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## Teacher Consultation to Enhance Implementation of School-Based Restorative Justice

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### ABSTRACT

Restorative justice (RJ) is an alternative approach to school discipline that has been gaining recognition in the public and academic spheres as a way to engage students who misbehave in school. RJ has promise to address racial/ethnic, gender, and disability disproportionality in school discipline. One aspect of school-based RJ that has received almost no attention in the literature is the professional development and ongoing support of teachers in schools using RJ. This article provides a review of extant literature on school-based RJ, teacher training, and consultation methods. Integrating the empirical literature on school consultation and teacher professional development, we argue that schools should implement a multitiered model of professional development to build teacher competency in RJ, specifically including the use of targeted teacher consultation. The proposed model is complementary to an RJ framework, systematic, and capable of evaluation; future research is needed to evaluate its effectiveness in practice.

### ARTICLE HISTORY

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School discipline can have a critical effect on a number of student- and school-level outcomes, including school climate, incidents of student misbehavior, rates of suspensions and expulsions, and academic achievement (Sharkey & Fenning, 2012). Racial/ethnic disproportionality in school discipline practices has been noted consistently in the research literature (American Psychological Association Zero-Tolerance Task Force, 2008); thus, school professionals must address the issue of student diversity in discipline implementation. Restorative Justice (RJ) approaches aim to engage, rather than exclude, students who misbehave in schools. Given its potential as a positive discipline technique, RJ approaches have gained attention in the public and research spheres as an alternative to more traditional and punitive styles of discipline that primarily use exclusionary punishments such as suspensions and expulsions. However, there is little guidance on methods to train and support teachers and other school staff in implementing RJ, and empirical evidence supporting its effectiveness is scarce. RJ approaches need to be implemented consistently with fidelity before they can be rigorously

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evaluated, necessitating effective teacher and staff professional development (PD) as a first next step in building an evidence base for RJ methods.

In this article, we address the topic of PD and teacher competency in RJ approaches, arguing for a multitiered method of PD in school-based RJ, with an emphasis on targeted teacher consultation. Specifically, we address gaps in the current literature on professional development and RJ in schools by (a) providing a systematic review of the extant research on RJ in schools, PD, and consultation; (b) informing professionals about the benefits and importance of effective PD and the role of consultation in PD for RJ; and (c) providing consultation professionals with an understanding of how to consult on the implementation of RJ in schools, specifically through a tiered approach.

### **Restorative justice in schools**

RJ was originally conceptualized and applied within the criminal justice system (Braithwaite, 1989). Within this paradigm, crimes are viewed as detrimental because they harm people and relationships. Therefore, the RJ response to crimes is centered on repairing the harm that was caused by bringing together those who were most closely affected by the incident (victims, offenders, community members) and working toward an agreement about how to repair the harm (Latimer, Dowden, & Muise, 2005). Studies evaluating the effectiveness of RJ programs within the adult criminal justice system have been generally supportive of the approach (Latimer et al., 2005), although further rigorous research is needed.

The principles of RJ can also be applied to noncriminal behaviors, such as student misbehavior in schools. As Amstutz and Mullet (2005) explain, if schools begin thinking about discipline as more than just punishment, then it can be used as an opportunity for learning, growth, and the building of community. In contrast to traditional, exclusionary forms of student discipline (e.g., suspensions and expulsions), a restorative approach focuses on the inclusion of students who misbehave by holding them accountable for their actions and providing support for their learning and growth. RJ has the potential to be responsive to student diversity as it takes into account each unique situation and allows all participants to share their perspectives. RJ interventions that have been adapted to the school setting include victim-offender mediation, community conferencing in the classroom, and peace-making circles. Whole-school models of RJ implement these practices at three tiers, where each tier provides appropriate prevention and intervention for students with varying degrees of need (i.e., tier 3 interventions address the most intensive and persistent types of harm; Morrison & Vaandering, 2012). A more thorough review of the theory and research on restorative justice is provided in the introduction to this special issue.

## Empirical support for RJ in schools

Although gaining in popularity, the use of RJ in schools is still a recent practice, and empirical research on its effectiveness is limited. We searched PsychInfo and ERIC databases for scholarly articles with the following inclusion criteria: (a) has subject or title with words “restor\*” and (“school\*” OR “student\*” OR “teacher\*”); (b) is peer-reviewed; (c) is empirical (i.e., quantitative, qualitative, or case study); and (d) evaluates RJ in K–12 schools. After checking abstracts to determine which articles met all inclusion criteria, we conducted comprehensive reviews of the 19 included studies (a summary of these studies is provided in [Table 1](#)). Results reveal that none of the studies used an experimental design; only one had any sort of control group; and the majority were case studies or pretest–posttest designs. Most studies (12 out of 19) were conducted outside of the United States, which raises concerns regarding the applicability of the research to the United States school system. Furthermore, none of the studies analyzed the effect of RJ on racial disproportionality; this may in part be due to the international context of most of the studies but also suggests that further research on the effect of RJ on discipline disproportionality is necessary. Taken together, the review of RJ research findings begins to develop general support for implementing RJ in schools, although more rigorous methods, research in the United States, and examination of disproportionality are needed.

Of the studies examined in our literature search, Wong, Cheng, Ngan, and Ma (2011) conducted the most methodologically rigorous study examining RJ in schools. They implemented a quasi-experimental design with a no-treatment control group with four schools in Hong Kong that were in the middle 33% of achievement. One school fully implemented, two partially implemented, and one did not implement the restorative whole-school approach (RWsA). The 1,480 seventh- to ninth-grade students in these schools were surveyed prior to implementation and 2 years after implementation on measures of bullying behavior, empathy, self-esteem, sense of belonging, and other school-climate factors. Researchers found that, despite similar rates of bullying at pretest in all four schools, the intervention and partial intervention schools had significant decreases in bullying behavior from pre- to posttest, whereas the control group had a significant increase in bullying. In addition, students at the RWsA school had increases in empathy and self-esteem that were not found at the non-RWsA school. Findings from this study provide support for the use of an RJ program within schools, but design limitations, such as not including enough schools to randomly assign intervention at the school level, limit conclusions about its effectiveness. Moreover, its generalizability to students in other countries and other schools that receive different training and have different school climates is unknown.

