas				
-Teacher-reported RP Implementation	-.16	-.04	.04	-.03
- Student-reported RP Implementation	-.28	-.41*	-.39*	-.40*

+*p* < .10; **p* < .05; ** *p* < .01

To illustrate the student-reported RP implementation findings, teachers were split into two groups, specifically those who scored above the mean (High RP) on the student-perceived RP factor and those who scored below the mean on the factor (Low RP). The gap in misconduct/defiance referrals between males ($M = 8.19$ referrals) and females (M

= 2.63 referrals) was wide for those teachers perceived by students as having low RP implementation. The gap between males ($M = 2.77$ referrals) and females ($M = 0.92$ referrals) was smaller when teachers were perceived by their students as having high RP implementation. A paired sample t-test showed that high RP implementers had *no* significant differences in their referrals across males and females, but teachers who were rated by their students as low RP implementers referred males significantly more often than females ($t(16) = 2.58, p = .02$)

Figure 1 shows that the referral gap between African American/Latino males and White/Asian males was substantially smaller for high RP implementers relative to low RP implementers. Paired sample t-tests showed that high RP implementers had *no* significant differences in their referrals across the race/gender groups, but low RP implementers referred with greater frequency African American/Latino males relative to White/Asian males ($t(16) = 2.86, p = .01$) and African American/Latina females relative to White/Asian females ($t(16) = 3.26, p = .01$).

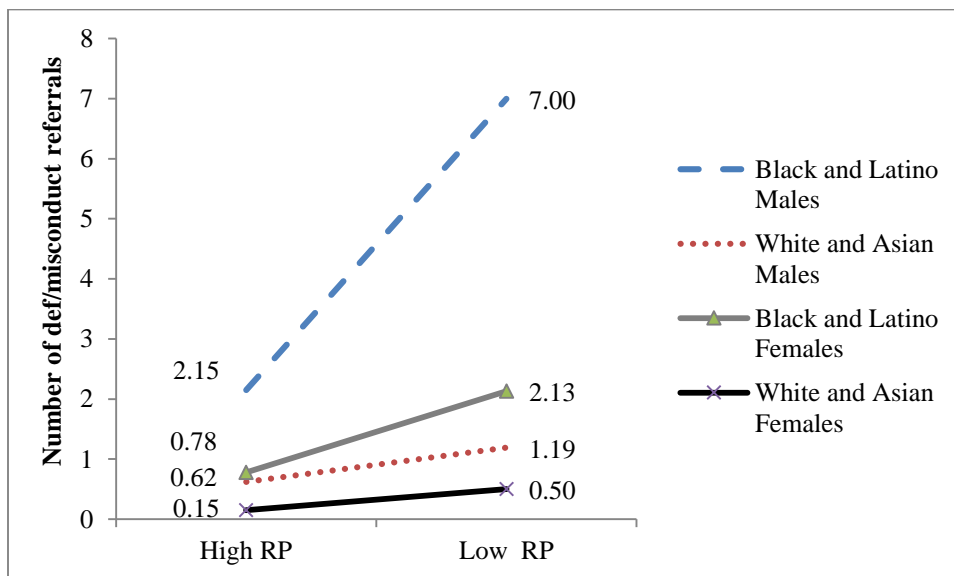


Figure 1: RP implementation and defiance/misconduct referrals by gender and race

Study 2: Male and Female Student Perceptions of RP

Will males report similar benefits from their participation in RP conferences relative to female conference participants? Will the benefits include: a) improved teacher-student relationships, b) enhanced problem-solving skills, and c) greater empathy/perspective-taking?

The hypotheses were as follows:

Hypothesis 2: Given the lack of research on RP and gender, some speculative hypotheses were set forth. A) It was hypothesized that both male and female students will note benefits in the following areas: improved teacher-student relationships, enhanced problem-solving skills, and greater empathy/perspective taking. B) That said, interviews, corroborated by trends in quantitative surveys, will demonstrate that a few components of RP will be in greater synch with female students, such as improved teacher-student relationships. This will suggest RP is acceptable to males who perceive benefits (albeit at slightly lower levels than females).

Methods

Participants

Study 2. Students who attended three campuses of a small alternative school that integrates the RP intervention into each element of the school voluntarily participated in the research study. All three middle and high school campuses were located in the Northeast of the United States. On average, each campus has 20 students with males comprising the majority of students (roughly 80 percent). Students who attended the school were referred from regular public schools, other alternative schools, the court

system, or the foster care system due to behavioral concerns impacting their academic performance.

Semi-structured interviews and a questionnaire were completed during the end of the 2013-2014 school year. Fifteen students obtained formal parent and guardian consent and/or provided student assent to participate. Participants (8 males) ranged in age from 12-20 years of age ($M = 16.8$, $SD = 1.8$). Nearly half of the students self-identified as White (47%; $n = 7$), with the remainder of the sample self-identifying as African American (27%; $n = 4$), Latino (13%; $n = 2$), and bi-racial (Latino and White; 13%; $n = 2$). Most of the students reported they resided in their parents' or primary caregivers' residence (73%; $n = 11$), though a small, but equal, number of male and female students reported residing in a group home (27%; $n = 4$).

Reasons for referral to the school were similar for male and female students. Students reported they were referred to the school for misconduct or defiant behaviors (13%; $n = 2$), alcohol or drug possession or use (20%; $n = 3$), and possession of a weapon on school grounds (13%; $n = 2$). Slightly more male students (27%; $n = 4$) reported they were referred to the school for engaging in aggressive behavior or fighting than female students (13%; $n = 2$) and only female students reported referral to the school for truancy (13%; $n = 2$). Students self-reported four reasons for participating in informal conferences, including: aggressive behavior/fighting (13%; $n = 2$), misconduct/defiance (53%; $n = 8$), peer problems (20%; $n = 3$), and suspicion of use of alcohol or drugs (13%; $n = 2$). Nearly an equal number of male and female students reported participation in each of the four categories of informal conferences (See Table 5).

Table 5

Self-reported Participant Demographics

	<u>Female (%)</u>	<u>Male (%)</u>	<u>N (%)</u>
Gender	7 (47%)	8 (53%)	15 (100%)
Racial Background			
African American	3 (20%)	1 (7%)	4 (27%)
Bi-racial (Latino & White)	1 (7%)	1 (7%)	2 (13%)
Latino	-	2 (13%)	2 (13%)
White	3 (20%)	4 (27%)	7 (47%)
Reason for Referral to School			
Aggressive Behavior/Fighting	2 (13%)	4 (27%)	6 (40%)
Misconduct/Defiance	1 (7%)	1 (7%)	2 (13%)
Possession/Use of Alcohol or Drugs	1 (7%)	2 (13%)	3 (20%)
Truancy	2 (13%)	-	2 (13%)
Weapon Possession	1 (7%)	1 (7%)	2 (13%)
Reason for Conference			
Aggressive Behavior/Fighting	1 (7%)	1 (7%)	2 (13%)
Misconduct/Defiance	4 (27%)	4 (27%)	8 (53%)
Peer Problems	1 (7%)	2 (13%)	3 (20%)
Suspicion of use of Alcohol or Drugs	1 (7%)	1 (7%)	2 (13%)
Residential Setting			
Group Home	2 (13%)	2 (13%)	4 (27%)
Parents/Caregivers	5 (33%)	6 (40%)	11 (73%)
			<u>M (SD)</u>
Age (years)			16.8 (1.8)

Informal Conferences

The study school weaved restorative elements throughout all aspects of schooling (e.g., students are taught academic subjects in circles; students reported daily feeling check-ins; and students reported staff frequently used affective statements). For the present study, participating students were asked to respond to questions about the use of informal conferences, during which school staff or students “confronted” a student’s challenging behavior. During such conferences, students were asked to complete the restorative questions, which included: “What happened? What were you thinking at the time?, What have you thought about since?, Who has been affected by what you have

done? In what way?, What do you think you need to do to make things right?"

(O'Connell, Wachtel, & Wachtel, 1999). In addition, it should be noted, the study school used the term *confrontations* to refer to the RP element more widely known as informal conferences. To increase applicability of findings across other schools using RP, it was decided the term *conferences* would be most suitable to use in the following findings section for Study 2.

Procedures

Study 2. School personnel presented this study to students at three of the schools' campuses and invited student participation during the spring of the 2013-2014 school year. Students were eligible to participate if they had participated in an informal conference with either peers or a counselor/ teacher at any point since beginning at the school. Fifteen students across three schools provided consent to participate in the study. Consented students were administered a survey and participated in an audio-recorded interview about their experiences of RP and discipline practices. Rutgers University Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the school's administrator approved the proposed study. Approval for the proposed study was granted by the Rutgers IRB in May 2014 and by the school administrator in April 2014. Interviews were individually conducted by the principal investigator within the school and surveys were administered to students directly after the interview. Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed.

