

# PEER RESOLUTION CONFERENCES FOR YOUTH

**Final Evaluation**  
**October 26, 2003**



**Peer Resolution Conferences for Youth  
In Partnership with School District 27, Cariboo-Chilcotin, British Columbia**

**Final Evaluation, October 26, 2003**

**Project Title: Peer Resolution Conferences for Youth  
Project File # 3310 L23  
Project Sponsor: Law Courts Education Society of BC  
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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Project Framework**

The Peer Resolution Conferences for Youth pilot project was initiated in April 2002 as a partnership between the Law Courts Education Society of British Columbia (LCES) and the Cariboo-Chilcotin School District #27. The project was a response to discussions between the LCES and representatives of the Williams Lake community about the limitations of traditional methods of discipline to deal with unacceptable student behaviours such as theft, vandalism, fighting, alcohol use, and bullying.

This project aims to use Peer Resolution Conferences for youth to provide students and administrators with an effective alternative to traditional school discipline procedures such as suspension. The Cariboo-Chilcotin community has a high population of Aboriginal people. As a result, project discussions involved the Aboriginal community, allowing the project to draw from Aboriginal approaches to justice, and involving Aboriginal communities in the design and delivery of this project for youth.

Peer Resolution Conferences (PRC's) are managed by trained youth peer facilitators and adult facilitators. Other participants usually include the respondent, and a supporter, the victim and a supporter, as well as a peer (student) mentor. The respondent is required to deal directly with the impact of his/her actions and all participants are invited to participate. The entire group is then given the opportunity to reach consensus on just, meaningful, appropriate and constructive consequences for the respondent.

### **Assessment Methodology**

Project evaluation was an integral part of this project, and an external evaluator was hired to develop tools to monitor the success of the project. The evaluation component began in January 2003 and was completed in October 2003.

Evaluation data was gathered through:

- Pre-training interviews with key participants
- Facilitator's Conference Feedback
- Post Conference Questionnaires to participants
- School records
- Meetings and interviews between LCES and key participants on February 6-7, April 28, June 16, and September 22, 2003.
- E-mail correspondence and regular telephone contact with school and project administrators.

## **Project Objectives and Assessment**

From March 2003 – June 2003 12 mediations/conferences took place at Marie Sharpe Elementary School (MSES) and one conference took place at Peter Skene Ogden Alternative High School. No conferences took place at Williams Lake Senior Secondary School (WLSS). Significantly, MSES developed a system of “mediations” in addition to the conferences, these applied to less serious issues, had a less formal structure, and parents or supporters did not necessarily need to attend.

The project proposal submitted to the funder presents the following objectives:

### **1. Decreased use of suspensions as a disciplinary measure**

The Principal of MSES observed that no cases referred to mediation or conference lead to a suspension – and that the process had led to “a more gentle and effective process of discipline” as an alternative to suspension. However, it is difficult to draw conclusions on the decreased use of suspensions or recidivism using school records of suspension, recidivism, and attendance rates as these reflect only one school’s records of one school term.

*“The more you do the process, the more you realise that it works – it effects how I deal with problems – my reactions are more restorative now from the beginning” – Principal MSES*

### **2. Decreased recidivism for students participating in the conferences**

With regard to recidivism rates, there is some evidence that to suggest that although some students committed other offences, there had been a definite increase in the length of time between incidents for certain respondents. A significant number of respondents and victims indicated that their expectations of a re-offence of the same nature were lower following the conference or mediation.

### **3. Improved school attendance for students participating in conferences;**

Interviews with administrators confirmed that the project had succeeded in creating a change in student attitudes, and that the process had begun to lead to a more pragmatic and fair system of discipline within classes and the schools. Changes in the attitudes of youth participants and peers regarding accountability and awareness of the impact of their behaviour on others were indicated in the written evaluations of both victims and respondents. The majority of respondents and victims in both mediations and conferences indicated that they found the process helpful, fair, and capable of allowing both parties to make amends and to represent their best interests.

#### **4. Changes in youth participant and peer attitudes regarding accountability and impact of actions and behaviours.**

Written evaluations demonstrate that both victims and respondents felt positively about the mediations and conferences. Victims perceived resolution and closure during the conference and indicated that they felt very happy with the way their case was handled. The majority indicated that it was important for them to make an agreement with the respondent, that they felt that they had a chance to say what they wanted to say, and that they did not consider it important to punish the respondent. The majority of respondents and victims indicated that they were either happy or very happy with how their case was handled, that they felt listened to, and that the conference or mediation had allowed their best interests to be represented. Respondents also indicated an understanding of the harmful effects of their actions on others, and most identified that it was important to make an agreement with the victim and/or apologize to their friends and family for what they did.

#### **5. Increased youth participant and peer knowledge about alternative justice processes.**

Youth participants clearly indicated an increase in knowledge about alternative justice processes. This goal is most readily verified by the analysis of peer facilitator comments. It is clear that this project would not have been successful without the youth peer facilitators embracing their roles with remarkable enthusiasm. It is notable that students had approached trained peer mentors to help them resolve conflicts without the principal, and that the youth enthusiasm has not waned since the training. One administrator commented that he was impressed with the student's ability to manage the process and was surprised that his workload was actually reduced. He indicated that he was confident in handing the process over to students, and he was often able to complete his paperwork as they worked the problem through.

*"Now we have a completely different attitude about the chronic kids because we now have a useful "tool" to use. This is at least a way for the school to have a tool to cause behavioural change – whereas we had no options before. This program changes the whole school culture of discipline to a more gentle and effective process"*

Principal MSES

#### **6. Perception of resolution and closure for victims of student wrongdoing**

Interviews and correspondence with administration confirmed that the program had succeeded in creating a shift in the student's attitudes and awareness of the impact of their behaviour.

*"It gives the students the opportunity to say they are sorry and really mean it after having the time to hear how it affects others and the time to think about what they did. They see what forgiveness can do for individuals"*

## **7. Increased community awareness of restorative justice alternatives for school suspensions.**

Finally the evaluation indicates that as a result of this project the community was aware of restorative justice alternatives. Findings indicated community and parental support in the restorative approach to discipline and encouraging children to stay in school. Teachers felt that the project had led to an improved relationship with parents regarding the discipline of their children. Members of the community had approached administration from MSES in order to facilitate issues in their homes and between neighbours. It also appeared that youth were able to practice their skills in restorative justice in their daily life. For example, one of the youth noted that she has been able to apply what she has learned in conference skills to her problems with family members in her home, and is a better listener now than she was before.

## **Recommendations**

Based on these encouraging findings, School District #27 should not hesitate to continue the conferences and mediations as an integral part of their program in as many school s as possible.

Further recommendations for School District #27 or others interested in replicating this project are:

1. Ensure that the school board and administrators are supportive of the project.
2. Ensure that a very well organized project coordinator is in place to handle problems as they arise, to summarize data as it is produced, and to supervise the overall project. This is essential to success.
3. Continue training students, parents, and administrators *each year*, targeting students who can train or consult in following years.
4. Spend more time at the high school level to determine the needs of administrators and students for PRCs.
5. The diligent administration, follow-up, and revision (if necessary) of evaluation forms is essential.
6. Designate a parent volunteer, teacher, counsellor, or administrator, to assist in the management of pre and post conference duties.
7. The same peer mentors should be involved for respondents who repeat offences.
8. Adult facilitators should debrief student facilitators and mentors following each conference or mediation.

# **1. PROJECT FRAMEWORK**

## **1.1 Project History and Context**

Peer Resolution Conferences (PRCs) for Youth were a pilot project in School District #27, funded by the Community Mobilization Program through the Canada's National Strategy for Safer Communities Initiative Program, Department of Justice Canada.

In April 2002, the LCES participated in detailed discussions with the Williams Lake community about alternatives to school disciplinary measures in order to better ensure safe, respectful, and supportive school environments. Discussions confirmed the limitations of suspensions in dealing with unacceptable student behaviours such as theft, vandalism, fighting, alcohol use, and bullying. There was consensus that while school suspensions may be necessary in some situations, they fail to address the root causes of problem behaviours. It was also agreed that suspensions can isolate youth from the direction and guidance that may help to create positive changes in their lives. Finally, the use of suspension as discipline can make reintegration into a school environment difficult for youth, thus contributing to repeat offences, truancy, and drop-out.

Discussions included representatives from School District 27, including the Assistant Superintendent, the Education Committee, local justice personnel, and the Director of Instruction responsible for school suspensions.

An important source of guidance for the project has come from consultations with the Aboriginal community. Initial project discussions included the Cariboo-Chilcoton Band Counsel, the First Nation Educational Council, and members of the Williams Lake, Alkali Lake, Soda Creek, Stone, and Canim Lake bands. The involvement of the surrounding communities allowed for collaboration and input regarding Aboriginal approaches to justice, and allowed for Aboriginal communities to be involved in the design and delivery of programs and services for their youth.

As a result of these consultations, the LCES and the Project Advisory Committee initiated a unique pilot project to implement Peer Resolution Conferences for youth to provide students and administrators with a more effective alternative to traditional school discipline procedures, especially suspension. As stated, the Williams Lake area has a significant Aboriginal student population and the project emphasizes Aboriginal restorative justice practices and principles. However, Peer Resolution Conferences are an option available for the entire student population, specifically, youth from 10 to 18 years of age. The project uses the term "restorative justice" to refer to a specific set of goals pursued by peer resolution conferences and based on Aboriginal justice practices.

The project also builds on the best practices of peer-led conflict resolution projects in other jurisdictions and ensures that issues such as confidentiality and due process are addressed.

The following theoretical values guided the design and implementation of the project:

- Keep students in school
- Practice restorative justice
- Hold youth accountable for their behaviour and give them a way to make amends
- Empower youth to accept responsibility
- Allow victims to be involved in the process
- Foster knowledge, skills, and values that youth need in contemporary society
- Provide an opportunity for peer volunteers to learn the skills needed to weigh conflicting points of view and reach a just and appropriate consequence.

## **1.2 Objectives**

The project's evaluation component commenced in January 2003 and was completed in October 2003.

The proposal for the pilot program included the following work plan:

1. Design a program alternative to school suspensions using youth peers to facilitate resolution conferences;
2. provide program training and outreach;
3. implement the program and collect evaluation data; and
4. evaluate the program and carry out sustaining activities.

## **1.3 Training and Resources**

On February 6 and 7, 2003 a training session was held for 41 participants in School District #27. These included students from Marie Sharpe Elementary School (MSES), Williams Lake Senior Secondary School (WLSS) and Peter Skene Ogden High School in 100 Mile House, a School Trustee, the Assistant Superintendent, the Director of Instruction, an assistant Director of Instruction, two principals, teachers, a school counsellor, a member of the Cariboo Tribal Council, Aboriginal Educators, and parent volunteers.

Student participants were selected from Grade 6 at the elementary school and Grade 11 from the high school. This ensured program sustainability so that students are trained and can continue the conferences over a two-year period. It is also expected that trained elementary students can develop and implement at high school level.