**Table 1.** Summary of Empirical Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles on RJ in the Schools.

Citation	Participants	Methods	Results	Disproportionality
(1) Bursens & Vettenburg (2006)	14 victims, 9 offenders, 20 victim supporters, 9 offender parents, 8 offender supporters, and 2 absent victims who participated in restorative group conferencing at school in Flanders, Belgium	Case study; used observations, interviews, focus groups, and questionnaires to evaluate experience of participants in restorative group conferencing	Restorative group conferences were viewed highly positively by the participants: Most reported they would choose the RJ group conference again, and all 14 victims and 20 supporters felt that confrontation with the offenders was positive. In interviews, offenders stated they did not feel humiliated. After a hazing incident, an RJ approach was used. Survey results found that 7 years after adopting RJ approach, few students reported being victims of or participants in hazing. Most students understood how hazing was defined and the consequences of doing it.	Not discussed/analyzed
(2) DeWitt & DeWitt (2012)	430 juniors (222 male and 208 female) in a high school outside of Chicago, IL	Case study and school-wide follow-up survey measuring student experiences of hazing	Almost all (95%) of teachers felt discussion about conflicts was important in school. Teachers reported positive feelings about restorative circles. Students reported feeling "respected," "listened" to, and "calm" as a result of participating in restorative circles.	In the study, 33.8% of teachers stated that they believe racism and intolerance are motivational factors for student aggression.
(3) Grossi & dos Santos (2012)	113 elementary school students, 45 high school students, 242 teachers in Porto Alegre, RS (Brazil) public school system	Case study using questionnaires, student focus groups, teacher interviews, and observations to understand RJ implementation and success	Most students reported that the "Fairness Committee" positively contributed to the school's environment and helped facilitate personal growth.	Authors discussed discipline disproportionality in the literature review.
(4) Hantzopoulos (2013)	Students at a small New York City public high school	Ethnographic case study of the Fairness Committee RJ model		

(Continued)

Table 1. (Continued).

Citation	Participants	Methods	Results	Disproportionality
(5) Kane, Lloyd, McCluskey, Maguire, Riddell, Stead, & Weedon (2009)	18 pilot schools within 3 local authorities in Scotland	Nonexperimental pretest–posttest design and process evaluation	Over 2 years varied outcomes were found for each school based on readiness for implementation of restorative practices, differences in change processes, level of investment and attitudes to the process, and varied use of multiple interventions.	Not discussed/analyzed
(6) Karp & Breslin (2001)	Minnesota Public Schools, Denver Metropolitan Schools, Buxmont Academy	Review of published school reports, telephone interviews	Reductions in suspensions were reported in Minnesota. Other anecdotal evidence was provided support of the implemented restorative justice practices for the districts examined. Differences in implementation were discussed.	Not discussed/analyzed
(7) Kaveney & Drewery (2011)	An urban high school in New Zealand (N = 970); 41 teachers involved in professional development	Review of information on RJ implementation. Qualitative interview data (n = 9 teachers)	Teachers reported improved well-being, positive feelings about their classes, positive relationships with students, learning environment, and student behavior. They reported positive experiences of being involved in the RJ process and reported on what skills they thought were most valuable to the process. They reported about the various important aspects of the class meetings.	Not discussed/analyzed

(Continued)

Table 1. (Continued).

Citation	Participants	Methods	Results	Disproportionality
(8) McCluskey, Lloyd, Kane, Riddell, Stead, & Weedon (2008)	18 pilot schools within 3 local authorities in Scotland; 7 primary schools, 10 secondary schools, and 1 special school	Descriptive survey design; qualitative design (interviews, focus groups, observations)	Most successful results were found in schools where administration embraced restorative practices and committed to staff development on RJ strategies and when school staff expressed openness to exploring their values and student behavior within the new framework of RJ.	Not discussed/analyzed
(9) Mirsky (2007)	3 pilot schools in Pennsylvania; 2 high schools ( $n = 732$ and $n = 855$ ) and 1 middle school ( $n = 559$ ) between 1998 and 2002	Nonexperimental pretest–posttest design; office discipline referrals and other school discipline data (pre and post) and interviews with staff (post)	Decreases in disciplinary referrals, detentions from administration and teachers, incidents of disruptive behavior and fighting, and out-of-school suspensions from 1998 to 2002. Staff quotes indicated positive regard for the RJ practices and increased incidences of students reporting each other for problematic behavior (hypothesized to be due to comfort with reporting, not an increase in problem behavior).	Not discussed/analyzed

(Continued)

Table 1. (Continued).

Citation	Participants	Methods	Results	Disproportionality
(10) Mirsky & Wachtel (2007)	919 adolescents discharged from the 6 CSF Buxmont day-treatment school programs in southeastern Pennsylvania between 1991 and 2001	Nonexperimental pretest–posttest design; interviews with adolescents (pre and post), survey measuring prosocial norms and self-esteem (pre and post), court criminal history and recidivism data	Probation–referred students were more likely to complete the program than school–referred students (66% to 53%). Increase in positive regard for police officers from intake to exit; exiters had high self-esteem regardless of their self-esteem at intake; program completers less likely to reoffend than those who left the program early. Program exposure related to improved behavior regardless of age, gender, offense type, race, or criminal history.	Not discussed/analyzed
(11) Payne & Welch (2010)	A sample of 294 public, nonalternative secondary schools in the United States from the National Study of Delinquency Prevention in Schools	Survey completed by principals at each of the participating schools; included measures of disciplinary response and student and school demographics and characteristics	Using structural equation modeling, they found that schools with higher percentages of Black students are more likely to use harsher and punitive punishments and less likely to use restorative approaches to discipline than those with fewer Black students. Schools with a larger percentage of poor and Hispanic students and those in urban areas are also more likely to use punitive rather than restorative approaches.	Researchers found that schools with larger percentages of Black and Hispanic students are less likely to use RJ; they tend to use more punitive approaches.