Measures

Semi-Structured Interview: A semi-structured interview was developed in order to assess student-reported positive and negative processes and outcomes related to the RP intervention. The interview consisted of nine questions created for the purpose of this

study (See Appendix C). Four of the nine primary structured questions for this measure included:

1. Since you started at this school, can you tell me about an experience when a counselor/teacher at school had to confront you or gave you feedback after something happened. What happened during this experience? Who all was there? What did you do when counselors/teachers confronted you? Did you get the chance to tell your side of the story? How did you feel participating in this confrontation/conference? How was the confrontation/confrontation resolved? Did the results seem fair to you?
2. After going through this experience, did you feel your relationship (or connection) changed with the other people who were a part of the confrontation/conference? Do you notice any differences in how you get along (relate to or interact) with others who weren't involved (like family, friends, classmates)? How has it changed?
3. Tell me about what you learned from the experience of having peers or counselors give you feedback or confront you. Tell me how you handle your frustration or problems with others now.
4. How should counselors/teachers handle problems with students? Should they handle problems differently between males and females?

Primary structured questions were followed by various prompts (e.g., “Can you tell me more about that?”, “What was that like?”) in order to clarify or expand upon students’ responses regarding their participation in an informal conference.

Thoughts on RP Questionnaire: The questionnaire designed for this study examined students' overall perception of the informal conferences: acceptability/satisfaction with the conference and conference processes (including structure, support, and student voice; See Appendix D). The questionnaire consists of twelve items assessing students' perception of the RP informal conferences, including likeability, helpfulness, impact, suggestion for others' use of the intervention. In addition, students were asked to share their perceptions for how teachers used power, fair treatment, made decisions, and involved students in the conference. Reliability and validity were not established for the questionnaire.

Data Analysis Plan

Stage 1

A priori data analysis approach. All semi-structured interviews were transcribed. Transcribed semi-structured interviews were coded using categories established prior to analysis (Stemler, 2001); specifically, the primary coder sought out students' discussion of the link between conferences and a) teacher-student relationships, b) problem-solving skills, and c) empathy/perspective taking. In addition, responses were individually coded for suggestions students made for teachers' use of discipline strategies (See Appendix G). Data reduction techniques were utilized to organize statements students noted regarding the three identified themes. Specific items from student responses were grouped within each theme according to whether the response was negative or positive. Findings were tabled using data displays. From these findings, revisions were made as a result of themes that emerged from the data differentiating the

process of students' participation in informal conferences from the outcomes students perceived as a result of participation in informal conferences.

In order to determine whether a typology, other than student gender existed in the data set, the principal investigator utilized data reduction strategies to organize respondents' answers to each interview question by respondent characteristics (e.g., age, reason for conference, and race/ethnicity). Frequencies of students' affirmative or negative responses to interview questions (e.g., "Did the results seem fair to you?") were counted in order to determine the prevalence of responses across participants (Ryan & Bernard, 2000). After reviewing frequencies across all interview questions, it was determined that gender remained the single identified typology, or reason for divergent responses to interview questions. However, it should be noted that a typology including both race and gender could not be determined due to the small sample size of this study.

Stage 2

Emergent *a priori* data analysis approach. The principal investigator, along with the faculty investigator, Dr. Anne Gregory, evaluated the initial *a priori* coding pattern against the unanticipated emergent findings (Stemler, 2001). It became clear that a larger framework was needed to encapsulate the findings. As a result, an emergent theory was noted that aligned with prior frameworks regarding RP process and social emotional learning outcomes (CASEL, 2013; Gregory et al., 2014b). In collaboration with the faculty investigator, the emergent categories were applied to the data and examined in a second stage of *a priori* coding. This second stage of analysis included six process and seven outcome coding categories (See Table 6). The second stage of analysis involved coding each transcript twice.

Table 6

Process and Outcome Coding Categories

<u>Process</u>	<u>Outcome</u>
Structure	SEL skills
Rules	Self-awareness
Support	Self-management
Positive adult-student respect and Responsiveness	Social awareness
Positive student-student respect and Responsiveness	Relationship skills
Student voice	Responsible decision-making skills
Autonomy	Improved relationships
Risk taking	Improved attitudes about, self, others, and school
Problem solving	

Coding themes for RP process were derived from the *RP-Observe Manual*, a systematic tool created to assess the degree to which RP circles or conferences included the following constructs: structure, support from adults and peers, and student voice (Gregory et al., 2014b). Each of the theoretical constructs were further divided into dimensions. The structure construct has a single dimension, namely rules, which refers to the degree to which teachers used clear expectations, fairness, and consistency in response to rule breaking during circles and/or conferences (Gregory et al., 2014b). The support construct has two dimensions, specifically adult-student respect and responsiveness and student-student respect and responsiveness, both of which refer to the degree in which staff and peers demonstrated positive rapport, empathic responses, and acceptance during the circles and/or conferences (Gregory et al., 2014b). According to the *RP-Observe Manual*, the student voice construct contains four dimensions, specifically: relevancy, autonomy, risk taking, and problem solving. Relevancy refers to the degree to which the circle included personally meaningful content and used personal opinions (Gregory et al., 2014b). Since relevancy refers only to circles, this dimension

was not coded in this study. Student voice also includes the autonomy dimension, which refers to student investment and voice in creating the resolution, student ownership of the conference, teacher use of power during the conference, and students' authentic choice during the conference (Gregory et al., 2014b). Risk taking is the third student voice dimension which refers to students' sense of safety during circles of conferences, in order to promote students appropriate personal disclosures (Gregory et al., 2014b). The final student voice dimension, problem solving, is an important process of circles and conferences in which adults and students collaboratively solve problems through problem identification, problem analysis, intervention development and implementation, and intervention evaluation and follow-up (Gregory et al., 2014b).

Outcome codes were derived from empirical research based on core social and emotional learning (SEL) competencies and associated skills, including self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, responsible decision-making skills, and improved attitudes about self, others, and school (CASEL, 2013). In addition, improved relationships was noted by the principal and faculty investigators as an important component of the RP interventions. The self-awareness outcome refers to students' ability to accurately recognize their own emotions and/or thoughts and understand how their emotions and/or thoughts impact their behavior (CASEL, 2013). Self-management is another SEL skill outcome, which refers to the ability to self-regulate emotions, thoughts, and behaviors (CASEL, 2013). Social awareness is another SEL skill that involves increased perspective taking and the ability to empathize with others (CASEL, 2013). Relationship skills refers to the students learning the skills in which to establish and maintain healthy relationships (CASEL, 2013). The final SEL skill,

responsible decision-making skills, involves the students' ability to make constructive and respectful choices for their own behavior and social interactions (CASEL, 2013). In addition to the aforementioned SEL skills, student outcome codes also included student report of improved relationships with others and improved attitudes about self, others, and school (CASEL, 2013).

Thematic saturation of the data (i.e., when no new themes were identified) provides validation for the identified codes and is regarded as an indicator of the completeness of a dataset (Bowen, 2008). Thematic saturation of the coded categories occurred after the fourth student interview. Enumeration was conducted by quantifying data. The number of times a code was used by a student in the sample can indicate the salience of a theme and be used to compare different subpopulations (Namey, Guest, Thairu, & Johnson, 2007). The frequency of positive and negative statements regarding each process and outcome code was calculated according to the number of individual participants who noted each coding category. Frequencies were then compared between male and female participants. In an attempt to organize how the codes related to one another, thematic analysis (Shank, 2006) was utilized to create a network of themes and explore the relationship among constructs. A visual display was created to capture the relationship among constructs (See Appendix F).

Data from the Thoughts on RP Questionnaire addressed overall acceptability/satisfaction with the conference and student feedback on positive process themes. Findings were summarized using frequencies, means, and standard deviations and examined by evaluating the degree to which trends in responses matched students'

responses to interview questions. Findings were then examined for potential gender differences.

Study 2 Findings

Descriptives. Male and female students within this sample reported a wide variety of positive and negative processes and outcomes as a result of participation in the RP conferences. As derived from the RP-Observe manual, student-reported positive and negative processes were categorized into three constructs that were further divided into dimensions: structure (rules), support (positive adult-student respect and responsiveness and positive student-student respect and responsiveness), and student voice (autonomy, risk taking, and problem solving; See Table 7). Student-reported outcome themes were divided into the following categories: five SEL skills (self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making skills); improved attitudes about self, others, and school; and improved relationships (See Table 8).