Participants were given the opportunity to gain new knowledge and attain a basic skill set on restorative justice approaches. Six trainers participated as presenters and facilitators. Some of the trainers were selected from School District #27, and others were invited from outside the district based on their specialized skill and experience in the practice of restorative justice. The agenda for the training is included in **Appendix B**.

This approach proved successful and the evaluations from the training were very positive. Many indicated that the training was the best they had ever been involved in.

- 100% of the participants found the training useful and practical.
- 100% of the participants planned to use the resources and the model in their schools.
- 85% of the participants gave ratings of “Excellent or Very Good” to the presentations. 9% rated them “Good”, 6% “Fair”, and 0% rated them “Poor”.
- 80% of the participants rated the scripted conferences “Excellent or Very Good”, 19% rated them “Good” and 1% “Fair”.
- 77% of the participants rated the materials “Excellent or Very Good”, and 23% rated them “Good”.

Program materials were designed based on research of best practices from across the United States and Canada. There was a great deal of collaboration with various stakeholders in the development of the training materials. The final design was the result of several advisory committee meetings and resources sent back and forth to the advisory committee members for input. Several meetings also took place with students, parents, and community members to introduce them to the concept of using Peer Conferences for Youth in schools as an alternative to suspension. All of the stakeholders were enthusiastic and eager to see the project implemented.

Completed resources include a Training Manual for teachers and a Youth Volunteer Handbook for students and adult volunteers.

Copies of the Training Manual and/or the Youth Volunteer Handbook are available from the Law Courts Education Society and will be available on line at [www.lawcourtsed.ca](http://www.lawcourtsed.ca).

## **1.4 Conference Process**

Participation in a conference is voluntary, and may include everyone who has been affected by the youth’s behaviour or actions. According to the training guide designed for youth volunteers, a PRC can be used to deal with the following:

- Bullying
- Drugs
- Alcohol

- Threats
- Theft
- Aggressive behaviour
- Truancy
- Smoking
- Defiance
- Assaults/threats to staff
- Fighting

They are not intended to deal with:

- Sexual assault
- Criminal acts with a charge
- School Act violations
- School safety violations

People likely to take part in the conference are the respondent(s) (who are the focus of the conference), youth facilitators (who ensure that all participants have a chance to fully and fairly participate and that the conference reaches an outcome based on restorative justice principles), victim(s), and family members of either the victim or the respondent. Elders, counsellors, social workers and outreach workers may also be involved.

The conference is run by the youth's trained peer and adult facilitators and mentors. Through this process, the respondent is required to deal directly with the impact of their actions on the participants. If possible, all participants reach consensus on a just, meaningful, appropriate, and constructive consequence. Possible consequences may include restitution, counselling, school service, volunteer work, apologies, essays, in-school suspension, or other creative outcomes.

Two of the three pilot school locations in School District #27 used PRC's as depicted in the project's original intent and procedures.

Originally, it was anticipated that students at the high school level would be the main participants in developing and utilizing the conference structure, and the materials were designed for the high school level. As the project progressed, MSES became a very active contributor in applying alternative resolution practices in the discipline procedures. In order to construct an age-appropriate model of conferencing for the elementary students, administrators and students at MSES tested and reworked the conference model to ensure that younger students were able to understand the script, the process, and their responsibilities for the agreement. See Appendix C for a copy of the MSES Procedures and Script.

In addition, at the elementary level, many of the conferences did not involve parents or outside parties, the meeting took place immediately following the

incident of concern, and the meetings were less formal than the conferences as intended in the original project materials and model. These meetings were referred to as “mediations”. Mediations were used to deal with minor issues, while conferences dealt with more serious areas of concern. This evaluation will analyze both conferences and mediations in order to present a thorough picture of project developments.

## **2. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY**

### **2.1 Evaluation scope**

Project evaluation was an integral part of the Williams Lake PRC project, and an external evaluator was hired to develop tools to monitor the success of the project. In specific, the evaluation plan included:

- The development of an evaluation framework,
- monitoring conferences and meeting with project participants through January 1, 2003 to October 27, 2003,
- collection of pre- and post-program quantitative evaluation data (recidivism, school attendance, number of suspensions),
- collection of pre- and post-program qualitative evaluation data and
- an interim and final analysis and report on data collected.

The partners (LCES and School District #27) hoped to see the following changes as a result of the project:

1. Decreased use of suspensions as a disciplinary measure.
2. Decreased recidivism for students participating in the conferences.
3. Improved school attendance for students participating in conferences.
4. Changes in youth participant and peer attitudes regarding accountability and impact of actions and behaviours.
5. Increased youth participant and peer knowledge about alternative justice processes.
6. Perception of resolution and closure for victims of student wrongdoing.
7. Increased community awareness of restorative justice alternatives for school suspensions.

### **2.2 Evaluation sources**

Evaluation of the project consisted of the following data sources:

- Pre-training interviews with key participants
- Facilitator's Conference Data Sheet
- Post Conference Questionnaires to participants
- School records
- Meetings and interviews between LCES and key participants on February 6 and 7, April 28, June 16, and September 22, 2003.
- E-mail correspondence and regular telephone contact with administrators

See **Appendix D** for copies of the post-conference evaluation questionnaires.

Feedback from the participants during the course of the project provided especially important descriptions of the perceptions regarding peer resolution conferences and mediations.

## 2.3 Pre-training Interviews

The February training included 41 participants, including student participants from grade 6 and grade 11, parent volunteers, a School Trustee, the Assistant Superintendent, the Director of and Assistant Director of Instruction, two Principals, several teachers, a school counselor, a member of the Cariboo Tribal Council, and Aboriginal Educators.

Pre-training interviews were conducted during the training session on February 6 and 7 to assess participant's knowledge of the goals for the project and reasons for attending. Interviews included school administrators, teachers, counsellors, students, and parent volunteers – 28 responses were collected.

The primary intent of these interviews was to examine participants' perceptions regarding the potential effectiveness, uniqueness, or simply the importance of the features of the project for the community and for the youth. Interviews were conducted at lunch and coffee breaks. Responses were also collected through e-mail.

Themes of the interviews suggested the following:

Administration:

- was concerned with bullying, harassment, and violence
- indicated that the current model does not work as a long-term solution, and is not effective for the individual student, the school as a whole, or the community,
- hoped for prevention of re-offending,
- saw the project as empowering for youth and a recognition to the Aboriginal values of harmony, relationships, and healing; and
- saw the potential for peer leadership and mentorship, skill development, greater competency and accountability, expansion of youth self-esteem, learning emotional intelligence, and the potential to foster a social – not just academic – curriculum.

Parents:

- saw the project as an important tool for community development,
- recognized that the conference model is more effective and supportive for youth than the current model.

*"This project is important because it gives the kids a second chance and it is an alternative to court"* - Parent of grade 6 student

Students:

- almost all students expressed concern about bullying, name-calling, and violence in their schools, and saw the current model as ineffective in preventing such behaviour,

- hoped their participation would help with their future goals, and help them to build strong friendships; and
- hoped that the project would identify people that need help and build greater understanding between peers.

*“In-school suspensions don’t work...kids who get suspended just have more fun than they do in school and don’t have to deal with their actions”*

Williams Lake Senior Secondary Student

## **3. PROJECT ASSESSMENT**

### **3.1 Results**

Five PRCs and seven *mediations* were evaluated.

As described in Section 1.4, Marie Sharpe Elementary School (MSES) became very active in using alternative dispute resolution at the elementary level, and administrators developed a system of mediations in addition to conferences. Mediations applied to less serious issues; the structure was less formal, parents or supporters did not need to attend, and mediations were seen as more appropriate for elementary students. Similar to a conference, in mediation, the Principal appointed a trained peer facilitator, and the victim and respondent met to discuss and attempt to resolve the issue. This meeting took place over the lunch hour, with the help of a teacher, principal, or trained administration. An agreement form was completed at the end of the mediation. Peer facilitators and mentors ensured that the respondent complied with the terms of the agreement - often on their own initiative and with little direction from the adult mentor.

Following the training, it became clear that the scripts included in the resource materials were too difficult for the elementary students. The Principal from MSES worked with students to revise the script (see Appendix C). Evaluation forms for the victim and the respondent were also adapted to make them more appropriate for the elementary level (Appendix D).

There was one conference at Peter Skene Ogden Alternative High School. Administrators at WLSS maintained that the school had had no incidences where conferencing would have been an appropriate approach to resolution. Therefore, no conferences took place at WLSS. However, there was evidence to suggest that the school administrator had too many other agendas and did not have the time to incorporate the Peer Conferences for youth.

Monitoring of project developments included the analysis of an evaluation form completed immediately following each conference or mediation. The questionnaires documented data in relation to the number of applications, outcomes, and participant satisfaction. Since the sample size is small, some caution need to be taken when interpreting the results, however, the consistency of responses tends to give credibility to the indicated results.

#### **(1) Mediations**

Seven mediations took place at MSES. Evaluation forms were collected from all seven victims, respondents and adult facilitators.

Mediations were used in response to three cases of name-calling, a theft, chasing and name-calling, a prank, and swearing and kicking. Outcomes included two written apologies, four verbal apologies, and one verbal apology

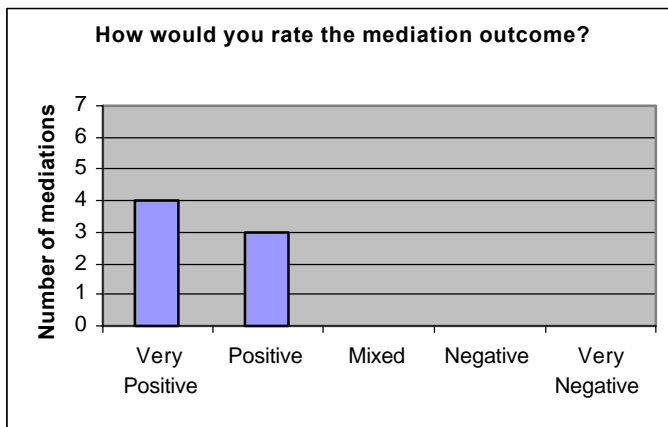
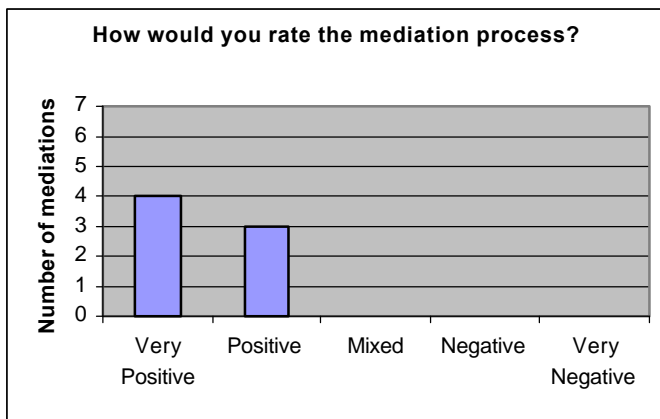
plus restitution. The length of mediation ranged from 45 minutes to an hour and 45 minutes. The average length was an hour and a half. This section will examine questionnaires collected for adult facilitators and student participants.