(Continued)



**Table 1.** (Continued).

Citation	Participants	Methods	Results	Disproportionality
(12) Reimer (2011)	4 Caucasian teachers and 2 school administrators from one school in Ontario	Case study; qualitative analysis of teacher and administrator semistructured interviews and questionnaires; school board's website and training materials were also analyzed	Faculty interviews indicated that they seem to have a positive attitude toward RJ. Faculty had only a moderate amount of confidence in their ability to initiate restorative justice practices, but overall they agreed with the philosophy; 80% of those teachers who had never received training in RJ still supported the practice, even though they had little confidence in their ability to carry it out. Interviews indicated that the popularity and success of the program lessened after 2007, when outside funding was no longer available.	Not discussed/analyzed
(13) Shaw (2007)	18 primary and secondary schools in Victoria, Australia	Case study; used descriptive surveys and interviews with teachers to describe the implementation and success of RJ in the schools	According to teachers, the use of problem-solving questions helped improve behavior management. Teachers reported that they could support students' emotional needs better when using restorative justice.	Not discussed/analyzed

(Continued)

Table 1. (Continued).

Citation	Participants	Methods	Results	Disproportionality
(14) Standing, Fearon, & Dee (2012)	A male student attending a secondary school in the United Kingdom (between 13 and 14 years old) who was at risk for drinking, using drugs, and other illegal behavior	Case study; observations of student at school (behavior logs), interviews, and written feedback from student and school staff	According to the teacher reports, the subject was excluded from school for 5 days during the course of the study for involvement in a racially charged fight; he was also confrontational with male staff, restless and disruptive in class, and performing academically at a level far below what he was capable of. His English teacher reported that the subject had improved attitude after one restorative circle that she started, but that was the only positive feedback. Across 3 years of using RJ, physical aggression acts drastically declined (from 773 to 153 incidents), out-of-school suspensions dropped, daily average attendance went up 85%.	Authors discuss the fact that males are "excluded" from school (i.e., suspended or expelled) more often than females, while students from lower SES backgrounds are more likely to be excluded than those from middle or high SES backgrounds.
(15) Stinchcomb, Bazemore, & Riestenberg (2006)	South St. Paul school district in Minnesota	Case study; used school data pre- and postimplementation of RJ and qualitative information from observations, interviews, and focus groups with school staff	Case one: After group meeting and 8 weeks of social skills class during school hours, put-downs and swearing went down, according to teacher reports. Case 2: After group meeting, lines of communication with parents opened between the family of the subjects and the school, and the school staff and the subjects' family reported that the boys were more positively engaged at school and reduction in anti-social behavior. They won achievement awards.	Not discussed/analyzed
(16) Wearmouth & Berryman (2012)	Case 1: a Maori boy Case 2: 2 Maori brothers with severe behavior issues in Aotearoa, New Zealand	Case studies; behavior recording and qualitative information from family and school staff involved with each case	Authors explain that racial disproportionality in exclusionary discipline exists (Maori students in Australia are suspended/expelled more than other ethnic groups). Suggest RJ is a culturally appropriate form of discipline within the Maori culture/traditions.	

(Continued)

Table 1. (Continued).

Citation	Participants	Methods	Results	Disproportionality
(17) Wearmouth, McKinney, & Glynn (2007a)	15-year-old Maori boy in Aotearoa, New Zealand, who was having behavioral problems	Descriptive case study	Student stole his mother's car and drove it into a garden. He had a restorative meeting with his extended family, friends, those affected by the car crashing into the property. During the meeting, the subject stood up and apologized to the person whose garden got destroyed and apologized to his mother for stealing the car. He then repaired the fence and the garden and did not take his mother's car again.	Not discussed/analyzed
(18) Wearmouth, McKinney, & Glynn (2007b)	2 Maori boys (and one of the boys' classrooms) in Aotearoa, New Zealand who were having behavioral problems	Descriptive case studies	The Maori community participated in deciding appropriate actions. One of the boys with behavioral problems used a personal narrative to apologize and repair the damages caused by his behaviors. For the other case study, it was determined that the entire class had a negative culture, and a curriculum was implemented to address it. After 8 weeks, there was an improvement in classroom culture and less swearing and put-downs.	Not discussed/analyzed
(19) Wong, Cheng, Ngan, & Ma (2011)	1,480 7th- to 9th-grade students from 4 schools in Hong Kong	Quasi-experimental design (nonrandomized intervention, partial intervention and control groups); surveys with students measuring bullying, school climate, and student empathy and self-esteem	After 2 years, the Restorative Whole-school Approach treatment group had less bullying, higher empathy, and higher self-esteem than the control group.	Not discussed/analyzed

A body of research using nonexperimental pretest–posttest designs to evaluate changes in school and student-level behavior and attitudes after the implementation of RJ has developed over the past decade. In general, these studies have found decreased behavioral referrals and suspensions (e.g., Stinchcomb, Bazemore, & Riestenberg, 2006), repeat offending behaviors (Cameron & Thorsborne, 2001), and disruptive behavior and disciplinary actions (e.g., Mirsky, 2007). A study of 18 Scottish schools implementing RJ found that the restorative practices improved student reports regarding feelings of safety and respect at school (McCluskey et al., 2008). Although five of the 19 empirical studies discussed racial or gender disproportionality as a problem with traditional disciplinary practices, no articles studied the effect of RJ on disproportionality. Several schools in the United States (e.g., Minnesota Public Schools, Denver Metropolitan Schools) have also begun using RJ with promising outcomes. For example, in 1995 the Minnesota Public Schools began incorporating a “restorative philosophy” (e.g., restorative conferencing and circles) into their schools, and by 2001 their schools demonstrated drops in disciplinary referrals, suspensions, and expulsions (Karp & Breslin, 2001). However, there is a clear need for further rigorous research in this area as nonexperimental studies do not support conclusions about whether RJ is more effective than other approaches. Moreover, it is critical to know whether RJ helps solve the problem of disproportionate discipline practices.