Table 7

Student-reported Processes by Gender

<u>Positive Process</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Total</u> <u>%</u>
Structure: Rules	4	8	80
Support: Positive adult-student respect and responsiveness	5	6	73
Support: Positive student-student respect and responsiveness	3	3	40
Student voice: Autonomy	4	3	47
Student voice: Risk taking/Sense of safety	4	3	47
Student voice: Problem solving	6	7	87
<u>Negative Process</u>			
Structure: Unfair/inconsistent rules or response to rule breaking	5	6	73
Support: Negative adult-student respect and responsiveness	5	3	53
Support: Negative student-student respect and responsiveness	3	5	53
Student voice: Lack of autonomy	4	5	67
Student voice: Difficulty with risk taking/Lack of safety	1	6	47
Student voice: Negative problem solving	-	-	-

Note: Female ($n = 7$), Male ($n = 8$). Results were calculated according to the number of individual participants who noted each coding category at least one time.

Table 8

Student-reported Outcomes by Gender

<u>Positive Outcome</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Total</u>
			<u>%</u>
SEL skills: Self-awareness	6	4	67
SEL skills: Self-management	6	7	87
SEL skills: Social awareness	4	3	47
SEL skills: Relationship skills	6	6	80
SEL skills: Responsible decision-making skills	7	5	80
Improved relationships	6	2	53
Improved attitudes about self, others, and school	5	2	47
<u>Negative Outcome</u>			
SEL skills: Self-awareness	-	-	-
SEL skills: Self-management	-	-	-
SEL skills: Social awareness	-	-	-
SEL skills: Relationship skills	-	-	-
SEL skills: Responsible decision-making skills	-	-	-
Worsened relationships	-	1	7
Worsened attitudes about self, others, and school	-	1	7

Note: Female ($n = 7$), Male ($n = 8$). Results were calculated according to the number of individual participants who noted each coding category at least one time.

The overall sample identified a range of process categories. Male students identified a similar number of positive processes ($M = 4.13$; $SD = 1.46$, Range = 1 - 6) as female students ($M = 4$; $SD = 1.63$, Range = 2 - 6). However, on average, female students identified slightly more negative process themes ($M = 5.71$; $SD = 1.11$, Range = 4 - 7), than their male peers ($M = 3.62$; $SD = 1.69$, Range = 2 - 7). Overall, male and female students identified a similar number of positive outcomes associated with participation in RP interventions ($M = 3.25$; $SD = 2.05$; $M = 3$; $SD = 1.41$, Range = 2 - 5; respectively). Across the sample, only one student, a male student, identified any negative outcomes associated with participation in conferences. More specifically, this student identified worsened relationships and worsened attitudes toward self, others, and school after participating in the conference process.

Student Perception of Conference Process

Structure. Students reported on the positive and negative aspects of the structure process, which included the single rules dimension.

Rules. More male students (100%; $n = 8$), than their female peers (57%; $n = 4$), identified that their teachers or counselors, at times, used clear expectations, fairness and consistency in responding to problems, and effectively responded to rule-breaking. While many students identified positive structure, most students also identified circumstances in which teachers were unfair in enforcing rules. Roughly an equivalent number of male (75%; $n = 6$) and female students (71%; $n = 5$) identified that their teachers were inconsistent, unfair, or ineffective during the conference. Examples of students' responses for processes are included below:

“[Whether it’s fair] depends on the situation, like when it felt fair, like [for] little stuff, for example, like say I drew on a table, they would be like ‘go now and clean it up’.... [When unfair] it will be something outrageous like - go apologize to a kid or go check in with a group.” Latino/White male participant (positive and negative process)

“It was frustrating. I felt like I didn’t have to be there. I mean, I get there was suspicion [of use] but I didn’t do anything. No way [was it fair], not at all.” African American female participant (negative process)

Support. The support construct includes student perception of the negative and positive aspects of the following two dimensions: adult-student respect and responsiveness and student-student respect and responsiveness.

Adult-student respect and responsiveness. While nearly an equal percent of male (75%; $n = 6$) and female (71%; $n = 5$) students identified positive rapport, empathic responses, and acceptance from adults; a larger percentage of female students perceived negative adult-student respect and responsiveness during the conference (71%; $n = 5$)

compared to male students (36%; $n = 3$). Some students shared they felt disrespected by adults, who at times engaged in “nitpicking” or verbally aggressive during conferences.

Below are some examples of respondent’s responses:

“It felt good having [my teacher] actually talk to me about my problems.” White female participant (positive process)

“They just did [the conference] because they cared about me, they didn’t want me to mess up - so that’s why they said it.” Latino male participant (positive process)

“Every little thing I’d do they’d be like ‘don’t roll your eyes, don’t breathe like that.’ Every little thing I did, like oh my God, every little thing – it made me want to snap.” White female participant (negative process)

“Sometimes, both parties play a part. Like how do you expect a kid to respond well to yelling and want to cooperate and participate? Cause I don’t want to participate or cooperate or do anything you want me to do when you yell. Just chill out. Sometimes [teachers] play a role in how it goes down.” White/Latina female participant (negative process)

Student-student respect and responsiveness. In order to support students in disclosing during a conference, students are expected to engage respectfully and warmly with their peers (Gregory et al., 2014b). Overall, less than half of male and female students (38%, $n = 3$; 43%, $n = 3$; respectively) perceived positive student-student respect and responsiveness and a majority of male students perceived negative student-student respect and responsiveness (63%, $n = 5$). While some students shared that conferences provided them an opportunity to better understand their peers, many other students shared feeling as though peers did not respect their privacy, behaved aggressively toward them, or did not listen to them during conferences. Sample responses include:

“I want to graduate and the restorative questions do help me. They help me get to know people, because I didn’t know anybody when I came here. I wanted to just do my time and go, but then when I sat down with people I didn’t think I liked - I

actually turned out to really like them because I get where they're coming from.” African American female participant (positive process)

“Like my peers turned on me and told on me, like I don’t like that because I know they don’t want me sharing their business.” African American male participant (negative process)

Student voice. The student voice construct contains student feedback on the following three dimensions: autonomy, risk taking, and problem solving.

Autonomy. While some students reported they had a voice and ownership in the conference resolution (47%, $n = 7$), most male and female students reported feeling as though they lacked autonomy during the conference and that their teacher was controlling during the conference (67%, $n = 9$). Some students noted feeling as though staff did not allow them to share their side of the story, while other students shared that being allowed to write the restorative questions provided them with an outlet to share their thoughts and feelings. Below are some examples of student feedback:

“Yeah during the questions I said what happened and was able to pinpoint you know where did we go wrong? [It was] kind of relieving. Like when you first do it, it’s like why do I do this but then it’s like what did I do at the time? What was I thinking? Maybe I did act a certain way and I should’ve done it a different way.” African American female participant (positive process)

“Sometimes, most, actually most of the time the staff and teachers don’t let you talk, like when you talk they cut you off and when you say ‘you cut me off’ [teachers] say ‘I need to say something’ like that’s what they say, I don’t think that’s right.” White female participant (negative process)

“Frustrated, like the staff [a]re really controlling here so it’s kind of like ‘ugh’ like you can’t have your opinion. You’ve just got to be like ‘agree to disagree,’ like take time.” White male participant (negative process)

Risk taking. During conferences, some male and female students reported experiencing a sense of safety with their peers or teachers in order to take risks and safely disclose their feelings to others (38%, $n = 3$; 57%, $n = 4$; respectively). However, a

significantly greater number of male students (75%, $n = 6$), compared to their female peers (14%, $n = 1$), reported feeling unsafe or uncomfortable to share their feelings with others during the RP interventions. Examples of student responses are below:

“After calming myself down, you have to write an apology letter and I had to read it in front of other people... it was embarrassing, you have to sit down and say what you did, and get feedback from all these different groups.... [Conferences are] scary because for me, like when I get mad I black out but when I’m calm I feel bad, so I’m scared because I don’t know what [the teacher is] gonna say, because I know I was wrong but I have a lot of pride and I hate admitting I was wrong, so it eats at me and scares me because I don’t know if they’re gonna accept my apology.” African American female participant (negative process)

“Like if I needed support I go to my counselor but the circles, like I can’t open up in that, I’m like ‘What?’ I’m not used to that. Like people open up and all that, and I’m like, ‘yo, what is this’. Not used to that... At first, I felt like I didn’t want to tell nobody my business, but then I felt a little more comfortable, but now I feel like I shouldn’t be telling no one my business now because it’s just like, I just feel it, like, I shouldn’t tell them, like I have that vibe, that’s how I feel so... Like my peers turned on me and told on me... Like I don’t like that because I know they don’t want me sharing their business.” African American male (negative process)

“When I was in public school when I did something wrong I would get a detention or a suspension or something, not like ‘What happened? Blah, blah, blah’. It was different... I didn’t like [the conference] at all, it actually bothered me a lot at first... I’m not all about, ‘What happened? How does it make you feel?’ Like all about that. I’m like: ‘Okay, give me a consequence’.” White male participant (negative process)

Problem solving. Most male and female students reported positive experiences problem solving during the conference (88%, $n = 7$; 85%, $n = 6$). In addition, no students reported negative experiences during the problem solving process. Sample responses are included below:

“You and the person you’re in conflict with sit across from each other and you talk about everything, you talk about why you dislike each other, how you’ll be successful at [school] with each other here, because they’re not going to kick us both out because we’ve got problems. No, we have to settle it, um, not to confront

and support each other, um, and just don't give each other dirty looks and stuff like that." White female participant (positive process)

"So when I went out there I was talking to [a peer] and usually when you have a problem with a student here they make you have a one-on-one sit down and he made us solve the problem and shake hands to like work out the problem so there was no continuing problem... it depends on the person and like the problem, but usually that is helpful." White male participant, age 16 (positive process)

"They could do the [restorative] questions, because that actually helps... If you have it in your head, and I've been here a long time so I already know, but even outside of here - you have it in your head, like I've done that like 5 times already. Like I got into trouble and I did the questions right there in my head, like they look at me like 'What?' but I'm like 'Aw nothing, I'm just doing the questions'." Latino male participant (positive process)

"[The conference] is good because if two guys get in a fight and we do the restorative questions we easily solve it, like at school, like at public school, those kids get in a fight and get sent out of class and they don't talk to them about it and they will still meet up after school and that turns into a fight but here they make the two kids sit down with each other and tell their side of the story." Latino male participant (positive process)

Student Perception of Outcomes Related to Participation in Conferences

SEL skills. Students reported a range of positive outcomes related to development of the five SEL skills, specifically: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making skills. In addition, students reported improved relationships and improved attitudes about self, others, and school. Only one student reported any negative outcomes related to worsened relationships and poorer attitude about self, others, and school.

Self-awareness. While half of the male participants (50%, $n = 4$) increased self-awareness, nearly all of the female students (86%, $n = 6$) reported they increased their ability to recognize their own emotions and/or thoughts and were better able to

understand how their emotions and thoughts impacted their behavior. Examples of student responses are below:

“I actually learned how to listen and after having a few one-on-ones with the same person it just clicks in my head, I just had a one-on-one that if I do something he feels some type of way so I just had to learn not to do something and I learned how to express myself and tell how I really feel before I get mad, and I learned how to actually talk to people... [Now] I take a 5, I leave the classroom, and if I’m at the house I go upstairs to my room by myself.” African American female participant (positive outcome)

“I just understood like what I did, if you’re telling me and explaining to me what I did wrong it’s better for me because then I know what I did and if they give me feedback I know what to do next time.” White female participant (positive outcome)

“I kept thinking I can’t let myself get angry because I can’t blame my anger on anybody but myself. So after a while I talked to another student, my counselor, and my teacher and they said they understood.” Latino male participant (positive outcome)

Self-management. Nearly all male and female participants (88%, $n = 7$; 86%, $n = 6$) reported positive outcomes in learning how to better regulate their emotions, thoughts, and behaviors as a result of participation in the RP conferences. Below are some samples of student feedback:

“I would just like curse the staff out, tell the students off. I was just very defiant, like I’m not like that anymore. Like even at the beginning of this school year I was like that but like I said before, I realized I needed a change because I didn’t want to write those questions no more. And I haven’t written them in a bit... I can control my anger now I have learned to bite my tongue more.” White female participant (positive outcome)

There was a time where I would not talk about anything and I felt like I was getting better with my anger and being able to process it through with the staff here was a great experience... There was a time I couldn’t have a conversation without getting angry and I felt like I’ve bettered myself for actually talking about the situation.” African American female participant (positive outcome)

“Sometimes it’s like, like you’re embarrassed [during the conference] because you don’t know you’re doing something and then suddenly all the attention is on you so you want to fix yourself. But it is good because I don’t want to be embarrassed again, so it makes you think about it for next time.” Latino male participant (positive outcome)

Social awareness. More than half of female students (57%, $n = 4$) and a little more than one-third of male students (38%, $n = 3$) reported an increased ability to take the perspective of others and reported increased empathy for others. See below for a sample of responses:

“It was frustrating, but when I actually thought about where did I go wrong in the situation? It became a lot easier to process it all... Because sometimes I don’t think I’m wrong when I do things but when I come back to reality... I realized - maybe they didn’t want me to open the door because it had to be something going on I couldn’t be [a] part of.” African American female participant (positive outcome)

“When I’m frustrated I get upset, but then I come back down. [Before] it would take me almost 2-3 hours coming back down from being angry but it’s like I come back down I look at it from another person’s perspective and I realize this is why they were doing that.” African American female participant (positive outcome)

Relationship skills. Overall 80% of students reported positive relationship skills as a result of participating in the conferences. Most female students (86%, $n = 6$) and most male students (75%, $n = 6$) reported they developed better skills at establishing and maintaining healthy relationships with others. Below are some examples of student feedback:

“When I got here I was real quiet but then when I started to show my true colors and had to have a meeting because I was about to get kicked out and like that changed because I do have goals. I want to graduate and the restorative questions do help me, they help me get to know people, because I didn’t want to know anybody when I came here, I wanted to just do my time and go, but then when I sat down with people I didn’t think I liked, I actually turned out to really like them because I get where they’re coming from.” African American female participant (positive outcome)

“[I’ve learned] more about people. Like more about other people and like more about myself... Like more sides of other people you would never see unless you got to know them, besides just seeing them in school.” White male participant (positive outcome)

“Before I used to get mad and hit people and stuff and now I just I don’t know just deal with it... [by] talking to the person.” White/Latino male participant (positive outcome)

Responsible decision-making skills. All female students, and slightly more than half of the male participants (63%, $n = 5$) reported improvements in their ability to make positive choices for their behaviors and social interactions with others. No students reported negative responsible decision-making outcomes. Please see below for a sample of responses:

“[Now] I just think through the consequences before I do stuff. I used to never do that but being here I have to.” White male participant (positive outcome)

“I just have no choice but to talk about my feelings but at the same time I’m kind of happy about it. Because I didn’t like talking about anything, like if I had a problem I kept it to myself, but when you come here, it’s like oh well, [you] have no choice, you grow from it... It depends on your goal, like my goal is graduation and if I wasn’t doing things like participating in group and if I was doing the things I was doing when I got here, I wouldn’t be able to graduate this year... [So I’ve learned] to cope with my problems.” African American female participant (positive outcome)

“[I learned] like how to handle a situation if it comes up next time, like taking action steps for how to fix a problem... Like cause and effect like kind of things, because if this person is making you angry like how you’re going to react to them the next time, are you going to confront the person or take your anger out on that person... Now I generally handle them in a more respectful way, just talking to the person, if they don’t respect me just talking to them and letting them know how to handle the conference.” White male participant (positive outcome)

“Back in public school, I wouldn’t think I would just walk up and yell at him and fight. Here I go to a counselor and say how I feel and ask why he did this.” Latino Male participant (positive outcome)

Improved relationships. The majority of female participants shared that their relationships with adults and/or peers have improved as a result of participation in the RP

conference and circle interventions (86%, $n = 6$). In contrast, few male students reported that their relationships with others improved as a result of participation (25%, $n = 2$).

Only one student shared feeling as though his relationships with peers worsened as a result of participation in the RP interventions. Below are some examples of student responses:

“I used to not like any of the teachers but actually they help me a lot and now I get along with a lot of them. Like with the students, I used to not get along with them but now I’m friends with some of them.” White male participant (positive outcome)

“With the staff members, my relationship changed, because it made me closer to them more. They’re helping me out.... all the teachers, staff members like they care. Like at a lot of schools they just do their jobs and leave, every single staff [here], I can’t see not one of them that don’t really care.” White female participant (positive outcome)

“Like if you’re having a problem and it’s not a good day just keep to yourself or if you have a problem, don’t snap just take 5 minutes out in the hallway. I have someone I can now talk to in here so we was just in the hallway because he was mad, we were in the hall and I calmed him down, and when I get mad and upset like there are certain people I can talk to.” White female participant (positive outcome)

“It taught me I had to change, last year I was a lot different than how I am this year... Like I wasn’t, last year I didn’t care, I would be physical with other people and I didn’t care that much and I threatened kids a lot last year and this year I tried to keep it to a minimum. I still wasn’t perfect this year, but it’s a lot better than last year... Like I talk now, like I talk at school and with my family and now I just talk.” White male participant (positive outcome)

Improved attitudes about self, others, and school. A larger percentage of female participants (71%, $n = 5$), over male students (25%, $n = 2$) reported an improvement in their perception of themselves, others, and/or their school. Students shared feeling more connected to school, believing in their capability to achieve, and shared increased positive attitudes toward others. One male student shared that as a result

of peers confronting him, his attitude toward others worsened and he no longer wanted to attend his own graduation. Sample responses include:

“I opened up [to others], but now my feelings have switched over. Like I’m almost at graduation and I don’t know if I even want to go. Like my peers, I don’t want them messing up my graduation so I want to stay home, you can send that jawn in the mail to me. That’s how I feel like... Sometimes I like [them], but other times I want to block them out. Like for graduation, I’m not coming. Even if they force me, I’m not coming.” African American male participant (negative outcome)

“I used to think nothing of [being suspended] because like my motivation for school was gone... And it was like, I don’t want to be here so today I’m going to be suspended from school because I don’t want to be here. I was like school wasn’t worth it. Now I see that I’m capable of doing anything I want to do.” African American female participant (positive outcome)

“[Now I know what] I’m capable of and what my strengths are, kind of like some I haven’t discovered yet and some I’m discovering now.” White male participant (positive outcome)

Thoughts on RP Questionnaire

The Thoughts on RP Questionnaire contained two constructs, namely acceptability/ satisfaction and process, and items were evaluated individually. The majority of students reported overall acceptability or satisfaction with the RP intervention, with both male and female students reporting similar levels of acceptance or satisfaction with the intervention ($M = 5.5$, $SD = 1.38$; $M = 5$, $SD = 1.41$; respectively). In terms of the conference process, male students reported observing slightly more positive processes during the conference, particularly in terms of teacher use of power ($M = 5.85$, $SD = 1.07$), compared to the female participants ($M = 5$, $SD = 1.15$; See Table 9).