**a) Adult facilitator evaluations:**

Adult facilitators' perceptions, as measured by the evaluation forms, indicated their overall satisfaction and success of the mediations.

In all of the seven mediations, facilitators rated the tone as "friendly".

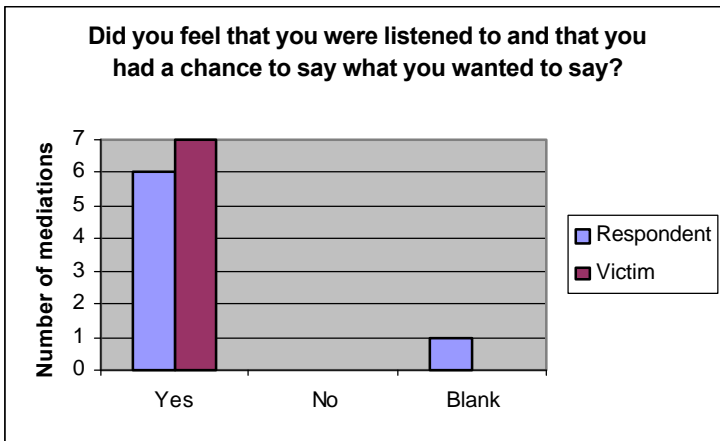
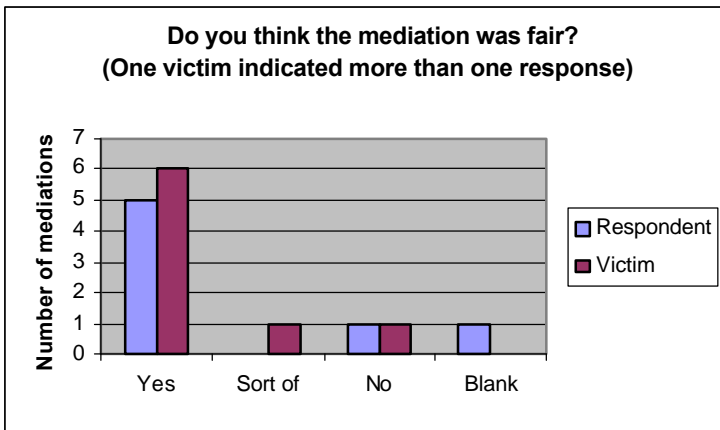
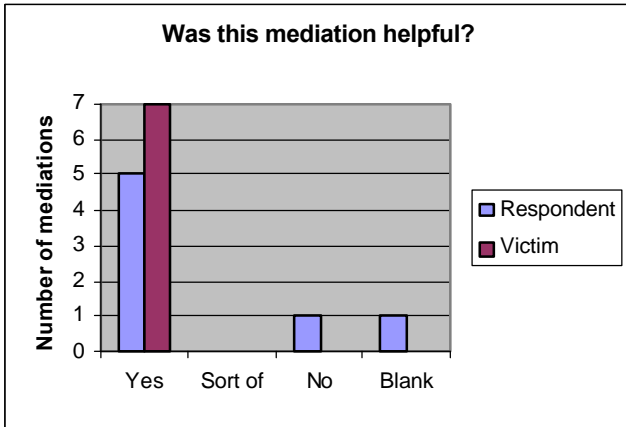
Facilitators rated both process and outcome as either positive or very positive.



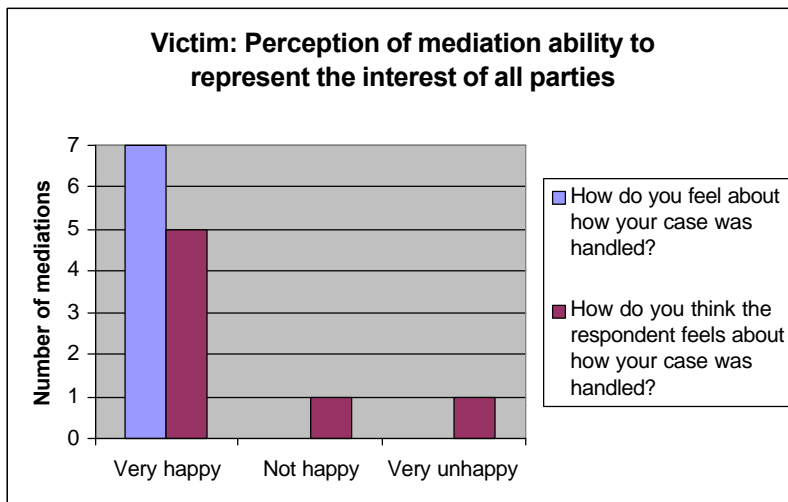
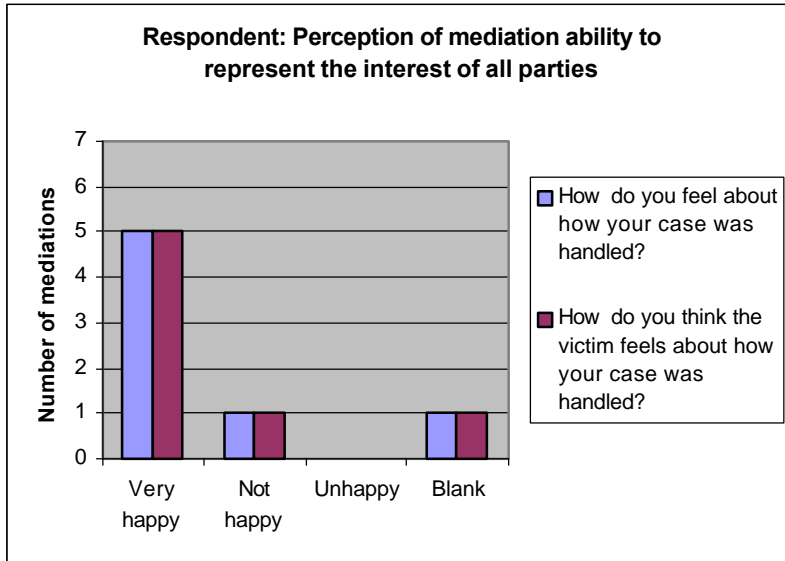
**b) Participants' evaluations:**

Results indicate that both victims and respondents felt positively about the mediations, suggesting that the project was working towards helping students gain positive experiences and values towards alternative justice.

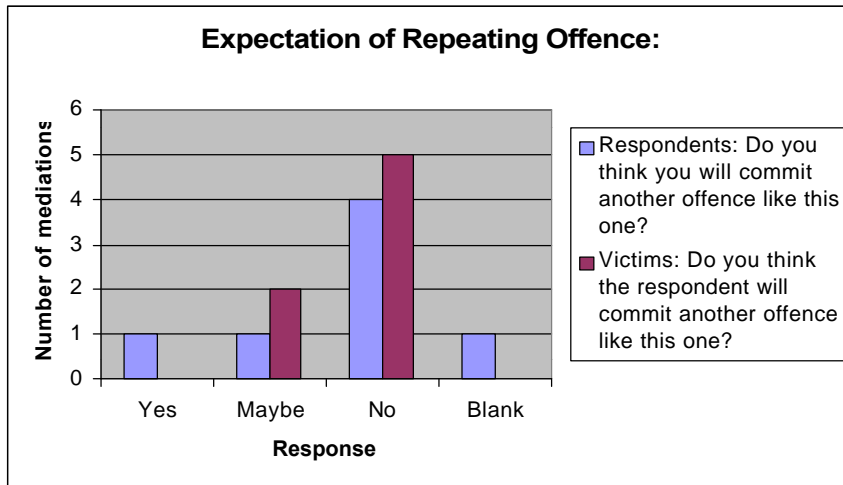
The majority of respondents and victims indicated the perception that the process was helpful, fair, that they felt listened to, and that they were given an opportunity to speak.



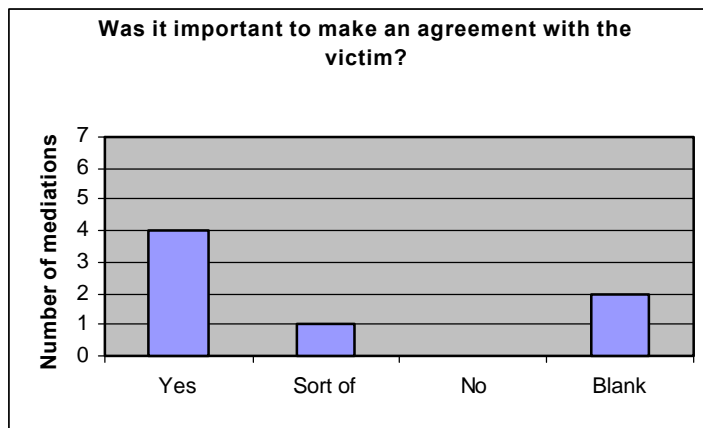
The participants also perceived mediation as capable of allowing both parties to make amends and to represent their best interests.



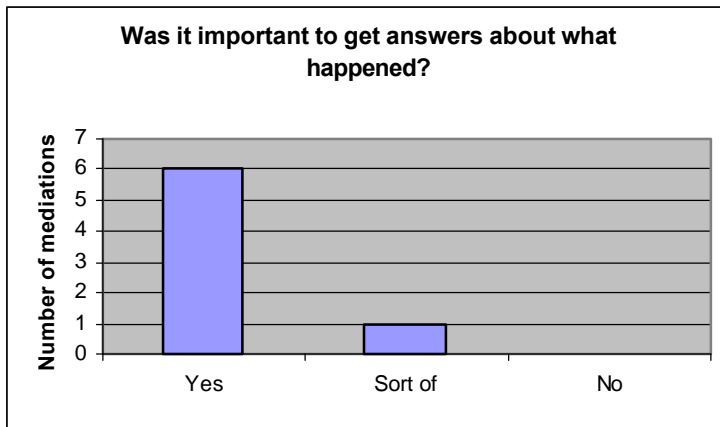
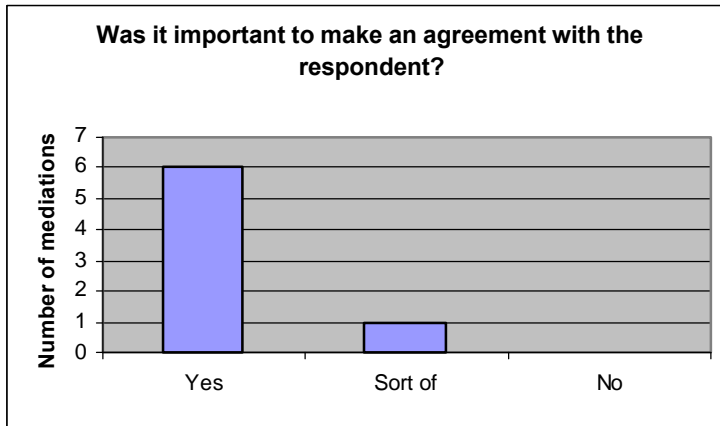
In order to examine whether the intervention with youth at risk would prevent them from future behaviour that could lead to suspensions, both victims and respondents were asked whether they felt that the respondent would repeat the offence:



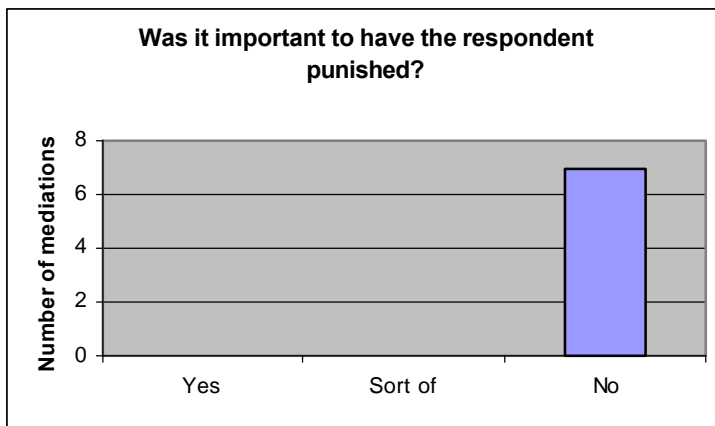
Respondents were asked to indicate what outcomes were important to them in order to assess new awareness of how their behaviour affects others, and to assess increased knowledge of a more restorative approach to justice.