### **Teacher professional development and restorative justice**

Teacher PD, or ongoing learning and development, is essential to the success of educational reform (Desimone, 2009). However, one aspect of school-based RJ that has received almost no attention in the literature is the PD and ongoing support of teachers in schools using RJ. It may be particularly important for teachers to receive PD on RJ approaches to school discipline as teachers do not receive adequate preservice training in classroom management practices in general and especially not to address strategies that fit within a restorative justice approach (Johansen, Little, & Akin-Little, 2011). Although numerous PD and other trainings on RJ can be found through a Google search, scholarship providing empirical evidence or even conceptual guidance for PD in RJ is rare in peer-reviewed journals. In the 19 articles identified in our search for RJ studies, nine mentioned that teachers were trained in PD practices as part of the RJ implementation being evaluated and three discussed the effect of PD on RJ. These three studies (see Kane et al., 2009; Kaveney & Drewery, 2011; Wong et al., 2011) indicated positive outcomes of PD trainings for school-based RJ but implemented very different strategies. For example, one had numerous components, including workshops, conflict resolution services, peace education, and parental

involvement. This program was designed as a whole-school approach to reduce bullying by establishing clear goals and building strong relationships among all members of the school community (Wong et al., 2011). In a second, teachers were taught ways to foster understanding of others' perspectives by using various questioning techniques and engaging in respectful dialogues. By participating in the PD, teachers learned to lead meetings with students that facilitate the examination of nonverbal cues, encourage reflection, and convey a message of equality among students (Kaveney & Drewery, 2011). The diverse strategies for teacher PD in RJ combined with the limited number of studies examining the effect of few unique PD strategies on student outcomes suggests that additional scholarship is needed to develop consistent, evidence-based practice in teacher PD for RJ implementation.

Research investigating PD across a variety of skills has shown that teachers benefit most from PD with a few specific qualities. Desimone (2009) describes the characteristics of teacher PD that research has found to be fundamental to improving their teaching as (a) a content focus that trains teachers how students learn specific content; (b) active learning that allows teachers to discuss or practice skills; (c) coherence that links training to teacher knowledge and beliefs; (d) duration of training of at least 20 hours spread over a semester, which promotes change in practice; and (e) collective participation that encourages teachers who work closely together to interact throughout training and implementation. For example, PD that allows teachers to integrate what they learn into their daily routine as opposed to receiving "one shot" trainings has resulted in better outcomes (Hunzicker, 2011). Mihalic, Irwin, Fagan, Ballard, and Elliott (2004) found that teachers they trained demonstrated greater preparedness, fidelity of implementation, and student outcomes than untrained teachers implementing a violence prevention program. However, teachers who did not receive follow-up support across time stopped fully implementing the program or discontinued the program altogether. Intensive approaches involving experiential learning and practice over multiple days are likely needed as this approach has been found to increase teacher learning (Fabiano et al., 2013). However, additional conceptual and empirical work is needed to advance the science and practice of teacher PD in general (Desimone, 2009) and particularly for implementing RJ strategies in schools.

### **Consultation within a tiered approach to professional development in restorative justice**

A tiered approach to intervention is often necessary to meet the needs of all members of the school community. Tiered approaches offer more intensive support for participants who need additional assistance beyond the universal level; they provide hierarchical interventions that increase in intensity and

attenuate in size to meet the needs of participants who demonstrate the need for more support (Walker & Shinn, 2010). For example, there has been widespread proliferation of multitiered models to solve behavior problems in schools, including response to intervention (e.g., Fairbanks, Sugai, Guardino, & Lathrop, 2007) and positive behavioral interventions and supports (e.g., Bradshaw, Koth, Bevans, Ialongo, & Leaf, 2008). Some models of teacher PD (e.g., exceptional professional learning) have also adopted a tiered approach to training, specifically conceptualizing school-based consultation as embedded within a comprehensive approach to training (e.g., Truscott et al., 2012).

Consultation involves collaborative problem solving between a school-based consultant (e.g., school psychologist, RJ specialist) and one or more people (e.g., teachers) who are responsible for providing services to a third party (e.g., students; Crothers, Hughes, & Morine, 2008). In general, consultation provides a structured, nonhierarchical problem-solving process for any given issue, facilitates deeper understanding of the problem, offers insights and alternative explanations of problems, helps explore practical interventions, and provides support to execute and evaluate interventions (Crothers et al., 2008).

Teacher consultation has been shown to positively affect students' academic learning and classroom behavior (Atkins et al., 2008). In addition, consultation is ideal to address cultural considerations such as discipline disproportionality as it is an individualized intervention that takes into account the unique perspectives of all participants. Consultants are encouraged to be mindful of the factors related to racial disparity that are prevalent within the school context, such as the expectations that teachers may hold of ethnically diverse students and barriers faced by culturally diverse parents with children in school (Lott & Rogers, 2005). Consultation may be most valuable when it is used as an avenue to build teachers' and schools' abilities to meet the needs of an increasingly diverse student population (Wizda, 2004).