Table 9

Frequencies of Student-reported Perception of the Informal Conferences based on the Thoughts on RP Survey

<u>Conference Questionnaire</u>	<u>Female</u> n (%)	<u>Male</u> n (%)	<u>Total</u> N (%)
Acceptability/ Satisfaction			
Conferences are helpful for male students	4 (57%)	4 (50%)	8 (53%)
Conferences are helpful for female students	6 (86%)	7 (88%)	13 (87%)
Conferences affect male students in a positive way	6 (86%)	5 (63%)	11 (73%)
Conferences affect female students in a positive way	6 (86%)	7 (88%)	13 (87%)
Suggest the use of conferences outside of the school	5 (71%)	4 (50%)	9 (60%)
Process			
Like how they were confronted	3 (43%)	6 (75%)	9 (60%)
Respected how their teachers used power and authority	5 (71%)	8 (100%)	13 (87%)
Felt fairly treated by everyone during the conference	5 (71%)	6 (75%)	11 (71%)
A good decision was made by the teacher for everyone	5 (71%)	5 (63%)	10 (67%)
Felt they were part of the conference	7 (100%)	5 (63%)	12 (80%)
Able to express their side of the story	5 (71%)	6 (75%)	11 (73%)
Felt listened to during conference	5 (71%)	5 (63%)	10 (67%)

Note: Female total ($n = 7$), male total ($n = 8$). Frequencies were counted for students responded *Agree* or *Strongly Agree* to individual survey questions.

Discussion

Findings from both studies indicate the potential for elements within the RP intervention to decrease the gender discipline gap and promote improved relationships, increased perspective taking/empathy, and improved problem solving skills among both male and female students. Both studies point to high RP implementation during circles and conferences as correlated with positive outcomes (e.g., reduction in the gender gap in disruption/defiance referrals; student-reported improvements in SEL skills, strengthened relationships, and improvement in attitudes toward self, others, and school) for students (See Appendix F).

High RP Implementation and the gender discipline gap. Results from the present studies indicate the importance of considering student-perception in understanding RP processes leading to positive outcomes. The initial study suggests that RP has the

potential to narrow the gender gap in discipline referrals when students perceive, but not when teachers self-report, teachers as high in implementation of the RP intervention.

Findings showed that teachers, who were perceived by their students, as high RP implementers had a more narrow gender gap in discipline referrals, however, the gap was maintained for teachers perceived by their students as low RP implementers with significantly more male, compared with female, students referred for ODRs. In addition, teachers perceived by students as high RP implementers narrowed the racial/gender gap through referring similarly for African American/Latino males and White/Asian males and for African American/Latina females and White/Asian females.

While such findings are promising for reducing the gender gap in ODR referrals in public schools classrooms, results from the second study potentially provides greater insight into how “high fliers” or students with extensive disciplinary histories attending an alternative school perceive processes within RP implementation. The results from this second study provided insight into how students with discipline histories perceive processes within the RP intervention and how they perceive RP as promoting positive outcomes, including enhanced SEL skills, improved relationships, and improved attitudes toward self, others, and schools (See Appendix E for RP Logic Model). This is important, given extant literature posits a number of negative consequences associated with higher rates of suspensions, including school dropout, future antisocial behaviors, and/or involvement in the juvenile justice system, which suggests the importance for increasing understanding for how processes within interventions help re-engage frequently suspended students in school and promote positive outcomes (American Psychological

Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008; Christle, Jolivette, & Nelson, 2005; Hemphill et al., 2006; Nicholson-Crotty, Birchmeier, & Valentine, 2009).

Improved teacher-student relationships. Both male and female students reported perceiving a range of positive and negative processes associated with participation in the RP interventions known as informal conferences. The majority of male and female students perceived positive processes during the RP intervention, which was suggested by the RP-Observe Manual as indicative of high quality implementation of RP conferences and circles (Gregory et al., 2014b). While the majority of both male and female students perceived positive processes in the areas of structure, support, and student voice, there was a notable gender difference in student perception of risk taking. While only one female participant noted feeling unsafe to disclose feelings or thoughts during RP conferences, most of the male students reported feeling embarrassed or uncomfortable during conferences, particularly during group conferences.

Some male respondents explained that talking about their feelings during conferences or circles seemed new and uncomfortable, even different from how males usually cope with their problems. One respondent noted, "Me? I don't talk about [problems]. I don't feel people need to know." Another male participant explained, "Us guys don't do that [conferences], we use actions, we don't just speak that much." In addition, some male participants noted they would prefer a consequence that involves action, instead of needing to make verbal reparations for their behaviors. Such initial findings are consistent with literature that suggests that males are more action-oriented from birth (e.g., Wood & Eagley, 2012). In addition, even female participants noted that males "try not to share their problems." Moreover, the difficulty for male participants to

mask their thoughts and emotions may also be reminiscent of what Pollack (2006) suggested was adolescent males' desire to portray stereotypical hyper masculine behaviors. Hyper masculine or masking behaviors, demonstrated by males with histories of repeated negative interactions with school personnel, may be otherwise viewed as negative coping skills and a need for school personnel to increase their support for males to feel safe in the classroom (Irvine, 1990; Luthar, 2006; Noguera, 2003; Osborne, 1999; Spencer et al., 2006).

Despite reporting feeling uncomfortable or embarrassed during group conferences, most male participants reported perceiving positive adult-student respect and responsiveness. In contrast, the majority of male students noted negative student-student respect and responsiveness processes during conferences. This finding may indicate that negative peer interactions may also impact male students' ability to take risks in circles or conferences. While many female students noted negative adult-student respect and responsiveness and few positive student-student respect and responsiveness, such support dimensions did not seem to negatively impact their sense of safety during conferences.

In order to solve males' self-reported feelings of embarrassment or feeling uncomfortable during RP interventions, male students suggested they would prefer to be confronted individually, for instance, one noted: "I think they should pull the kid out of the classroom and talk... because a lot of people don't like getting confronted in front of everybody. They get embarrassed." Another student stated: "I think have a one-on-one... I mean imagine if that situation is embarrassing." Male students perceived greater safety during one-on-one conferences for both peer and staff conferences.

In addition to staff respecting adolescents' need for privacy or confidentiality in order to help students feel safe during conferences, less than half of participating students noted experiencing autonomy during the conferences and the majority of students reported experiencing a lack of autonomy during some conferences. During interviews, students explained that some staff "spoke at" them or "interrupted" them, leaving many to feel that they were unable to tell their "side of the story" and authentically contribute during some conferences. This experience may have contributed to the gender gap in student-reported improvement in relationships.

Overall, most male and female students reported improved relationships skills, more specifically, abilities in developing and maintaining healthy relationships with others (CASEL, 2013). Both male and female respondents noted they were better able to control their feelings and had learned how to talk to others (e.g., family members, other students, peers, and staff) after participating in the conferences. For example, one student noted how exposure to the intervention improved her ability to talk about her feelings: "I just have no choice but to talk about my feelings, but at the same time I'm kind of happy about it... Because I didn't like talking about anything, like if I had a problem I kept it to myself but when you come here it's like 'oh well,' [I] have no choice." Another student explained how his relationships with others outside of the school "got better... cause I learned to talk about my feelings."

While an equal number of male and female students reported improved relationship skills, gender differences emerged in improved relationships outcomes. The majority of female students noted improved relationships with others; for instance one student noted improvement, stating, "yeah with staff members my relationship changed

because it made me closer to them and like them more. They're helping me out.”

Conversely, few male students noted improved relationships resulting from participation in the RP intervention. This may be in line with research noting that from childhood, females are more attuned to connection with others than males (Bylington, 1997).