Victims were also asked what outcomes were important to them in order to assess whether they had attained a perception of resolution and closure.



All victims indicated that they understood that punishment was not the only solution to behavioural problems.



## (2) Conferences

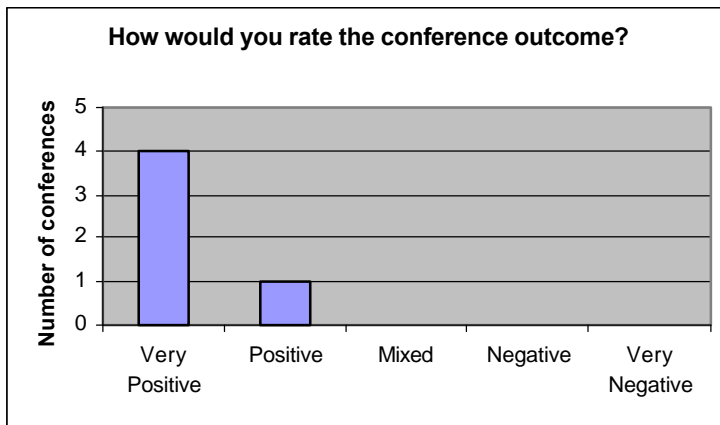
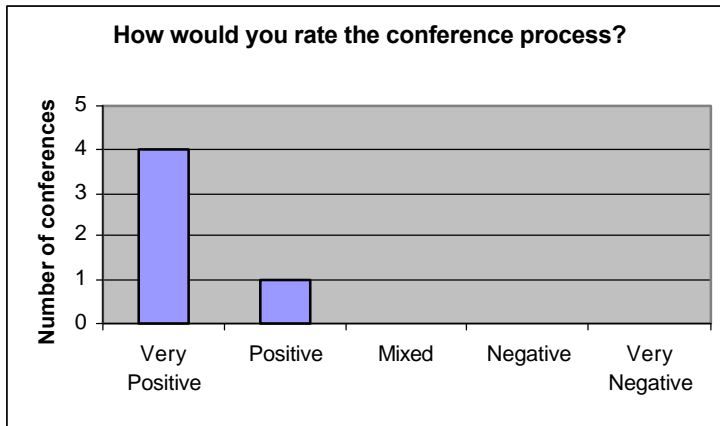
There were five peer resolution conferences held at MSES. Of these, evaluation forms were collected for 9 respondents, 6 victims, and 10 supporters. In some cases, not every participant completed an evaluation form. Only one conference took place at the high school level (see Section 2(d) for more detail).

Issues dealt with through conferencing included theft, swearing and disrespect, theft, bullying, and verbal abuse. Outcomes included restitution, the return of items, written apology, detention, verbal apologies (4), and one included a term that the respondent conduct research into culture of the victim. Length of the conference was between 35 minutes and an hour and 15 minutes. The average length of conferences was an hour and 15 minutes.

This section will examine evaluations from adult facilitators, participants, and supporters.

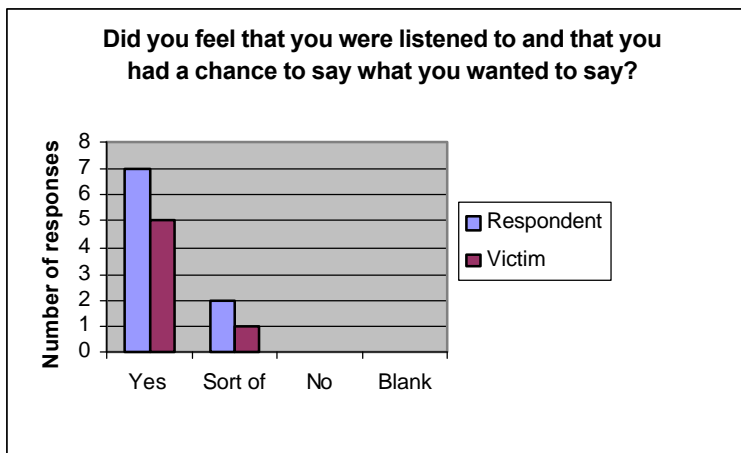
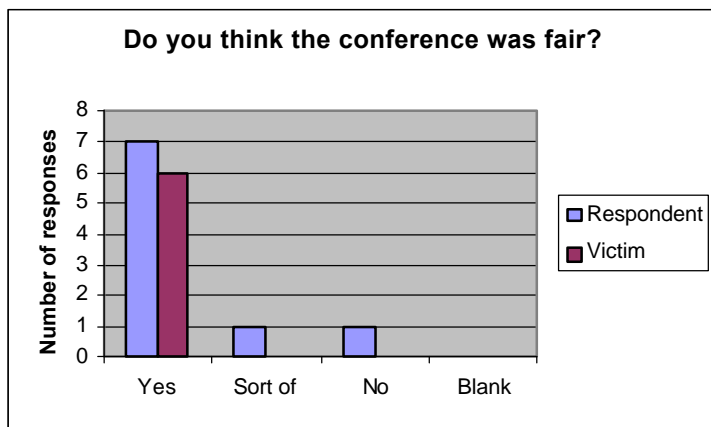
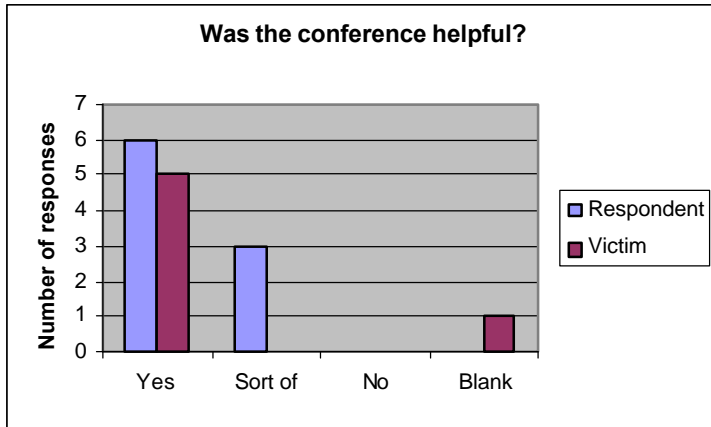
### a) Adult facilitator evaluations:

Facilitators rated both process and outcome of the conference as either positive or very positive.

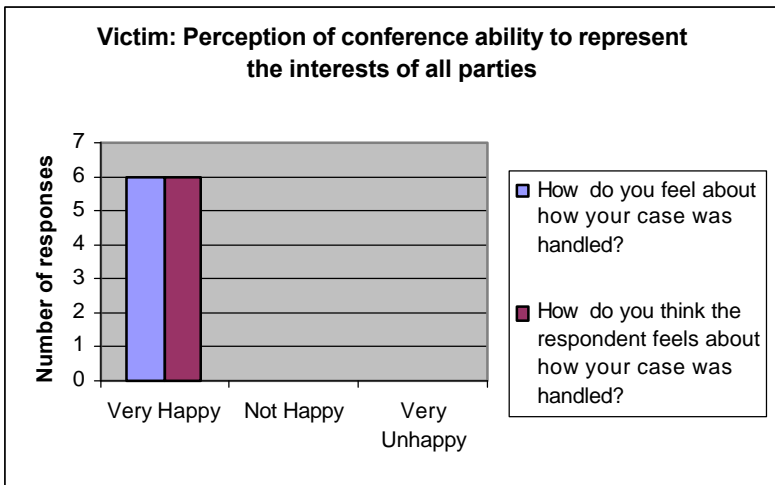
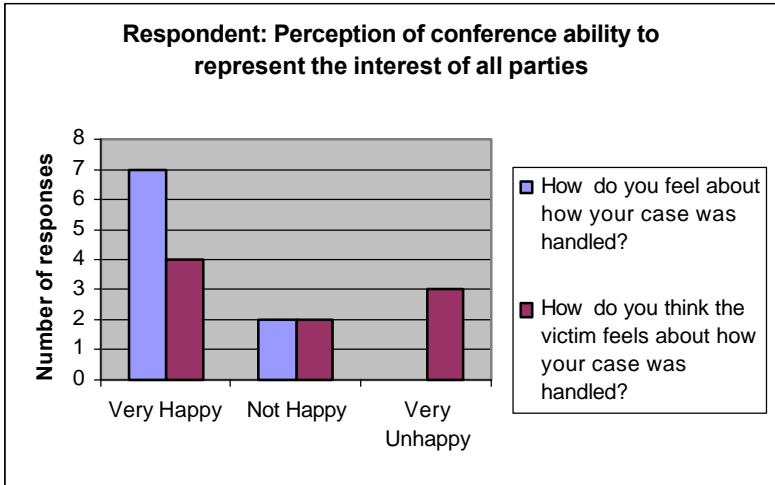


## b) Participants' Evaluations:

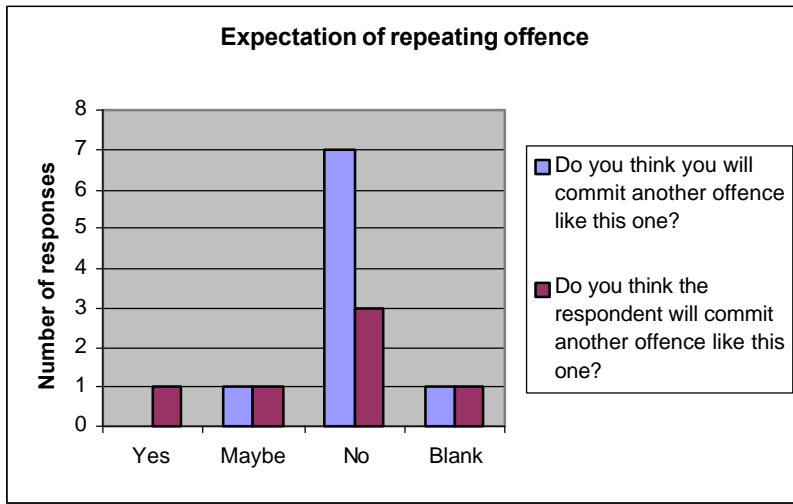
Similar to the mediations, conference evaluation forms indicated that both the respondent and the victim perceived the conference as helpful, fair, and that the best interests of both parties had been represented in the conference.