Thus, consultation is well suited to support teacher PD in RJ because both require problem solving and group processing to achieve better outcomes for students. In addition, they share concern for cultural sensitivity, which is highly important to successful implementation of any consultation model (Ingraham, 2000). To date, how well any method of consultation improves teacher competency and use of restorative approaches is not known. However, a number of consultation methods for addressing related aspects of teaching (e.g., working with teachers to change student behavior and improve classroom management) have emerged in the past 15 years (e.g., Atkins et al., 2008) and may be appropriate methods for teacher consultation within a tiered approach to PD in RJ, including behavioral and consultee-centered methods and individual and group consultation formats. Whereas behavioral approaches to consultation (e.g., direct behavioral, conjoint behavioral) may be useful because of their focus on addressing specific and measurable student behaviors and preference

by teachers, students, and school psychologists (Gutkin & Curtis, 1999; Wilkinson, 1997), they may not be entirely compatible within an RJ program. For example, behavioral approaches focus on behavior modification, whereas other methods of consultation (e.g., consultee-centered consultation) emphasize relationships and community building. Because of this focus on relationships, the consultee-centered consultation (CCC) model and the group consultation format align particularly well with RJ philosophy.

### **Consultee-centered consultation**

CCC is based in Caplan's (1970) mental health consultation model and is distinguished from other forms of consultation by its focus on addressing the consultee's behavior, attitudes, and feelings rather than those of the client/target child. There are four primary elements to CCC: (a) It places emphasis on a nonhierarchical relationship between the consultant and consultee; (b) the problem being addressed is a concern for the consultee who has a responsibility for the outcome of the client; (c) the consultant is primarily focused on helping the consultee consider multiple perspectives on the concerns, with the goal of the consultee reframing the problem; and (d) the goal is jointly developing a new way of understanding the problem and the consultee acquiring new skills so that the relationship between the consultee and client can be restored (Knotek & Sandoval, 2003). There is limited empirical research examining the effect of CCC on consultee and/or client change, but evidence suggests it is particularly helpful in facilitating consultee conceptual change (Hylander, 2012).

CCC may be particularly suited for the implementation of an RJ program because of its accordance with RJ philosophy, including CCC's focus on the relationship between the consultee and client(s), emphasis on having a nonhierarchical relationship between consultant and consultee, and facilitation of the consultee guiding the choice of outcome and approaches (Wilkinson, 2005). CCC may be especially helpful when a consultee is having difficulty agreeing with, understanding, or adopting the RJ philosophy and/or is struggling with regaining students' respect.

### **Group consultation**

CCC is commonly thought of in a one-on-one consultee–consultant format, but it can also be implemented in a group format (Sandoval, 2014). Group consultation may be particularly useful within a teacher PD model as there is emerging literature suggesting that consultant workshops and group work with consultees (i.e., teachers) may be effective methods for disseminating information on skills and problem-solving techniques (e.g., Truscott et al., 2012). Group consultation consists of a group of consultees (e.g., teachers) who are facilitated by a consultant (e.g., school psychologist). The distinguishing aspects of group consultation are its focus



on group members being emotionally supportive of one another, as well as helping consultees to support the client (e.g., student) and problem solve issues with clients (Hanko, 1985). The consultant oversees discussions by providing group direction and facilitation. During the process, teachers are encouraged to examine their personal theories and assumptions, the objectivity of their perspectives (Farouk, 2004), and the full range of biopsychosocial and systemic factors influencing their students' behavior (Hanko, 1985) and support each other in the problem-solving process. Case examples have provided anecdotal evidence of the utility of group consultation work with teachers (Farouk, 2004), though empirical methodology is still lacking.

Group consultation is suited to PD for RJ because of its focus on RJ values, such as fostering community through teachers interacting and problem solving together and inclusion, collaboration, and respect. Furthermore, RJ is not a concrete, manualized intervention, so collaboration is especially helpful for training and troubleshooting problems. A group consultation format may be particularly helpful when multiple teachers are experiencing similar difficulties as this method saves time in teaching/practicing skills and better facilitates collaborative problem solving.

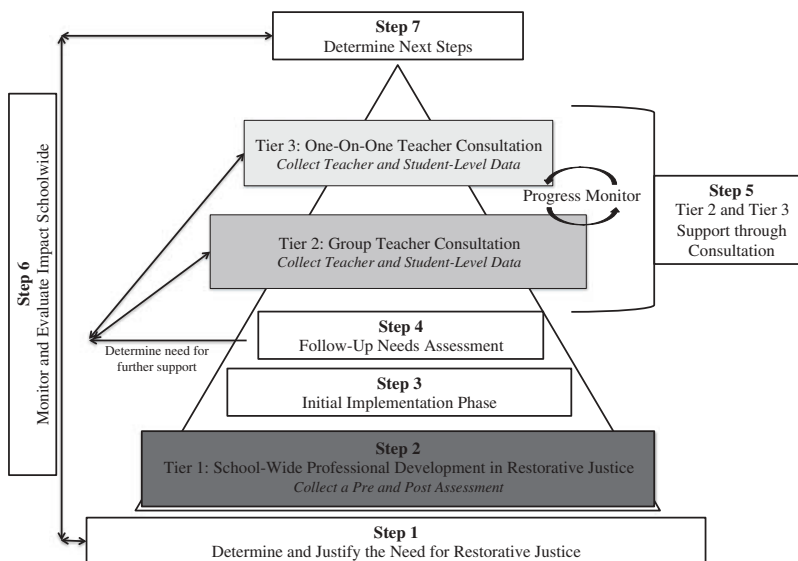
### **The proposed model: A tiered approach to teacher PD in RJ**

Through our review and synthesis of the research literature, we developed a tiered approach to teacher PD in RJ that incorporates aspects of previously developed implementation models (e.g., Bear, 2010; Wiseman et al., 2007) but is tailored for the unique needs of school-based RJ (depicted in Figure 1). Figure 1 includes both tiers of intervention (i.e., three tiers of teacher PD that become progressively more targeted) and steps of PD (i.e., the seven steps necessary to implement, monitor, and evaluate PD in RJ). Here we describe each step of the model, including the three tiers of intervention, along with a case example of how the step could be achieved at a hypothetical school, *RJ School*. We note that the examples merely provide one way a step was accomplished; our model must be tailored to the specific needs of an individual school but serves as a helpful framework for professionals (both consultants and educators) who are involved in school-based RJ implementation.