Alternatively, the gender gap in the outcome for improved relationships may also be related to how students perceive and value autonomy, risk taking, and support from staff and peers. Further research is needed to determine the relationship among these processes and improve understanding for how such processes lead to the outcome for improved relationships.

Enhanced problem solving skills. Nearly all male and female students reported enhanced problem solving skills related to participation in the RP conferences. While some students hinted at less autonomy during some experiences in formulating a conference outcome, nearly every student noted that they learned how to better recognize and solve problems after participation in a conference. Some students explained that completion of the restorative questions (e.g., “What happened?”, “Who has been affected by what you have done? In what way?”, “What do you think you need to do to make things right?”, etc.) provided them a voice in the problem solving process. Still other students noted differences in staff implementation that explained why some, but not all, conferences resulted in students’ self-reported enhanced problem solving skills. These students explained that while some staff members engaged in social dialogue with them to solve the problem, other staff engaged in monologues or interfered with their problem solving process. This finding suggests the importance of incorporating support and

student voice processes involved in high fidelity implementation of each conference, in order to enhance students' problem solving skills.

Greater Empathy/perspective taking. In addition to RP's focus on improving relationships, the findings of the present study suggest that through focusing on improving students' relationships with others, RP has the potential to enhance student's empathy or perspective taking skills. While less than half of the participants in the present study reported increased social awareness or empathy/perspective taking, students who reported this gain explained that through the conferences they learned how to see the other person's "side of the story." Such student responses indicate that conferences may hold the potential to promote growth in students' social awareness. Factors that may promote such growth may relate to staff behaviors, such as promoting structure, providing support through respect and responsiveness, and authentically integrating student voice during conferences and circles. While participants in the second study, particularly male students, noted positive structure processes, many students still noted both negative structure, negative support (both adult-student and student-student), and negative student voice processes. Such negative processes may interfere with development of social awareness outcomes.

Macready (2009) contends that RP's focus on moving school processes away from the monologue of teachers or administrators into a social dialogue that allows students' voice to be heard will promote students to learn social responsibility and understand how their behavior impacts others. In order to ensure such social dialogue occurs, Macready (2009) noted the importance of staff implementation. Through focusing on providing high support and high expectations, similar to Baumrind's (1979) model for

authoritative parenting, school staff may be better able to promote positive outcomes from use of the RP intervention with high fidelity of implementation.

Limitations of the Current Research and Future Directions

While these studies contribute to our understanding of the relationship between RP and positive outcomes for male and female students, several study limitations should be noted. As the studies do not have a randomized control design, the findings are only correlational and cannot say what caused the reduction in the gender gap in discipline data or other positive student outcomes. Future research should closely link teachers' RP implementation in classrooms with specific referrals that arose directly from interactions in that same classroom. Findings from the first study are limited by obtaining de-identified discipline records for each participating teacher across the whole school year, rather than having access to discipline data that linked the individual teacher to the specific surveyed student in the RP focal classroom. As a result of this limitation, it is unknown whether students within the focal classroom are representative of students in the teachers' other classrooms. Moreover, it is unknown how many referrals arose from interactions from within their classrooms or other settings around the school (e.g., hallways, cafeterias).

For the second study, the study included a small number of students attending three campuses of a small alternative school. Despite this limitation, thematic saturation was achieved, indicating an adequate sample was used to answer study questions (Bowen, 2008). In addition, this study could have been strengthened in terms of adding additional coders, which would decrease the possibility of researcher bias. Given the small sample size in Study 2, race by gender differences were unable to be explored. In

the future, this is an important consideration that should be made given African American, and increasingly Latino, male students are most at risk for exclusionary discipline practices (Fabelo et al., 2011). In addition, within the alternative school, the RP intervention reportedly permeates the school processes, making it difficult to exclusively focus on informal conferences as many students reported on both conference and circle processes. In order to better focus on understanding how a specific RP element impacts outcomes, future research should include longitudinal data, for instance graduation rates, employment rates, and recidivism. In addition, the current study is limited in relying solely upon student report and could be strengthened by the use of observational data, for instance utilizing the RP-Observe Manual to observe conferences. Lastly, this study could not assess change in perceived outcomes over the duration of exposure to the RP intervention, which may be important to consider in future research.

Implications for Practice

Findings from these studies have direct implications for both staff implementing the RP intervention in schools and for administrators considering adopting new programming. While teachers rated as implementing RP programming with high fidelity were linked to a reduction in the gender discipline gap in classrooms, some gendered differences in students' experience of the intervention emerged in individual findings. As a result, RP implementers should consider how gender differences may result in differing developmental needs for male and female students in schools implementing the RP intervention. For example, upon introduction to the RP intervention, male students may need individualized scaffolding around emotional expression so that they feel comfortable and supported enough to share their feelings to others.

Additionally, given that outcomes may be related to implementation of the RP intervention, administrators should consider how they may train, support, and monitor implementation of the RP elements within their school. Administrators may consider use of the RP-Observe Manual in guiding and monitoring implementation of the seven process dimensions (i.e., rules, adult-student respect and responsiveness, student-student respect and responsiveness, relevancy, autonomy, risk taking, and problem solving) during conferences and circles. Identifying and understanding such specific positive or negative processes for conferences and circles can assist school staff in successfully implementing the RP intervention. Taken together, these findings suggest that RP holds the promise to promote positive outcomes in schools, though, administrators should be mindful of providing implementation supports in order to increase fidelity of RP programming.

Conclusion

These studies extend previous research by examining gender differences in students' perception of the RP intervention. Results suggest that RP has the potential to promote positive outcomes for students, through closing the gender gap in discipline referrals and students self-report of their personal growth. Further, these results suggest that when teachers are perceived by students as high RP implementers, RP has the potential to close both the gender and the gender/racial discipline gap. While both male and female students report of conference processes and outcomes generally overlap, several discrepancies were noted. Such discrepancies underlie the importance of considering gender differences when implementing interventions with students. Given these findings, administrators choosing interventions should consider the importance of

implementation practices in promoting positive outcomes for both male and female students. Future research should include more rigorous and controlled research trials to clarify how RP elements promote positive outcomes for both male and female students.

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Appendix A

Implementation of Restorative Practices Student Survey

Not at all = A, rarely = B, sometimes = C, often = D, always = E

1. My teacher talks about his/her feelings.
2. My teacher encourages students to express their feelings.
3. My teacher is respectful when talking about feelings.
4. When someone misbehaves, my teacher responds to negative behaviors by asking students questions about what happened, who has been harmed and how the harm can be repaired.
5. When someone misbehaves, my teacher asks the questions in a respectful way.
6. When someone misbehaves, my teacher provides opportunities for those who were harmed to be heard and to have a say in what needs to happen to make things right.
7. When someone misbehaves, my teacher encourages students to talk about feelings when responding to the questions.
8. My teacher uses circles to provide opportunities for students to share feelings, ideas and experiences.
9. My teacher uses circles to help students get to know each other and build relationships.
10. My teacher sets a positive tone when beginning a circle.
11. My teacher picks topics that encourage risk taking.
12. My teacher uses circles to respond to behavior problems and repair harm caused by misbehavior.
13. My teacher helps students feel safe to take risks in the circle.
14. My teacher models the kind of behavior and responses he/she expects from students.

15. My teacher sits in the circle with us.
16. My teacher encourages students in the circle to confront each other when necessary.
17. My teacher encourages students to take responsibility for their own behavior.
18. My teacher takes the thoughts and ideas of students into account when making decisions.
19. My teacher explains the reasoning behind decisions that affect students.
20. My teacher clearly states new expectations and consequences if expectations are not met.
21. My teacher listens to what students have to say when they have misbehaved.
22. My teacher acknowledges the feelings of students when they have misbehaved.
23. My teacher avoids scolding and lecturing.
24. My teacher focuses on behavior and not whether students are “good” or “bad” people.

Appendix B

Implementation of Restorative Practices Teacher Survey

Not at all = A, rarely = B, sometimes = C, often = D, always = E

1. I used “I” statements to express my feelings.
2. Students used “I” statements to express their feelings.
3. I actively encouraged students to express their feelings.
4. Students used affective statements to express how they were impacted by others’ behavior.
5. When providing positive or negative feedback, I identified specific and concrete behaviors.
6. I delivered feedback in a personalized manner directly to the student who impacted others.
7. I distinguished the deed from the doer.
8. I used affective statements informally through-out the day.
9. I responded to negative behaviors using restorative questions.
10. I asked the questions in a non-judgmental way that communicated a desire for understanding.
11. I engaged those who were harmed when I dealt with an incident.
12. I provided opportunities for those who were harmed to be heard and to have a say in what needed to happen to make things right.
13. I asked the wrongdoer to identify who had been harmed and what harm was done.
14. I asked the wrongdoer what needs to be done to make things right.
15. I asked restorative questions informally throughout the day.
16. When addressing misbehavior between students, I structured the conversation using restorative questions.
17. I facilitated small impromptu conferences when a lower level incident occurs.
18. When facilitating a small impromptu conference, I encouraged students to do most of the talking.