The majority of respondents and victims indicated an understanding of the conference to represent the interests of both parties, and to foster an understanding between one another. Results show that victims indicated that the conference allowed them to discuss the impact of the crime or violation on them, and allowed them to make suggestions about the way in which the respondent could repair the harm.

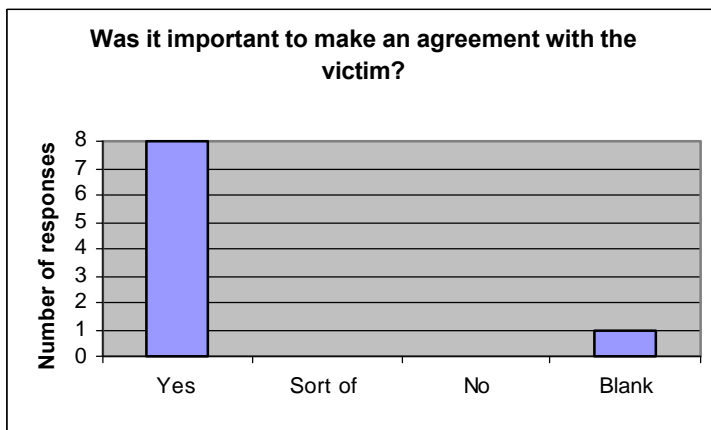


A significant number of respondents and victims indicated their expectations for the respondent to repeat the offence was lower:

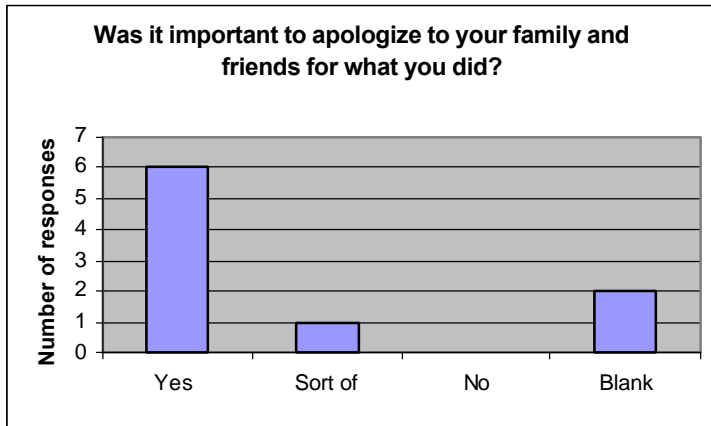


Respondents thus indicated an understanding of the harmful effects of their actions on others, and took responsibility for their offences.

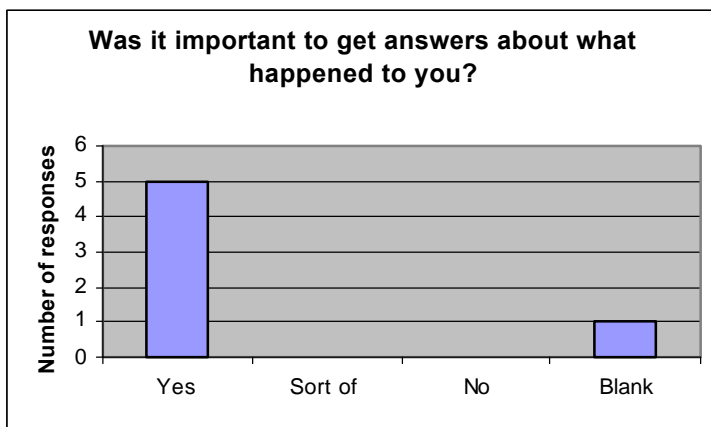
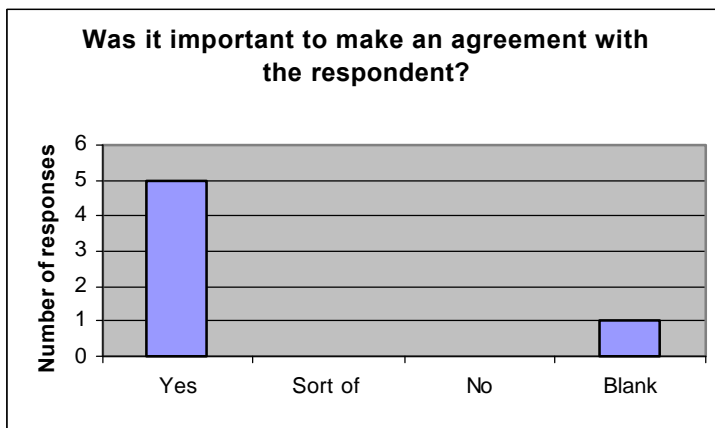
Respondents were asked to indicate what outcomes were important to them.

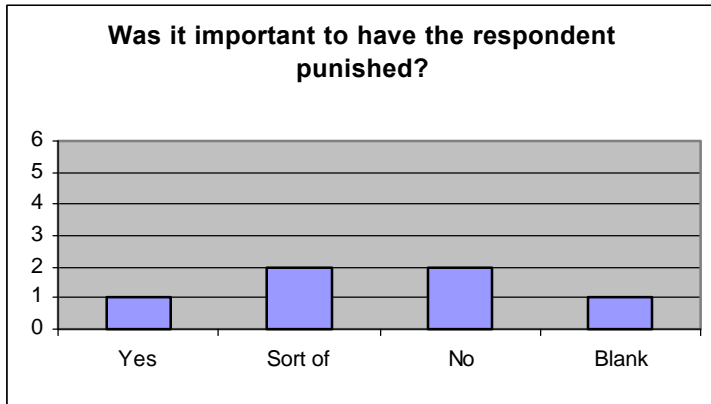


In conferences, where parents and supporters were involved, respondents were asked to indicate their perspective about the importance of an apology.



Victims were asked what outcomes were important to them. In the conferences, where the offences were of a more serious nature than the mediations, it is interesting to note that the victims took a more punitive approach. As previously indicated victims had nonetheless indicated satisfaction with the general conference experience.





**c) Supporter Evaluations:**

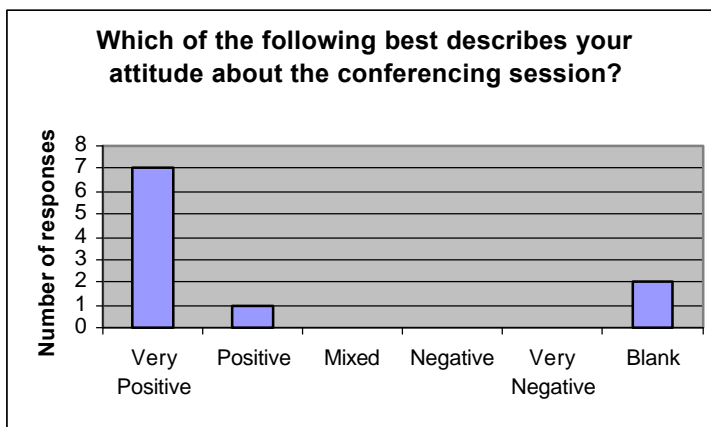
Supporters were very encouraging of the conferences in their written feedback: All of the supporters indicated:

- if they had to do it over again they would choose to participate in a conference;
- that they would recommend conferencing to others who face similar trouble; and
- that they believed that their opinion regarding the offense and circumstances was adequately considered in their case.

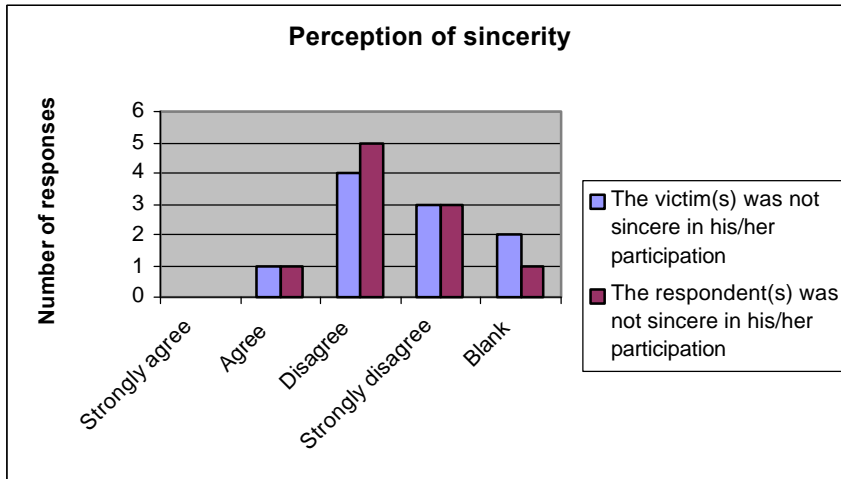
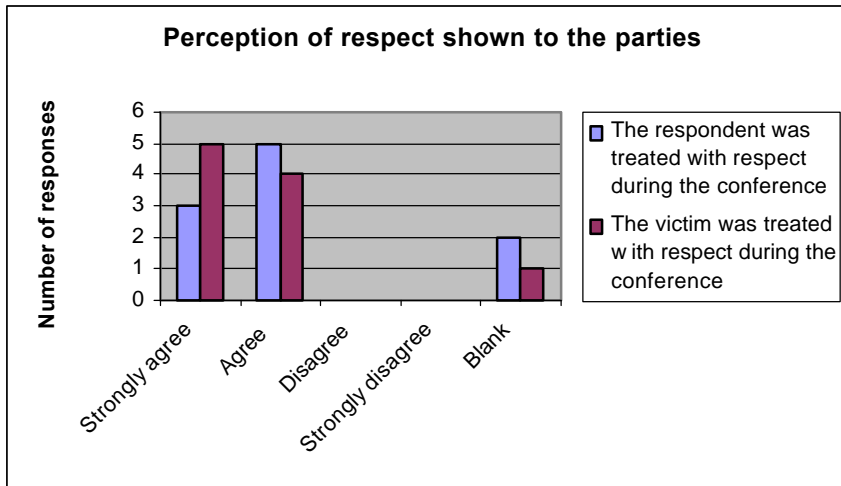
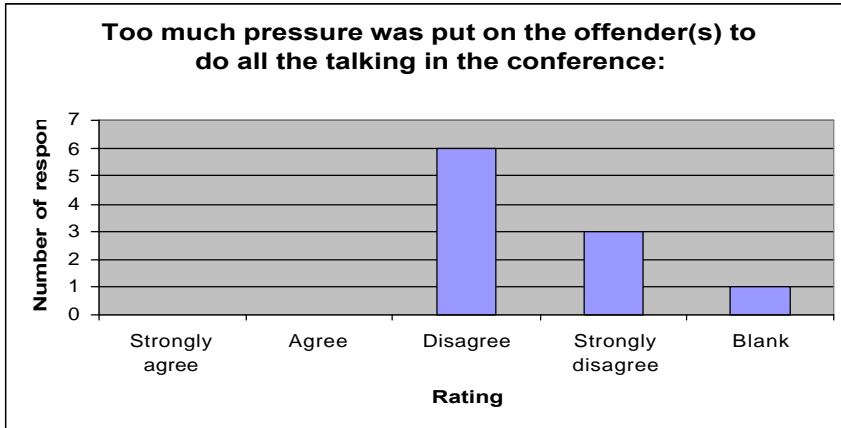
Nine supporters indicated that they experienced overall fairness (1 blank).