#### ***Step 1: Determine and justify the need for RJ***

The first step to implementing a new school discipline model is evaluating the need for change and using data to justify the new approach and persuade key stakeholders to engage in the process (Bear, 2010). Justifying the need to change the school model of discipline may be particularly important when adopting an RJ approach to discipline as school staff, parents, and





**FIGURE 1** Visual depiction of the model of teacher professional development in school-based restorative justice approaches.

community members may be resistant to a model that diverges so greatly from a traditional, retributive justice approach to responding to student misbehavior (Morrison & Vaandering, 2012). This justification will hold the most weight when data are used to support the need for a new approach and the school community has the opportunity to learn about and become invested in the tenets of RJ. At RJ School (RJS), data indicating high rates of suspensions and expulsions and racial disproportionality in discipline were the impetus for change. Once school administrators, teachers, families, and community members reviewed these data, they were motivated to try a new approach to discipline. The use of RJ, rather than other alternative approaches, was adopted because key administrators believed in the RJ philosophy. It may be necessary to educate the community about what RJ is and is not, present findings from other schools that have used an RJ approach, and work in collaboration to identify a method of implementing RJ that is accepted by the broader community. Data that may inform the initial needs assessment phase include the number of office disciplinary referrals (ODRs); rates of suspension, expulsion, truancy, school completion, and absenteeism (teacher and student); achievement scores; referrals to prereferral student success teams (SSTs) and special education; number of students receiving mental health services; and school climate (Bear, 2010). These all have the potential to serve as baseline data when evaluating the RJ program being implemented. However, their reliability must be taken into consideration. For example, office disciplinary referrals have been criticized

for being implemented inconsistently within and between schools (McIntosh, 2010). Only data that are objective and consistent over time should be used.

### ***Step 2: Tier 1 school-wide professional development***

Once school professionals have identified the need for a new RJ program, the first tier of PD—a school-wide training—should be implemented, informed by data gathered through the initial needs assessment. This training provides comprehensive instruction and practice to all teachers and staff in an efficient way. Evaluation of the success of the training, as well as baseline data for evaluation of implementation, should be conducted through the use of pretest and posttest assessments of staff knowledge, competence, and resistance to and/or investment in the RJ approach.

### ***Step 3: Initial implementation phase***

After the school-wide training has occurred and data have been gathered, the initial implementation phase of RJ can begin, starting with an infrastructure that provides guidance and support to program administrators (Bear, 2010). This infrastructure should include the involvement of leaders with advanced knowledge of RJ approaches who can serve as consultants in later stages of the training model.

At RJS, district administrators reached out to other districts around the country that had been implementing RJ approaches with success to learn about and get trained in their methods. From these discussions combined with data from the initial assessment phase, RJS administrators decided to pilot their RJ approach in the first year at a single junior high school that had the most administrative and staff support for changing discipline approaches. RJS planned to expand implementation throughout the district in waves once strategies were proven successful and staff became confident in their application. Over the summer, RJS sent district and pilot school administrators and key staff to a district with a history of successful RJ implementation to attend a comprehensive training. This included intensive training of a credentialed teacher so he could become the school-based RJ expert to assist teachers in implementing RJ approaches as needed. Subsequently, RJS paid experts to train all pilot schoolteachers in the approach over a two-day period before school started. Starting with the first day of school, the pilot school—with 62 teachers and staff responsible for approximately 1,200 students (50% European American, 40% Latino/a, 10% other)—implemented RJ as their approach to discipline. This whole-school approach included the following RJ practices: affective statements, restorative dialogue, proactive circles, restorative preconferring and conferencing, mediation, and reactive circles.

#### **Step 4: Needs assessment**

After an initial implementation phase, school data and surveys collected at baseline and while monitoring implementation can identify teachers who may benefit from group or one-on-one consultation. These data may identify teachers who (a) refer many students to the office, (b) refer a disproportionate number of ethnically diverse students, (c) self-identify as needing support using RJ, and/or (d) are identified through observations as needing additional support. By using multiple forms of data collection including fidelity checks, ODR reviews, and teacher feedback, the full range of teachers who may benefit from additional training can be identified. At RJS, the school psychologist obtained self-referrals from teachers after offering consultation services at a staff meeting and she identified teachers with exceptionally high levels of office referrals through office discipline records.

#### **Step 5: Tier 2 and Tier 3 support through consultation**

Even well-designed PD can fail to change teacher attitudes and behavior and student outcomes if follow-up support is not provided over time (Mihalic et al., 2004). Ongoing follow-up support is what helps transform knowledge gained from a school-wide PD training into applied skills in the actual classroom. This can occur through both group and individual CCC formats.

##### **Tier 2: Group teacher consultation**

For teachers with a moderate need for additional support, group CCC should be delivered by a school district employee with advanced training in CCC and RJ and enthusiasm for the technique. The process of group CCC will look similar to that of one-on-one CCC described in the next paragraph (Sandoval, 2014). However, within the group consultation format it will be necessary to address unique factors, including planning the size, composition, and length of sessions; determining whether sessions should be case or issue focused; and facilitating group member participation (see Sandoval, 2014 for more information on making these determinations). For example, group CCC might be offered during mandatory staff meetings to allow teachers to debrief their experiences, share challenges and successes, and brainstorm strategies for addressing problems as they arise. Such an approach can help to build community among teachers and promote the RJ philosophy throughout the school. At RJS, the school-based RJ expert implemented group CCC with identified groups of teachers and staff during the bimonthly faculty team meetings throughout the year. This allowed the teachers to problem solve, brainstorm solutions, implement ideas, and evaluate their success over time.