19. I encouraged students to use affective statements in response to the restorative questions.
20. I asked students to take specific actions to repair the harm.
21. I used a respectful tone and avoided lecturing.
22. I used circles to provide opportunities for students to share feelings, ideas, and experiences.
23. In a given week, I held more pro-active circles than responsive circles
24. In the circles, only one person spoke at a time.
25. In the circles, participants were focused on explicit topic.
26. I modeled desired behaviors and responses for the participants within the circle.
27. I set a positive tone when I began a circle.
28. I was ready with a response to participants who asked to “pass.”
29. I sat *in* the circle.
30. I picked topics that encouraged risk taking.
31. I used circles as a response to an incident/problem.
32. Students felt safe to take risks.
33. In the responsive circles, only one person spoke at a time.
34. In the responsive circles, participants focused on the explicit topic.
35. I modeled desired behaviors and responses for participants within the circle.
36. I set a positive tone when I began a circle.
37. I am ready with a response to participants who ask to “pass”.
38. I encouraged students in the circle to confront each other when necessary.
39. I encouraged students to take responsibility for their own behavior.
40. I looked for ways to reintegrate the offenders and allow them to reclaim their good name in the group.
41. I consistently followed the script.

42. I kept my personal views and needs separate from the conferencing process.
43. I acknowledged and disapproved of harmful behavior.
44. I valued all participants who are involved in the incident.
45. I allowed for free expression of emotions.
46. I ensured the conference stayed focused on the incident.
47. I allowed participants to develop their own solutions to the harm resulting from the incident.
48. I encouraged clear agreements.
49. I encouraged others to separate the deed from the doer in the conference process.
50. In the conferences I facilitated, the wrongdoer was reintegrated into the community.
51. I used fair process in decision making.
52. I used fair process when I made decisions that affect my students.
53. I actively engaged students and asked their input.
54. Students' input impacted my decision making.
55. I explained the reasoning behind decisions that affected students.
56. After I made a decision, I stated new expectations and consequences if those expectations were not met.
57. I listened to what the person experiencing shame had to say.
58. I acknowledged the feeling of a person experiencing shame.
59. I encouraged those experiencing shame to express their feelings.
60. I encouraged the person experiencing shame to move beyond his or her shame response.
61. I avoided stigmatizing and labeling others.
62. I examined and monitored my own shame responses.
63. I could identify the type of shame responses on the compass of shame.
64. I used affective statements with other staff members.

65. I used restorative questions to resolve staff conflicts and repair harm done to staff relationships.
66. We used proactive circles to build a healthy staff community.
67. We used responsive circles to deal with conflicts that arose from staff members.
68. We used fair process in situations where participatory decision making was appropriate.
69. The administration models restorative practices.
70. I had a deep understanding of the fundamental hypothesis and how it related to the other essential elements.
71. I think as a staff we met the criteria of a high quality restorative staff community.
72. I used affective statements with students' family members.
73. I used proactive circles with students' family members.
74. I used responsive circles to resolve problems between students' family members and the school.
75. I engaged families in "real" substantive consultations regarding behaviors and academic concerns.
76. I used fair process where participatory decision making was appropriate.
77. I routinely communicated positive student behavior and academic achievements to family members.
78. I anticipated shame responses from family members when I reported inappropriate behavior.
79. I was able to identify their shame responses on the compass of shame.
80. I used "I" statements to express feelings.
81. I helped the family members to distinguish between the deed and the doer.
82. I used high control and high support.
83. I maintained high expectations for appropriate behavior.
84. I addressed inappropriate behavior and did not ignore it.
85. I distinguished the discipline window box that I operated in.

86. I used the social Discipline Window to reflect on my behavior and interactions with others.

Appendix C

Conferences Interview

1. Please tell me about your high school experiences and what brought you to this high school?
How did you deal with problems or frustration before you came to this school? In your experience, how do males typically deal with problems or frustration? How do females?
2. Since you started at this school, can you tell me about an experience when a counselor/teacher at school had to confront you or gave you feedback after something happened. What happened during this experience? Who all was there? What did you do when counselors/teachers confronted you? Did you get the chance to tell your side of the story? How did you feel participating in this confrontation? How was the confrontation resolved? Did the results seem fair to you?
3. When your counselor/teacher gave you feedback or confronted you about a problem, did the experience seem new to you? How is it different from the typical way that males or females solve problems?
4. After going through this experience, did you feel your relationship (or connection) changed with the other people who were a part of the confrontation? Do you notice any differences in how you get along (relate to or interact) with others who weren't involved (like family, friends, classmates)? How has it changed?
5. Tell us about what you learned from the experience of having peers or counselors give you feedback or confront you. Tell me how you handle your frustration or problems with others now.
6. Prior to attending this school, were you ever suspended? If so, what was it like to be suspended?
7. Do you think that certain students or groups of students are targeted for suspensions (e.g., students from specific neighborhoods, race, or gender)? If so, which group(s)? Are certain students targeted for receiving feedback or confrontation from counselors/teachers at your school?
8. How should counselors/teachers handle problems with students? Should they handle problems differently between males and females?
9. I'm trying to learn about what students think about schools' discipline approaches, so do you have any final comments on ideas for what schools could do differently to help students follow school rules? Males tend to get into trouble with school staff

more than girls in many schools. Is there anything else schools could do to help make schools a better place for male students?