Eight supporters indicated that they experienced fairness in the process (2 blanks), and eight supporters indicated that they experienced fairness in the agreement (2 blanks).

Most supporters indicated that they had a positive or very positive attitude about the session:



In evaluating the conferences, respondents were asked to evaluate subjectively several aspects of the experience:



#### **d) Peter Skene Ogden High School Conference Evaluation**

There was one conference at the high school level. The issue involved the theft of a blanket from a motel on a basketball trip. This conference involved one respondent and three victims. The evaluation forms used were not comparable to those used in the preceding results. The respondent indicated that he felt satisfied with the conference outcome, that he had been held accountable for his actions, that he had participated in order to let the victim know why he did it, in order to offer an apology, and to take responsibility for making things right. Three victims had participated in order to tell the respondent how they felt about the offence, and two said they wanted to help the offender. Two of three were very satisfied with the way the case was handled, and one was very satisfied. Two of three said it was unlikely that the offender would repeat the offence, and one said that it was very unlikely.

### **(3) Other sources of feedback**

#### **a) Interviews, e-mails and meetings**

A key part of project assessment was the incorporation of meetings, interviews, and e-mail correspondence between the evaluator and participants as part of ongoing monitoring and evaluation. The LCES traveled to Williams Lake on February 6 and 7, April 28 and June 16, 2003 to monitor the progress of the project. These meetings indicated exceptionally positive feedback and the continued development of project goals.

The April 28 meeting included students and administration from Peter Skene Ogden School, students, parents and administration from MSES, the Project Coordinator, Aboriginal Educators from the School District Office, and the Assistant Superintendent. This meeting indicated that the project had already had considerable impact on the students and staff.

On June 16, the LCES made a second visit to Williams Lake. This meeting included the principal, teachers, and project coordinator alongside students from MSES. Key administrators who were unable to attend the meeting received a questionnaire to elicit their feedback. Participants indicated that the project had continued to expand and make considerable impact on the community, the schools, and the individuals involved.

On September 22, the LCES made a final visit to Williams Lake. Peer facilitators and mentors put on a mock conference for grade seven students. Feedback from the students was positive, and students agreed that the process was more constructive than suspension. A meeting after school included the Assistant Superintendent, project coordinator, volunteer parent, former Principal of MSES (now the Principal of Williams Lake Senior Secondary), former counsellor at Peter Skene Ogden (now a teacher at a storefront school), and representatives of LCES in the north. The discussion focused on the general value of the program, and the activities needed to sustain the program in the district.

## **3.2 ANALYSIS OF GOALS OF THE PROJECT MEASURED THROUGH CONFERENCING**

This section will analyze the evaluation sources (evaluation forms, email correspondence, interviews, meetings and school records) based on the original project goals.

Accurate school records and data from the school board office are required in order to measure the attainment of the first three objectives. It is important, however, to regard such quantitative data as tenuous, since, in this case, it reflects initial findings based on one school's records of one school term. Over time, data could reflect a longer period, include records from more than one school for comparison, provide details such as number of transfers, and where relevant, describe individual student issues. Sociological information may also be relevant, reflecting major changes in the community due to unemployment or loss of resources, etc.

### **1. Decreased use of suspensions as a disciplinary measure.**

Records of school suspension rates at MSES indicated a reduction in the number of students suspended in 2003 compared to 2002. However, the relationship between the program and the decreased number of suspensions cannot be determined at this time. The principal of MSES indicated that all cases referred to mediation or a conference led to outcomes that did not include suspensions, although many cases included informal in-school suspensions until parents could come in for the conference. There had also been a change in the way records were kept regarding suspensions, in 2002 records kept for suspension included in-school suspension, and in 2003, in-school suspension was not counted as suspension. He stressed, nevertheless, that it was too soon to draw any conclusions about the suspension rates.

The Assistant Superintendent also cautioned against interpreting the decline in suspension rates as resulting from the project alone. He suggested that the results could be a combination of the impact of the program, the impact of restorative processes that are beginning to find more widespread use in the District, and the placebo effect of the attention to decrease the number of suspensions.

Despite the lack of reliable data, comments from the administration indicate that there had been an important qualitative shift in school disciplinary procedures. One administrator commented that:

*"[This project] shows very positive results for students and staff. We get better results than suspending students. Students remain in school so that they do not get behind academically. It shows that students can certainly make a positive difference by participating in the peer resolution conferencing"*

Aboriginal Educator and Director of Instruction for School District 27

Comments from administration also indicated that mediations and conferences had been important in challenging traditional school philosophy and in creating a more pragmatic and appropriate system of discipline.

*“I see the role for restorative justice moving into more schools and to more school districts. I would like to see each classroom teacher taking the training so that it can affect how they handle the students also. I believe this would mean that the principals would have less discipline issues to deal with because it is being handled in each classroom. I say this because when I was teaching I did similar activities just using our Aboriginal culture and you did not have to send anyone out to the office. After the first month of school and training you had a great class with feelings for everyone else in the room”* – Aboriginal Educator and Director of Instruction for School District 27

*“The more you do the process, the more you realise that it works – it effects how I deal with problems – my reactions are more restorative now from the beginning”* – Principal MSES

A changing culture in the classroom environment came from the perspective of a teacher who attended the February training. She noted that she has begun to apply restorative techniques within her classroom. Rather than punishing difficult behaviour, she had begun to challenge members of her class to come up with an appropriate way to deal with the student’s conduct.

*“I can use these techniques in the classroom to ‘nip any problems in the bud”* – Teacher, MSES

## **2. Decreased recidivism for students participating in the conferences.**

With regard to recidivism rates, the principal of MSES indicated that although some students committed other offences, there had been a definite increase in the length of time between incidents for certain respondents. He also indicated that some repeat offenders were starting to turn to peer mentors as potential confidants and advisors. This increase in social connectedness between peers may lessen the recidivism rates for some students.

## **3. Improved school attendance for students participating in conferences.**

Records indicate greater attendance rates for students in the District from September 3, 2002 to June 19, 2003 compared to records from September 4, 2001 to July 31, 2002. However, the short time frame of the project, the difference in the length of time for records kept in 2003, and the fact that no data was made available regarding the attendance rates at MSES specifically, means that there can be no conclusions drawn about the goal of improved school attendance rates at this time.

#### **4. Changes in youth participant and peer attitudes regarding accountability and impact of actions and behaviours.**

Written evaluations demonstrate that both victims and respondents felt positively about the mediations and conferences. The majority of respondents and victims indicated that they were either happy or very happy with how their case was handled, that they felt listened to, and that the conference or mediation had allowed their best interests to be represented. Respondents also indicated an understanding of the harmful effects of their actions on others, and most identified that it was important to make an agreement with the victim and/or apologize to their friends and family for what they did.

*“I want to say sorry to \*\*\*\* and never swear again”* – Respondent evaluation form

*“Sorry for hurting your feelings”* – Respondent evaluation form

In order to examine whether the intervention with youth would prevent them from future behaviour that could lead to suspensions, both victims and respondents were asked whether they expected that the respondent would repeat the offence. The majority of participants indicated that the likelihood for re-offence was lower after the conference or mediation. The project seemed to work to ensure intervention that prevents youth at risk from behaviours that lead to suspensions, more serious infractions of school rules, or criminal offences through an increased understanding of the impact of their actions and behaviours on others.

Interviews and correspondence with administration confirmed that the program had succeeded in creating a shift in the student’s attitudes and awareness of the impact of their behaviour.

*“It gives the students the opportunity to say they are sorry and really mean it after having the time to hear how it affects others and the time to think about what they did. They see what forgiveness can do for individuals”*

Aboriginal Educator and Director of Instruction for School District 27

*“I have seen a lot less stress for the Administrative Office in dealing with all of the negative behaviours at a school... Students are more aware of unacceptable behaviour, students are being more responsible for one another’s unacceptable behaviour”*

Aboriginal Educator and Director of Instruction for School District 27

#### **5. Increased youth participant and peer knowledge about alternative justice processes.**

This goal is most readily verified by the analysis of peer facilitator comments. Although peer facilitators did not complete written evaluations, some conclusions can be drawn with respect to their involvement and attitudes towards the program.

It is clear that this project would not have been successful without the youth peer facilitators embracing their roles with remarkable enthusiasm. It is notable that

students had approached trained peer mentors to help them resolve conflicts without the principal, and that the youth enthusiasm has not waned since the training.

The principal commented that he was impressed with the student's ability to manage the process and was surprised that his workload was actually reduced. He indicated that he was confident in handing the process over to students, and he was often able to complete his paperwork as they worked the problem through. Following the conference, student mentors continued to check in with him as to whether or not the agreement had been complied with as stipulated.

*"Now we have a completely different attitude about the chronic kids because we now have a useful "tool" to use. This is at least a way for the school to have a tool to cause behavioural change – whereas we had no options before. This program changes the whole school culture of discipline to a more gentle and effective process"*

Principal MSES

It also appeared that youth were able to practice their skills in restorative justice in their daily life. For example, one of the facilitators noted that she has been able to apply what she has learned in conference skills to her problems with family members in her home, and is a better listener now than she was before.

Student facilitators indicated an increase in self-esteem and an extraordinary ability to empathize with fellow students.

*"I felt good after because they don't fight anymore"* – Peer facilitator (grade 6)

Peer facilitators had set up a system of meeting on a weekly basis during their lunch hour. The students involved were keen to continue their involvement in peer resolution conferences and mediations in the fall of 2003. They presented mock conferences for the school in September in order to introduce the concept to the student and teachers as an available option in the beginning of the school year.

It appeared that peer facilitators gained new awareness, knowledge, and skills, such as the ability to weigh different points of view and to reach a just and appropriate consequence, which are valuable tools for a restorative justice approach to conflict.

## **6. Perception of resolution and closure for victims of student wrongdoing.**

Written evaluations show that victims indicated that it was important for them to make an agreement with the respondent, and that it was important for them to get answers about what happened.

Victims indicated that they felt listened to and that they had a chance to say what they wanted to say. This indicates the perception that the conference or mediation was successful in allowing victims to discuss the impact of the

respondent's actions, and allowed them to make suggestions about the way in which the respondent could repair the harm.