### ***Tier 3: One-on-one teacher consultation***

For teachers with more intensive needs, targeted one-on-one CCC should be implemented. CCC, and most other models of consultation, includes the following stages of implementation: (a) establishing relationships; (b) identifying the problem; (c) analyzing the problem; (d) implementing the plan; and (e) evaluating the plan (Kratochwill, 2008). Within CCC, these stages can be further broken down into an eight-step process model described in the following (Sandoval & Davis, 1984).

***Orientation, relationship building, and maintaining rapport.*** Numerous consultation models emphasize the importance of beginning all consultation with a focus on developing a positive relationship (Kratochwill, 2008; Sandoval, 2014). This aspect of the consultation process is especially important because consultants who are able to achieve this relationship are likely to experience less resistance and more success (Kratochwill, 2008). It is critical that the consultant express the nature of consultation as a cooperative partnership to the teacher(s), with a clear emphasis on both the consultant and consultee having important perspectives and potential solutions to the presenting problem (Crothers et al., 2008). Within CCC, the nonhierarchical nature of the consultant–consultee relationship is of primary importance; consultants should help consultees to understand their relationship with the consultant as a problem-solving process between two experts in different fields (Sandoval, 2014). Consultee anxieties and self-doubts, which may be common when adopting a new discipline approach such as RJ, should be attenuated through the consultant’s focus on empathic listening skills (Sandoval, 2014). The skills of active listening, respect for diverse opinions, and establishing an inclusive, collaborative process are similar to skills supported through RJ approaches. In this way, parallels between the consultation process and the skills of RJ can be modeled and acknowledged with the consultee.

***Problem exploration, definition, reframing.*** Research by Bergan and Tombari (1976) points to the problem identification stage as the most important in predicting outcomes of consultation. In this phase, the consultant and consultee engage in the process of defining the problem; accurate problem identification is critical to selecting the most appropriate intervention (Kratochwill, 2008). Within CCC, there should be a focus on exploring the problems comprehensively, without rushing to “solve” the problem prematurely (Sandoval, 2014). This may include analyzing (a) the client’s problem, (b) the history of the client’s problem, (c) the consultee’s explanations, (d) the consultee’s image of the client, (e) the consultee’s fantasy for the future, and (f) the consultee’s expectations of the consultant (Sandoval, 2014). The consultant will want to fully explore what has already been tried and how effective it has been. When implementing RJ, this may include

exploring other methods of discipline and interacting with the client that have been used previously, whether RJ approaches have been tried, how they were implemented, and what the result was. Through the gathering of this information, alternative explanations for the problem can be generated. The identification of the problem should include identifying the client's behavior that is problematic, explanations for why this is occurring, and the consultee's own abilities, knowledge, self-confidence, and objectivity (Sandoval, 2014).

***Gather data as needed.*** Once initial ideas of the problem have been identified, additional data may need to be collected to better understand these problems or address gaps in problem identification (Sandoval, 2014). This step may not be necessary if adequate information was gathered in the previous step of consultation, but such data generation is encouraged for evaluation purposes. Information should be collected on both the client and consultee, including background and cultural information on the client and systems-level factors that may be affecting the consultee (e.g., pressure from the principal to handle student behavior independently; Sandoval, 2014).

***Sharing information, hypothesis generation, and reframing.*** The data gathered through the previous step should then be shared with the consultee. This process should be mutual, however, with both the consultee and consultant sharing information they have gathered. Within a CCC model, it is critical to make sure the consultant does not assume an authority position; consultant involvement should be encouraged. Through the process of sharing and discussing new data and information, alternative hypotheses and problem identification can be generated (Sandoval, 2014). This is an appropriate time to engage in reframing the problem, with consultant and consultee working together to develop the most logical hypothesis for the problem identified, which will guide intervention decisions.

***Analyze systemic forces.*** A unique element of CCC, as compared to other consultation models, is the focus on understanding how other systemic factors (e.g., cultural, institutional) may be affecting the client and consultee. This phase may be especially important within a model of RJ implementation in schools as numerous cultural, societal, and school factors could be affecting the client, consultee, their acceptance or use of RJ, and its effect on behavior change. The consultant should explore what these factors may be and integrate an understanding of these systemic forces in intervention.

***Generate interventions.*** At this step, the consultee and consultant work together to brainstorm and develop interventions to address the identified problem, with a focus on identifying the roles and responsibilities of each person (Sandoval, 2014). There are several factors to consider when selecting the intervention that will best address the presenting problem—particularly

the acceptability of the intervention, which affects the degree to which the intervention is implemented (Reimers, Wacker, & Koepl, 1987). An RJ approach may not always be deemed most appropriate (e.g., a student has a mental health concern that requires counseling), but the process of determining how and when RJ should be used is an important part of the problem-solving process. Because this consultation process focuses on improving the use of RJ approaches, it is critical to understand how acceptable the consultee believes different RJ approaches are to implement. It may be necessary for the consultant to provide additional education and skill building in a particular intervention before the consultee will accept the intervention. It also is important to emphasize that the consultant is there to engage in a problem-solving approach and understands that the need for other services outside of RJ (e.g., counseling, community resources) can be identified through this process.

***Supporting experiments and interventions.*** The consultant should be actively engaged in supporting the consultee in carrying out the intervention. What this means will differ for each consultee but may include revisiting treatment acceptability, evaluating treatment integrity, and providing emotional support (Sandoval, 2014). In addition, further skill development may be needed and could include modeling, education, or the provision of additional resources. Ultimately, this implementation step is focused on treating the consultation as an experiment, aiming to evaluate how effective the strategies employed are in addressing the identified problems (Sandoval, 2014). As the consultee implements the plan, data should be collected and ongoing feedback and processing of the plan should occur between the consultant and consultee. For example, the consultant may conduct periodic observations of implementation; the consultee may collect data on implementation; and/or student data may be used as a measure of the plan's impact. Ultimately, data should be examined throughout the process so that modifications to the plan can be made as needed (Kratochwill, 2008; Sandoval, 2014).