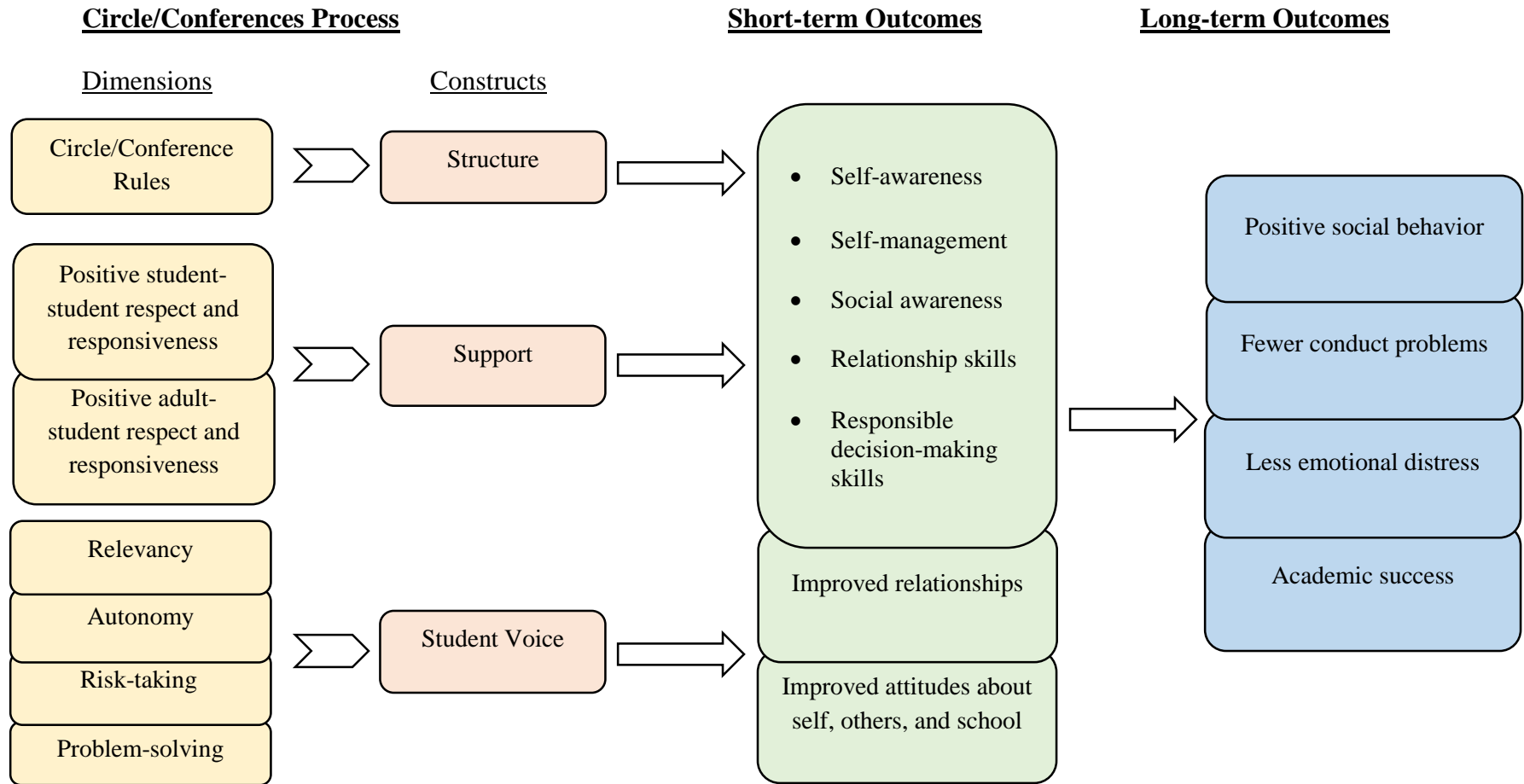
Appendix D

Thoughts on Restorative Practices Scale

Strongly disagree = A, disagree = B, agree = C, strongly agree = D

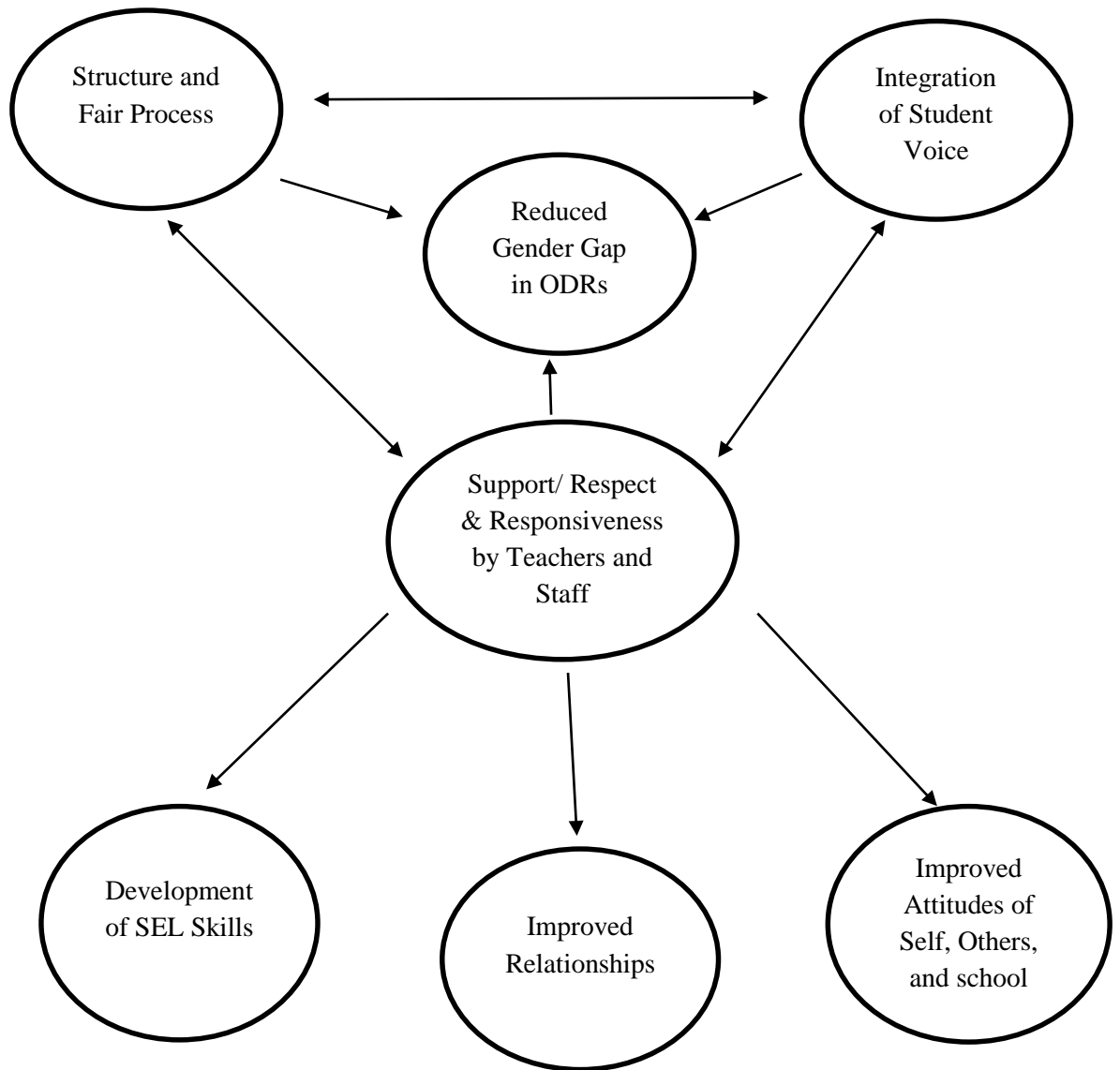
- 1) I like how I am given feedback or confronted by others during conferences at school.
- 2) Overall the use of conferences, or when I'm given feedback by others, is helpful for **male** students.
- 3) Overall the use of conferences, or when I'm given feedback by others at school, is helpful for **female** students.
- 4) The use of conferences, or when I'm given feedback by others, is likely to affect **male** students in a positive way.
- 5) The use of conferences, or when I'm given feedback by others, is likely to affect **female** students in a positive way.
- 6) I would suggest the use of these type of confrontations/ conferences to other people I know outside of my school.
- 7) I respected how the counselor/teacher leading the confrontation/ conference used their power and authority.
- 8) I felt fairly treated by everyone during the confrontation/ conference.
- 9) I felt like the counselor/teacher made good decisions for everyone at the confrontation/ conference.
- 10) I felt like I was *really* a part of the confrontation (conference).
- 11) I was given a chance to explain my side of things.
- 12) My side of things was really listened to by other people in the conference.

Appendix E
RP Logic Model



Appendix F

RP Implementation as a means to Positive Outcomes



Appendix G

Student Recommendations for Teacher's use of Discipline Strategies

Students reported on their suggestions for both public school and alternative school teachers handling problems with students. Some suggestions included strategies reportedly already used by teachers from the alternative school that students hoped teachers at public schools would adopt. Still other suggestions involved staff behavior students would like to see more or less of.

- Students noted the importance of staff checking in with students to understand the underlying cause of the behavior:

“Usually when a student is acting up, usually something else is going on with them so I would suggest you talk to them and not just kick them out of school and say come back when you're ready, what is that gonna do? They're just gonna act the same way as when they left.” White female respondent

“If they see a kids is getting upset, say 'do you want to take a 5?' And like give them space. Not going on if they're getting irritated about a situation, just actually hearing what they're trying to say not cutting them off. Getting their perspective.” African American female respondent

“I guess you have to see where the kid is coming from, like the motive, like I'm not gonna say you can tell everyone's motive” Latino/White female respondent

“To actually talk and be like ‘are you okay?’ Talk to you one-on-one or in the group, but talk.” White female respondent

“Like confront them once and if it becomes a bigger problem - send them out to talk to a counselor, like talk about what's going on, refocus their thoughts, help them be more respectful.” White male respondent

“Like sit down with the person and talk to them, help them understand what they did wrong, how they feel, and if someone's egging them on to make them angry.” White male respondent

- A student had a suggestion for using the restorative questions:

“Like they could do some of this stuff at a regular school, like if there is a problem, they could do the questions, because that actually helps.” Latino male respondent

- In addition, some students discussed how staff behaviors that could promote positive behaviors in students – or frustrate students:

“Like change the tone of voice... No attitude. [Staff] sometimes do smart-alecky stuff and I don't like that snotty attitude stuff. You want respect. I wouldn't do it to them but as soon as they get snotty, then I want to get snotty back..... Just talk it out, like that's how I feel, that's what I want to do - like the attitude - that's just too much.” African American male respondent

“I feel like they should be more assertive, like if you have food out in class, they're like ‘please put your food away.’ And if you don't, they're like ‘leave, get out.’ But it would make more sense if they were assertive and talked to the student and they don't even have to be sincere but they have to be serious about it, and not just ‘oh yeah, whatever, just put the food away, alright, leave.’ I mean people get kicked out of classes for stupid stuff so they should just be serious about it.” White male respondent

“Treat everybody fairly, I feel like they go harder on guys than girls.”
Latino/White male respondent

“The thing I see that makes people angry the most is when a teacher confronts them, in the wrong way and then they get defensive and angry at the teacher. Seems like kids always think teachers are attacking them to get in trouble, at least from here.” White male respondent

“I guess, don't be on my case for no reason.... Like on my butt 24/7. Like always watching to see if I'm doing something when I'm really not.” African American male student

- Finally, several students, particularly male students, noted the importance of privacy. These students requested one-on-one confrontations with either staff or peers.

“I think have a one-on-one, like not circle up.” White male respondent

“The one on one would be perfect. The group thing, like people have ADHD. People have this and that or whatever, they're talking in group, it doesn't solve anything, so I think a 1 on 1 would be good.” African American male respondent

“Pull them aside... like even if you're in trouble or doing a good job, they're like ‘hey, come here, I have something to tell you’.” African American female respondent