

Restorative Practices

Peer Mediation

Reflection Sheet: Educator

Use the following to think about and/or discuss the video, "Peer Mediation."

- 1. Peer Mediation training guides teachers and other school staff members to bring Peer Mediation programs back to their schools. Peer Mediation trainer, Garfield Smith, says that this training can help teachers and other school staff to change the culture of their schools. How might Peer Mediation change the overall culture of your school? How would having a Peer Mediation program at your school impact the relationships among students? How might it affect the relationships among adults in the school? How might it affect the relationships between adults and students?

- 2. Garfield Smith tells his training group, "This is something different; this is peaceful resolution." How does peaceful resolution differ from traditional approaches to discipline in schools? How is Peer Mediation and this system of peaceful resolution similar or different from your experience when you were in school? What is the value of this unique approach?

3. One of the elements of Peer Mediation training is for peer mediators to consider the diverse cultural backgrounds of their classmates. Why is it important for peer mediators to be aware of their classmates' cultures? How is culture relevant to mediating disputes?

4. When discussing the peer mediator training, trainer Wendy Halm-Violette speaks specifically about acknowledging the prejudices that we bring to the table. As an example, she describes one problem caused by a common misperception of boys and girls: "We have to be really careful that we don't do that to boys, that all boys are guilty until proven innocent, and all girls are innocent until proven guilty; that's a double standard that we can't have." What are some other common prejudices that peer mediators should check within themselves and be on the lookout for among disputants?

5. Wendy Halm-Violette explains, "Peer Mediation is a program of respect. It's a program of decency, tolerance and kindness." Based on what you saw in the video, how does a Peer Mediation program in school help students to develop those key social characteristics: respect, decency, tolerance, and kindness?

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Action Plan: Educator

Consider the following to begin the process of implementing elements of the Peer Mediation program in your own classroom.

- 1. With disciplinary or restorative justice programs already exist at your school? Are there elements of the Peer Mediation program that were described in the video that are already happening in your school? If so, what are they?

- 2. What is one new idea that you took away from the video about how to peacefully resolve conflicts among students? Can you implement that strategy in your classroom?

- 3. What barriers might exist that would prohibit your school from creating a Peer Mediation program? How might those barriers be overcome?

- 4. How might students at your school be chosen to become peer mediators? Are there students that you can think of who would thrive in that role?

- 5. Who do you think are some of the key players among your school staff that should get trained in how to create a Peer Mediation program at your school? How might those who do receive Peer Mediation training disseminate the information they acquire?