*"... if you want to learn about me you can ask me and I will ask you. And before you talk you need to know about what you are saying"* – Victim evaluation form

The data also suggests that the victims understood that punishment was not the only solution to behavioural problems – only one victim both mediations and conferences indicated that it was important to have the respondent punished.

All victims indicated that they felt very happy with the way their case was handled in the mediation or conference and the majority indicated that they found the experience of the mediation or conference as helpful and fair; indicating that they had attained a perception of resolution and closure following the conference.

## **7. Increased community awareness of restorative justice alternatives for school suspensions.**

An analysis of the findings indicated community and parental support in the restorative approach to discipline and encouraging children to stay in school.

Adult facilitators and supporters indicated that the process and outcomes of the mediation or conference were positive for the youth.

*"Supporter of victim started off in very punitive manner. Once the supporter realized what we were really trying to accomplish this, his attitude improved"* – Facilitator

*"I feel these conferences are very positive. Thank you for your support"*  
Parent of Victim

*"I feel this was a very good lesson for \*\*\*\* and I hope he has learned from this...we are continuing to work with him and we are working on getting him into counseling"*  
Parent of Respondent

*"\*\*\*\* was quite vague and didn't seem to be interested in the process. But it was a good process for my daughter to have an opportunity to express herself and talk about what happened to her"* – Parent of Victim

*"I am very happy that everything was brought into the open to be able to try to understand all points of view"* – Parent of Respondent

Teachers felt that the project had lead to a different relationship with parents regarding the discipline of their children.

*"Now, when we phone parents, we feel good about explaining the process – I actually feel positive about phoning home!"* – Project Coordinator

Members of the community had also approached administration from MSES in order to facilitate mediation regarding issues in their homes and between neighbours.

*“Parents now want to come into the school to deal with this - they even call us to help them with conflict issues at home” – Project Coordinator*

*“We are really just re-introducing what families used to do before” – Principal, MSES*

Other comments indicate that the project had an impact on the larger community and provided an opportunity for the school district to encourage the development of community relations.

*“the conferences bring Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal parents and families together and opens understandings” – Adult facilitator comment on evaluation form*

*“Our District initiative to develop and implement a more restorative, community building, tool box of proactive oriented programs and reactive oriented protocols is part of a larger long-term strategy for all schools in the district”*  
Assistant Superintendent, School District 27

*“we see the project as an opportunity to look seriously at alternative ways of supporting students and enhancing the strengths of communities, and a way for the school system to develop better connections between students (and their parents) and their schools” –*  
Assistant Superintendent, School District 27

## **4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

This section includes recommendations about training the participants, for streamlining data collection and record keeping, and for introducing the process of restorative justice as a tool for discipline in other locations.

1. Ensure that the school board and administrators are supportive of Peer Resolution Conferences for Youth.

It is also important to have the assistance and encouragement of top administrators in the school in order to establish innovative ways to ensure conferences or mediations are successful and restorative justice becomes part of the schools values.

2. Ensure that a very well organized project coordinator is in place to handle problems as they arise, to summarize data as it is produced, and to supervise the overall project. This is essential to success.

For the project to continue to expand to other schools, accurate records need to be maintained in order to inform the school board of project outcomes. The

project coordinator must therefore be an effective administrator in order to see that evaluation forms and other records are diligently completed.

The coordinator must also be proficient at publicizing the results amongst interested parties. A regular system of communication with funders, key stakeholders, and community interest groups should be maintained to inform media and community groups about the use of restorative justice in schools. The results of the pilot should be disseminated in order to maintain enthusiasm following the project completion in October 2003.

3. Spend more time at the high school level to determine the needs of administrators and students for PRCs.

Only one conference took place at the high school level. Prior to the training, the high school indicated the need for conferencing, however, months after the training no conferences had taken place. The discrepancy should be clarified in order to understand the needs of the high school level and how the program might effectively respond. This process could be facilitated by the project coordinator, who would encourage and oversee this process.

4. Continue training students, parents, and administrators *each year*, targeting students who can train or consult in following years.

The training was well received and participants considered it indispensable. Positive feedback indicated the need for training to include varying areas of skill and diverse experience of the workshop presenters. Trained participants can train or consult in the following years. In specific, students from grade 6 and grade 11 should receive training early on, to allow sustainability over a two-year period.

The momentum following the training session needs to be maintained by regular support and communication between the project coordinator and on-site facilitators.

Facilitators should be trained on the importance of correctly completing the evaluation forms following the conference, and on the general record keeping required for school district support and funding from other sources.

The training should include scenarios that provide examples of how to deal with a variety of individuals and offences (for example, a situation with three victims and two respondents).

Training should also provide for mediations in addition to conferences. This would allow mediations to continue at the elementary level. In addition, information regarding revised scripts and protocols appropriate for less serious offences could be shared with high school personnel. Administrators may be

more open to a less complex and time-consuming approach to discipline as allowed in the mediations.

5. The diligent administration, follow up, and revision (if necessary) of evaluation forms is essential.

Some of the original forms were found to be too complex and lengthy, particularly the supporters' evaluation forms. The structure and vocabulary of the forms could be simplified for participants of different age and ability. It may be useful to train a number of volunteers in record-keeping and reporting in order to ease the responsibilities and to assist the project coordinator.

6. Designate a parent volunteer, teacher, counsellor, or administrator, to assist in the management of pre and post conference duties.

These people could participate by organizing meeting times with participants, ensuring the proper set up for the meeting, and ensuring all paperwork is completed following the conference or mediation. The imposition of additional jobs to already over-burdened teachers and school administration may lead to reluctance to applying the conference process instead of or in addition to traditional forms of discipline. It may be of use to do some outreach and training for individuals who are interested in participating in community volunteer service. If possible, a committee of volunteer parents and other interested parties might be formed to provide ongoing support for schools.

7. The same peer mentors should be involved for respondents who repeat offences.

This allows for the continuation of providing youth with friendships and trusting relationships between peers, and eases the burden on administration. The building of strong relationships between peers will work towards the goal of keeping students in school and holding them accountable for their behaviour. The encouragement of a sense of social responsibility between peers should result in less recidivism rates.

8. Adult facilitators should debrief student facilitators and mentors following each conference or mediation.

In the debriefing session, adults can make suggestions, reassure, and acknowledge peer facilitators and mentors for their contribution. One student did not know if the process had made any real difference to the respondent, and expressed this concern when meeting with staff from the LCES. The Principal was able to comment positively on his observations. Student facilitators invest a great deal of emotional energy into the process. It is important for them to

“check-in” with adult facilitators in order to help answer any remaining questions and/or ease any feelings of self-doubt in relation to the process.

## **APPENDIX A: PROJECT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

### **Peer Resolution Conferences for Youth**

Rick Ashe, (new) Principal, MSES

Jerome Beauchamp, Principal, MSES

Nora Gambioli, Project Manager, LCES

Joan Gentles, Director of Instruction

Sandra Hawkins, Retired Teacher

Hars Manhas, Vice Principal, WLSS

Jeannette Merriott, Project Coordinator, Williams Lake

Evelyn Neaman, Project Manager, LCES

Joe Pierce, Principal, Williams Lake Secondary

Byron Robbie, Assistant Superintendent

Debra Schmidt, Evaluator, LCES

Marty Shoub, MCFO (probation), Williams Lake

June Streigler, Retired Principal

## APPENDIX B: AGENDA FOR TRAINING SESSION

Thursday February 6 and 7<sup>th</sup>, 2003

Bill Nor Restaurant

Williams Lake BC

Time	Lesson # from Manual	Activities	Presenter
9:30		Opening prayer	<b>Robert Phillips</b>
9:40		Welcome and Introductions to the project and participants	<b>Byron Robbie</b> Asst Superintendent of SD #27
9:50		Training Objectives Over view of agenda Housekeeping (Use red dot activity)	<b>Evelyn Neaman</b>
10:00	Lesson one Understanding Crime and the Canadian Criminal System	"Each one teach one" p. 15 (make two sets and break group in two)	<b>Marty Shoub</b>
11:45	Break * Interviews with Debra Schmidt-project evaluator (Staff)	Break	Break
11:00	Chip's PowerPoint presentation and discussion	Philosophy of Peer Resolution Conferences	<b>Chip Elwyn Hayes</b>
12:30	Lunch * Interviews with Debra Schmidt (students)		
1:30	Lesson Two Restorative Justice Principles Libby's material	Scenarios pgs. 18-22 Handout 2  Libby's video, "intro to Conferencing"	<b>Libby Hart</b>
2:30	Lesson 3  Chips handouts on kinds of parents  Roles and steps in a conference (SCRIPTED)	Pgs. 23-26 Secondary school Kyle's phone call p. 36 & Elem students Jason and the Fire alarm Handouts 3 "rolls and steps" And 4 "debriefing" (In large group)	<b>Chip Hayes</b> -Types of parents <b>Sandra Hawkins</b> – Introductions for rolls and steps in a conference  <b>2 Breakout groups for mock conferences</b> <b>Elementary Students</b> Libby, Jerome Beauchamp and Jeannette Marriott (Include pre conference sheets for younger students) <b>Secondary Students</b> Joe and Sandra Hawkins

# **APPENDIX C: MARIE SHARPE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PROCEDURES AND SCRIPT FOR PEER RESOLUTION MEDIATIONS**

*École Marie Sharpe  
École élémentaire*

*Elementary School*

260 Cameron St.  
Williams Lake, B.C. V2G 1S8  
Phone: (250) 392-4104  
Fax: (250) 392-6574

## **Marie Sharpe Elementary Restorative Justice Model DRAFT**

### **Goals:**

1. Keep students in school
2. Incorporate Restorative Justice based practices
3. Hold youth accountable for their behaviour, and allow them to understand the consequences of their behaviour and give them the ways to make amends
4. Empower youth to accept responsibility
5. Allow victims to be informed about and involved in the justice process
6. Teach skills and values that are needed to live in our society
7. Provide an opportunity for volunteers to learn the skills needed to consider conflicting points of view and reach a reasonable and appropriate consequence

### **Uses:**

The Restorative Justice Model will work in conjunction with Steps 3 and 4 of the school's discipline model and may be used in cases of theft, disrespect, violence, bullying, and intimidation. In each case an assessment of the probable success of the model will be completed.

\*\*Note: School's Discipline Model (See Appendix A)

Offences that could be dealt with using the Restorative Justice Model.

1. Bullying
2. Drugs
3. Alcohol
4. Threats
5. Theft
6. Aggressive behaviour
7. Truancy
8. Smoking
9. Defiance
10. Assaults/threats to staff
11. Fighting
1. School safety violations

Offences that will not be dealt with using the Restorative Justice Model

1. Sexual assault

2. Criminal acts with a charge
3. School act violations

***Referral Process***

The current practice for school discipline follows the School Code of Conduct outlined in Appendix A. This Code of Conduct allows behaviour to be modified within a progressive discipline model which generally works as follows:

Step 1 – Student is allowed to modify minor behaviours on their own.

Step 2 – Parents become involved in behaviour modification

Step 3 – Behaviours are consistent enough or severe enough to warrant a contract meeting with parents. This is the point at which the value of using the Restorative Justice Model will be assessed.

