

December 2010
Newsletter

Volume 3, Issue 2

Inside this
issue:

New Film

Annual
Conference!

The
Restorative
Classroom

Behaviour File

Pupil
Referral Units

International
Partnerships

Developing
Partnerships
in the UK

Training
Trainers

National
Standards

Editorial

Season's Greeting to everyone we have met and worked with this past year, and to old friends and loyal supporters over the past few years. As we steam towards the end of the year in snow, wind and frost this seems like a good time to reflect on what has been a very exciting year for us, despite the shifting sands of a changing government and the impact of the cuts.

Belinda Hopkins

New Film

In the early months of this year Belinda Hopkins had the honour and pleasure of spending a day in each of 4 schools with cameraman Neil Crofts from [Resolution TV](#), as he filmed examples of restorative practice in each school, ready for our new film. Childshill Primary School in Barnet, Iffley Mead School in Oxford, Parkside School and Bishop Barrington School in County Durham (and later in the summer Deptford Green

school in Lewisham) were all so generous with their welcome and their time. We have some fantastic footage of excellent practice, as well as of staff and students talking about the impact the restorative approach has had in their schools. The film 'Restorative Approaches in Schools' will be on sale in the new year and gives an excellent introduction to restorative practice across a whole school. The film shows the importance of building sound foundations in every classroom,

illustrates day to day respectful conversations to maintain relationships and demonstrates the use of a variety of processes to put things right if they go wrong. The 20-minute film is just a taster and it is hoped that all the extra footage we have 'in the can' will help us develop more films to help with training. We also plan to develop useful website clips to help support people both new to restorative practice, but also those keen to refresh their skills.

We plan to have a splendid national launch of the film at next years' Annual Conference



Residential Training

Our ever popular entry level course on restorative approaches is next running at the Holiday Inn West Reading again at the end of January 2011 if you would like to join us please contact

Tracy Parsons

All participants will receive a copy of either Belinda Hopkins' classic text '**Just Schools**' or, for those working in the care sector, a copy of '**Just Care**'

Annual Conference

Our 2011 conference is taking place on March 18th in Birmingham at the Austen Centre – a venue that we hope will be as luxurious and fun as last year's fabulous hotel in York. Because of our awareness of reduced budgets in the current economic climate, conference organiser Zoe Charlesworth has decided to opt for a slightly shorter event this time. Those who want to travel down the night before will still be able to join us for a nice meal and a chance to catch-up, but the conference itself will be a single day event.

This conference is rapidly becoming the 'Home Conference' for all those in the field – people come not only to update their skills, gain new ideas and share best practice but also to catch up with old friends and make new ones.

The focus of the conference will be classroom practice in schools and day to day living in care settings. Every interaction with young people is an opportunity for an exchange of teaching and learning – we can learn from young people and vice versa – and we also have a role in teaching them pro-social behaviours, especially when there are challenges and conflicts. Behaviour management – the box that restorative approaches is sometimes put – cannot and should not be separated from how teachers teach in their classrooms, and care staff interact with their charges on a day to day basis. So this year's conference is all about **developing a restorative, social pedagogy**.



The conference theme is designed to tie in with

Belinda Hopkins' new book – The Restorative Classroom, published by Optimus Publishing

This book is still being written but with a deadline of the end of December (hmm – have I got time for Christmas!!) it should be out sometime in the Spring of next year. The book describes each of the elements of developing a truly relational and restorative environment in each classroom. No single element is new in itself and many teachers will recognise each of the elements. However it is the combination of every element that makes for a truly 'restorative' classroom where young people and the adults working with them learn to

- make meaningful and respectful relationships with themselves, each other and the curriculum;
- maintain these relationships through interactive, collaborative teaching and learning strategies and
- take responsibility for putting things right when they go wrong, in either academic or social situations, in an environment where there are high levels of support from fellow students and from staff.

The book will be highly practical and contain lots of constructive resources to photocopy and adapt. The book teases out in much more detail ideas that may first see the light of day in a chapter Belinda has contributed to

The Behaviour File, published by Optimus Publishing

This will provide teachers with a range of options for addressing behavioural challenges. Belinda has made the point that the restorative approach is much, much more than yet another strategy, and

hopes that the editors (Simon Ellis and Janet Tod) will reflect this in the way they use her contribution. It is significant that providers of teacher training (both the editors are academics with a strong track record in the

field of behaviour management and teacher training), have chosen to include restorative approaches in such a manual, which may become a key text for new and developing teachers.