***Follow-up and disengagement.*** At the end of the consultation process, it will be necessary to reflect on client and consultee progress, as well as plan for follow-up evaluation and potential changes in intervention overtime. Evaluation is a particularly important part of consultation within a model of RJ PD, as RJ has been criticized for the lack of rigorous empirical evidence of its effectiveness (Stubbs, 2007). The consultant–consultee pair should evaluate whether the goals were attained and the effectiveness of the plan; this information can be used to inform future efforts, as well as modify the existing plan, if needed. Efforts should be made to ensure that the consultee has the skills and/or resources to address additional problems as they arise in the future (Kratochwill, 2008) and is capable of extending what was learned

in consultation to other situations and students (Sandoval, 2014). If the consultee and/or client were unsuccessful in meeting intervention goals, then the process can begin again from the initial steps of CCC. This recursive process may be necessary as new client concerns arise or other systemic factors affect success. It is also possible that a productive consultee relationship cannot be built, in which case consultation should be terminated. The disengagement process should include encouragement and praise for the consultee's progress and discussion of how to receive follow-up support if/when it is needed (Sandoval, 2014).

At RJS, the school psychologist also offered to engage in classroom-based consultation to help teachers implement the approach if they were having difficulty. With one teacher who volunteered for individualized assistance, the school psychologist used CCC to problem solve ways the teacher could better implement RJ strategies. As part of the RJ evaluation, the school psychologist regularly queried the school database discipline records to determine the number of times students were sent to the office from the classroom by the teacher. By midsemester, the discipline referral rates of four teachers continued to stand out from the others. She approached each teacher with the data, but instead of identifying the problem as within the teacher, she expressed concern about the behavior of the students in the classroom and offered to help provide strategies for supporting these students. By adhering to the guidelines of CCC, the school psychologist helped teachers select proactive RJ approaches instead of exclusionary strategies. The individual consultations allowed the school psychologist to help the teachers find approaches that worked for the teachers' specific strengths and classroom dynamics.

### ***Step 6: Monitor and evaluate impact school wide***

Ongoing data should be collected not only on teachers engaged in consultation but also on the fidelity of implementation and impact of the program at the whole-school level. All of the data described in the initial needs assessment phase should be monitored overtime so that new needs can be addressed as they arise. Skiba et al. (2011) recommend that standardized discipline data be briefly analyzed and distributed to teachers and staff on a monthly basis to bring awareness to rates of ODRs, suspensions, and expulsions. In addition to school data, surveys administered during the initial needs assessment can be periodically readministered to understand what needs have been met and which still remain issues, informing successes and needed adjustments to the multitiered PD model. At RJS, the primary method of evaluation was to monitor ODR data, which was shared internally at staff meetings in order to reinforce efforts.



### **Step 7: Determine next steps**

Another key component of PD to support implementation of a new school-wide program such as RJ is the risk for teachers, staff, and administrators to lose interest and enthusiasm for the approach (Bear, 2010). Rather than only providing PD and evaluating the program in the first few years, it is critical that stakeholders continually evaluate how their implementation of RJ can be improved to achieve long-term goals (Bear, 2010). In this model of PD in RJ, continual data collection and conversations with teachers should be used to identify obstacles to implementation and elements that are and are not working. Consistent with the tenets of RJ, conversations on how to best address identified problems should be collaborative in nature, focusing on how the needs of all members of the school community can best be met through ongoing innovation.

### **Future directions**

We propose that a multitiered model of PD is an efficient method to promote successful implementation of school-based RJ. However, a great deal of further research is needed to understand how effective such a model is at promoting positive student outcomes. First, research on the effectiveness of teacher training programs that focus on discipline and RJ is needed, as well as understanding teachers' perceptions of their roles and responsibilities in RJ to determine how to best meet their training needs. Second, studies need to determine how well teachers can implement RJ strategies after school- or district-wide PD, what components of PD are successful, and whether additional supports are warranted. If additional supports are needed, then research should investigate the possibility of a multitiered model of PD to support the provision of RJ approaches. Third, studies need to evaluate different approaches to RJ consultation using experimental and quasi-experimental designs so the most effective methods for improving teacher competence to implement RJ approaches can be identified. Finally, the impact of rigorously implemented RJ approaches on school factors, including school climate and student engagement, needs to be examined, particularly regarding discipline disproportionality. Given the state of current evidence, schools should carefully monitor the immediate outcomes of an RJ approach and the teacher PD process to make sure it has the intended impact on teachers, students, school safety, and climate for all students and particularly those traditionally most negatively affected by discipline procedures (students who are male, have disabilities, or are of racial minority backgrounds).

Ultimately, our comprehensive review of the current literature on teacher PD, consultation, and RJ suggests that a multitiered approach to PD with a focus on using data to inform intervention may be a successful way to provide PD in RJ. There are numerous obstacles to implementing RJ programs in schools, including



the large time commitment, limited access to resources, and substantial staff effort (Kaveney & Drewery, 2011). Therefore, a tiered approach to PD may be a viable solution so that less intensive but equally successful strategies can be implemented for all teachers, leaving those who are successful at integrating the concepts in their teaching free to focus on other aspects of their job. For teachers who experience more obstacles implementing RJ, more intensive teacher support should be prioritized given how critical respectful student–teacher interactions and classroom management are to academic learning and behavioral engagement (Piwowar, Thiel, & Ophardt, 2013). School professionals who are implementing, or thinking about implementing, restorative approaches in their schools should consider designing a training based on our proposed tiered approach to PD in school-based RJ.

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**Note:** The authors report that, to the best of their knowledge, neither they nor their affiliated institutions have financial or personal relationships or affiliations that could influence or bias the opinions, decisions, or work presented in this article.