

A RESTORATIVE APPROACH

A restorative approach describes a mindset, skillset and array of practices which aim to prevent and address harmful behaviours by recognizing and attending to the human need for belonging within a supportive web of relationships. A restorative paradigm rests on the belief that all people are interconnected and worthy of dignity and respect. Restorative approaches seek to build, maintain and repair relationships so that everyone can thrive as a contributing community member in ways that express their innate positive values.

Restorative approaches are pro-active, seeking to foster trust, healthy attachments, and resilient communities to maintain safety and well-being for all. The approach is also responsive, seeking to address damaged relationships in ways that promote accountability, repair, healing and transformation.

Restorative approaches (sometimes referred as restorative justice, restorative practices, restorative discipline, restorative action and other terms) are being implemented in schools, criminal justice settings, workplaces and other organizations internationally as a part of a growing social movement.

Restorative Principles¹

Restorative approaches are bound by a set of principles which orient practitioners and leaders across a variety of circumstances. The following principles serve as a ‘compass’ for the implementation, practice, and evaluation of restorative approaches.

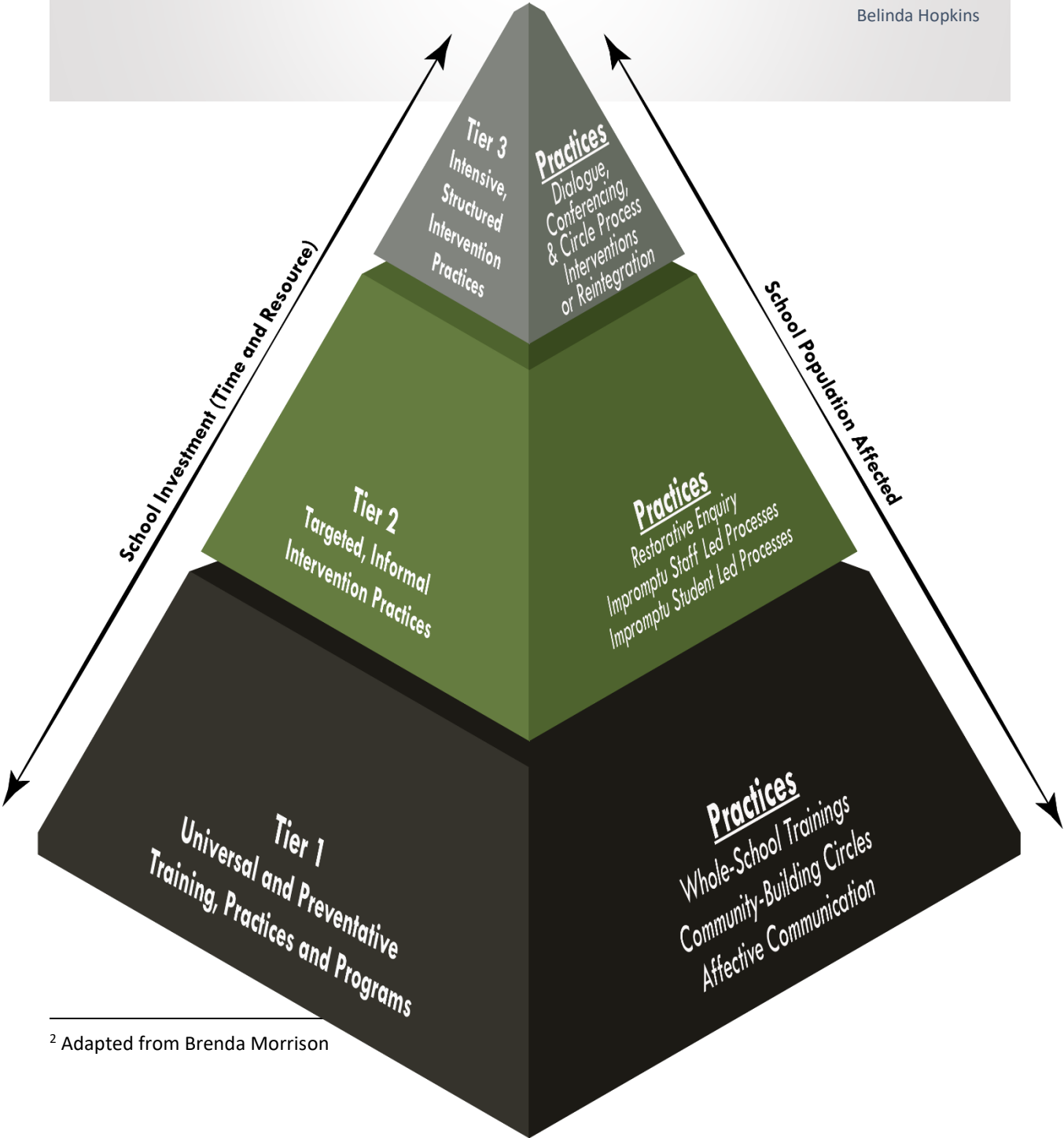
Relationally Focused	Attention to interconnection, seeking to understand and promote just relations between individuals, groups and communities.
Comprehensive and Holistic	Takes into account histories, contexts and causes of harm and its impacts.
Inclusive and Participatory	Culturally grounded and trauma informed, attentive to the needs of parties and the safety and well-being of participants.
Responsive	Contextual, flexible practice, accessible, efficient and effective processes, informed by data and knowledge.
Individual and Collective	Focused on promoting individual and collective accountability & responsibility.
Collaborative and Non-Adversarial	among parties to the process, and system/community partners.
Forward Focused	Educative (not punitive), problem-solving, preventative and proactive.

¹ Nova Scotia Restorative Justice Program

RESTORATIVE APPROACHES IN SCHOOLS: THREE TIERS OF PRACTICE²

“A restorative approach in a school shifts the emphasis from managing behaviour to focusing on the building, nurturing and repairing of relationships...Behaviour management policies tend to focus only on the behaviour of young people, and the imposition of sanctions has the potential to harm the crucial adult/student relationships on which good teaching and learning depend.”

Belinda Hopkins



² Adapted from Brenda Morrison