Step 4 – Suspensions occur. The value of using the Restorative Justice Model will be assessed, as a rehabilitation measure.

At Step 3 or 4 of the process the principal will consult with parents, teachers, counsellors, vice-principal, youth liaison workers, and other adults with close contact with the child to determine the value of using the restorative justice model. The Assessment Tool form will be completed at this time.

Favourable probability of success using the Assessment Tool will result in the Restorative Justice Model being initiated.

**École Marie Sharpe Elementary**  
**Peer Resolution Conference**  
**Assessment Tool/Referral Process**

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Part 1 – Incident Details**

**Contact Information**

<b>Student(s)/Supporters</b>

**Incident (Please describe incident):**


**Involved Adult Comments:**


**Part 2 – Type of Offense**

The following offenses qualify for use of the school’s restorative justice model. Which of the following offenses were part of this incident? (check as many as qualify)

Bullying		Threats	
Theft		Aggressive Behaviour	
Defiance		Assaults	
Fighting		School Safety Violations	
Drugs		Alcohol	
Truancy		Smoking	
Other:			

Note: The following Offences will not be dealt with using the school’s Restorative Justice Model.  
Sexual assault, Criminal acts with a charge, School Act violations

<b>Part 3- Admission of Guilt</b>	Yes	No
Did the respondent admit to the offense?		

**Part 4 – Willingness to Participate in Peer Resolution**

Student(s)/Supporters	Yes	No

**École Marie Sharpe Elementary Peer Resolution Mediations**  
**Agreement Form**

PRC Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Mentor: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Student(s)/Supporters</b>	<b>Student(s)/Supporters</b>

<b>Previous Consequences</b> - for this type of offense.

<i>Apology</i> (Names and check appropriate)	Verbal	Written	Comp. Date

<b>Restitution</b> – Include restitution and deadline date

<b>Other Consequences</b> – Include consequences and deadline date

*Signatures*

Student(s)/Supporters	Student(s)/Supporters

**École Marie Sharpe Elementary Peer Resolution Mediations  
Facilitator’s Script**

**ROOM ARRANGEMENT**

- Before participants arrive, arrange the seating according to the seating plan.
- Place name tags on the seats.
- Have tissues, script, agreement forms, etc. ready
- Ensure that juice, cookies, napkins, and glasses are in place.

**GREETINGS**

- Greet each person upon arrival.
- Invite the victim/supporters and the respondent/supporters to wait in separate areas if possible
- Using the seating plan, seat the respondent and supporters first, then remaining participants

**INTRODUCTIONS**

- Introduce yourself.

<p>Example:  “Hello. I’d like to begin by introducing everyone. My name is _____ and I will be facilitating today’s conference.”</p>
--

- Introduce each participant and indicate their relationship to the victim, respondent or incident.

## THE RULES

- Welcome everyone
- Layout the incident in general:
  - a. We will be concentrating on what happened on (date) between \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_,
  - b. The place where it occurred.

Example.

“Your presence here today is appreciated and shows a willingness to resolve this situation. We will be concentrating on what happened... *(Give basic details of incident, date, place without elaboration.)*”

- Explain that our goal is to:
  1. deal with what the respondent did.
  2. How the incident affects others
  3. Not judge the respondent
  4. Find ways to repair the harm that was done.

Example:

We will be dealing with what \_\_\_\_\_ did and how others have been affected. It must be understood that we are not here to judge \_\_\_\_\_’s character. Instead, we are here to learn how others have been affected by \_\_\_\_\_’s unacceptable actions and to find ways to help \_\_\_\_\_ to understand the impact of his/her actions and to repair the harm that has been done.”

## **RESPONDENT(S)**

- Have respondent(s) tell what happened  
\*\*Have them say it to the victim\*\*

Key questions to ask the respondent(s) to solicit a complete story:

1. How did you come to be involved in this incident?
2. What were you thinking about at (specify specific, critical points of the incident)
3. Who do you think has been affected by your actions?
4. In what way have they been affected?

Example:

“\_\_\_\_\_ has admitted his (her) role in this matter and we will start by asking him (her) to tell us what happened.”

## **VICTIM(S)**

- Find out from victim how they were affected.

Key questions to ask the victim (s) to solicit response:

1. What did you think immediately after?
2. How has this affected you?
3. How did your family and friends react when they heard what happened?

Example:

“ \_\_\_\_\_ , what was your first reaction when this happened?”

#### VICTIM SUPPORTERS

- Get their information about the incident and how they are feeling.

#### Key Questions:

How did you find out about what happened?  
What did you think when you heard about it?  
How did you feel when you heard what happened?  
What has been happening with (victim) since this happened?

#### RESPONDENT SUPPORTERS

- Get their information about the incident and how they are feeling.

#### Key questions:

“How did you find out about what happened?  
What did you think when you first heard about it?  
What has happened with (respondent) since this happened?”

#### RESPONDENT

- find out if the respondent has anything to add and how they are feeling now

#### Key Questions:

1. Is there anything you would like to say to (victim) or to anyone else here?

#### Example:

“ \_\_\_\_\_ , before we move on, is there anything you would like to say to (victim) or to anyone else here?”

#### AGREEMENT

- Explain consequences that are already in place. (from Agreement form)
- Find out if victim and supporters need anything else to happen to repair the harm.
- Find out if the respondent and supporters have anything else that they would like to see.

#### Example:

“Now that we have heard from everyone, I would like to explain the consequences that are in place for \_\_\_\_\_.” Explain consequence.

#### Go to victim supporters:

“After hearing all that has been said here, is there anything else that you would like to see happen?”

#### Go to respondents supporters:

“After hearing all that has been said here, is there anything else that you would like to see happen?”

#### When the agreement has taken shape:

We seem to have an agreement. It is my understanding that the agreement is as follows: (Read out Agreement)

“Is everyone satisfied with this agreement?”

#### CLOSING THE CONFERENCE

- Read back the agreement to ensure the group’s decision is accurately recorded.
- Go around the circle and give everyone an opportunity to speak if they wish.
- Give each person the chance to say anything else they would like to say.
- When writing up the agreement, you must ensure that it is exactly what the group intended; that it contains monitoring arrangements, deadlines and the specifics of who does what...when...where...and how much.
- Distribute copies of agreement.

**DO NOT** rush people out of the conference room – remember that much informal reintegration will be happening now.

Example:

“Participating in this conference and the completion of this agreement will go a long way toward helping \_\_\_\_\_ to understand the effect of their behaviour on others and repairing the harm that has been done. Is there anything anyone would like to say before we close?”

“Thank you all for coming; I hope it’s been worthwhile for you.

#### Appendix A

#### ÉCOLE MARIE SHARPE SCHOOL STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT

Students are representatives of Marie Sharpe and are subject to the school’s Code of Conduct. It is expected that students understand their rights and live up to their responsibilities as laid out in the school’s Rights and Responsibilities. To demonstrate their understanding, student’s will:

- \* value education and lifelong learning (LEARNING)
- \* show respect for people and property (RESPECT)
- \* demonstrate safe behaviour in all activities, at all times (SAFETY)
- \* be responsible and accountable for their own behaviour and actions (RESPONSIBILITY)

Students not carrying out responsibilities will be subject to a process of natural and progressive consequences.

The process will generally progress as follows:

1. Consequence will include an opportunity for the student to change their behaviour on their own.
2. When a pattern of behaviour develops, there will be a short term consequence and a student generated Plan of Action to modify behaviour, signed by student, parent, teacher and principal.
3. If a pattern persists, the consequence will include suspension of privileges and parents will be involved in the creation of a formal Student Behaviour Contract to modify behaviour.
4. If pattern continues, consequences will include suspensions.

Note: Infractions involving bullying, intimidation, disrespect, violence and theft will not be tolerated and will automatically move to Step 3 of the process.

# APPENDIX D: EVALUATION FORMS

## POST-CONFERENCE RESPONDENT QUESTIONNAIRE ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Case # \_\_\_\_\_ Date of conference: \_\_\_\_\_

1. How do you feel about the way your case was handled?  
\_\_\_\_\_very happy      \_\_\_\_\_not happy      \_\_\_\_\_very unhappy
  
2. How do you think the victim feels with the way the case was handled?  
\_\_\_\_\_very happy      \_\_\_\_\_not happy      \_\_\_\_\_very unhappy
  
3. Did you apologize to the victim?      \_\_\_\_\_yes      \_\_\_\_\_no
  
4. Was it helpful to meet with the victim(s)?  
\_\_\_\_\_ yes      \_\_\_\_\_sort of      \_\_\_\_\_ no
  
5. What was important?  
To be able to tell the victim(s) what happened? \_\_yes \_\_sort of \_\_no  
To pay back the victim? \_\_\_\_\_yes      \_\_\_\_\_sort of      \_\_\_\_\_no  
To make an agreement with the victim? \_\_yes \_\_sort of \_\_no  
To apologize to my family and friends? \_\_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_\_sort of \_\_\_\_\_ no
  
6. Do you feel like you were listened to and that you had a chance to say what you wanted to say?  
\_\_\_\_\_ yes      \_\_\_\_\_sort of      \_\_\_\_\_ no
  
7. Do you think you will commit another offense like this one?  
\_\_\_\_\_ yes      \_\_\_\_\_maybe      \_\_\_\_\_ no
  
8. Do you think that the conference was fair?  
\_\_\_\_\_ yes      \_\_\_\_\_sort of      \_\_\_\_\_ no
  
9. Do you have anything else to say about the conference or how your case was handled?

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**POST-CONFERENCE VICTIM QUESTIONNAIRE**  
**ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

**Case # \_\_\_\_\_ Date of conference: \_\_\_\_\_**

1. **How do you feel about the way your case was handled?**  
\_\_\_\_\_very happy \_\_\_\_\_not happy \_\_\_\_\_very unhappy
  
2. **How do you think the respondent feels with the way the case was handled?**  
\_\_\_\_\_very happy \_\_\_\_\_not happy \_\_\_\_\_very unhappy
  
3. **Did the respondent apologize to you?** \_\_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_\_no
  
4. **Was it helpful to meet with the respondent?**  
\_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_sort of \_\_\_\_\_ no
  
5. **What was important?**  
To get answers from the respondent about what happened?  
\_\_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_\_sort of \_\_\_\_\_no  
To tell the respondent what happened to you? \_\_yes \_\_sort of \_\_no  
To make an agreement with the respondent?\_\_yes \_\_sort of \_\_no  
To have the respondent punished? \_\_yes \_\_\_\_\_sort of \_\_\_\_\_no
  
6. **Do you feel like you were listened to and that you had a chance to say what you wanted to say?**  
\_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_sort of \_\_\_\_\_ no
  
7. **Do you think the respondent will commit another offense like this one?**  
\_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_maybe \_\_\_\_\_ no
  
8. **Do you think that the conference was fair?**  
\_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_sort of \_\_\_\_\_ no
  
9. **Do you have anything else to say about the conference or how your case was handled?**

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