Pupil Referral Units

Other exciting projects this past year have included Transforming Conflict's involvement in a pilot initiative in London as part of the London Back on Track project. We were fortunate to be chosen as the training providers and consultants to work with three Pupil Referral Units (in Camden, Brent and Sutton) to support them implementing a restorative approach into their day to day interactions with young people. The three units are very different and each has implemented the approach in different ways and at different paces. However all three are very satisfied with the training they have received from our lead trainers Caroline Newton and Paul Moran, and with the on-going support Caroline continues to offer.

One Unit has noticed a dramatic drop in exclusions since introducing the approach, much less staff absenteeism due to sickness, a rise in attendance and a huge rise in the use of awards recognising positive contributions in the classroom and around the unit.

We are learning a lot from the project and a report is being written with recommendations for PRU's London-wide in the new year.



International partnerships

This time last year Belinda Hopkins visited Helsinki to give a brief introduction to Finnish educationalists about our whole school restorative approach. She had been invited by Maija Gellin with whom Belinda has been gradually developing a warm and mutually respectful friendship and professional connection over several years. They first met at a European Forum for Restorative Justice conference. Maija and her team from the Finnish peer



mediation organisation Verso, have been introducing Peer mediation into Finnish schools around the country for several years, with great success, and are now keen to continue this work in the context of a whole – school restorative approach.

To this end, following the initial conference presentation and introductory workshops last year Belinda returned this summer to run a five-day summer school with Maija's team.

In idyllic surroundings, next to a lake in the forest, the group explored how to adapt the Transforming Conflict model for Finnish schools. This work continues and both organisations hope that their association will lead to exciting developments in both countries.



National Centre for Restorative Approaches in Youth Settings

Transforming Conflict

Mortimer Hill
Mortimer
Berkshire
RG7 3PW

E info@transformingconflict.org
W www.transformingconflict.org

T 0118 9331520

Developing partnerships in the UK

This year has seen Transforming Conflict enter into much longer relationships with various local authorities, as people recognise that implementation of a restorative approach in a school, a care setting and especially in a locality, takes a long time. Initial awareness raising, followed by some initial training for senior managers, is just the

beginning of a long journey. Project coordinators have become much more aware of the need for a strategy that involves on-going support and care of newly trained people, as well as attention to how policy changes need to be in place to support people in practice that may at first be counter-cultural. We are proud to be

associated with exciting initiatives in Stirling, County Durham, Leighton Buzzard, Norfolk, Oxfordshire and Cardiff as well as on-going work with various London boroughs. Over the course of next year research and evaluation in these areas will help us continue to make a strong case for the approach – important in these straitened times.



Training trainers

One way we are expanding the service we offer is to support the development of local training teams, by initially training local people in restorative approaches, supporting them as they gain experience and then extending their skills by training them as trainers. We are developing a licensing scheme so that we can continue to support these teams, ensure they maintain our own high standards and keep them up to date with all our new developments.

Closely linked to these developments are the national developments in accreditation and standards being led by the Restorative Justice Council.

National Standards and Accreditation

Over the next year the Restorative Justice Council is ensuring that the field of restorative practice is underpinned by a strong code of practice for training, and that there are practice standards to work to, and accreditation opportunities to validate what people are doing. The context of restorative work in schools and care settings differs from the criminal justice field but the skills and processes used in these settings must still be regulated by rigorous standards. Practitioners need standards to which to work, and need recognition when they have achieved these standards.

Transforming Conflict will be reviewing the training it offers to ensure that its main flagship courses cover the full spectrum of restorative practice are in accordance with the best Practice Guidelines and the National Occupational Standards. In order to keep our courses as practical, experiential and lively as possible we recognise we will need to also develop support materials specifically for education and care settings to cover the extensive knowledge base.

In addition we will also be ensuring that all our training team qualify in the first instance for associate membership of the new RJC register of practitioners but aspire to become full members in due course. These opportunities are linked to developments in opportunities for 'passporting' for experienced practitioners and to accreditation for those relatively new to the practice so this registration process will take time.

Postgraduate Certificate of Professional Study in Restorative Approaches from Cambridge University

Belinda Hopkins will be the tutor for the Postgraduate Certificate of Professional Study in Restorative Approaches for the Cambridge Institute of Education, during the spring and summer term of 2011.

For more information visit the Institute of Education website:

<http://www.educ.cam.ac.uk/ppd/courses/lent/a35.html>