



Library Restorative Practices for Youth 2018 Top Innovator – Race and Social Equity category

“The Library Restorative Practices for Youth program is key to helping young adults learn accountability and responsibility. It’s a great tool for addressing behavioral issues while not invoking punishment and taking away a safe and supportive space they need to thrive.”

— Amber Mathewson, Library Director

“We want our youth to know that this is a safe place, but also a place where you need to be respectful of each other. [We can] encourage youth to grow not just in their knowledge but also their behavior.”

—Mary Sanchez, Library Manager, Eckstrom-Columbus Library

“We treat the kids with respect and engage in dialog rather than punishment. We tell them, ‘We consider you part of this community and we want to keep you in the community.’”

—Manuel Abril, LRPY Board Member

“A LRPY worksheet might say, ‘Who shows you respect and what do they do to show respect?’... or ‘What does my face look like when I’m mad,’ and we’ll draw a face.”

—Sofia Blue, LRPY Board Member

Part 1: What are Restorative Practices?

The fundamental premise of restorative practices is that people are happier, more cooperative and productive, and more likely to make positive changes when those in positions of authority do things *with* them, rather than *to* them or *for* them.

In practice, there are informal and formal processes that address wrongdoing in such a way as to build relationships and a sense of community. In addition, restorative practices can be viewed as a way to build social capital and achieve social discipline through participatory learning and decision-making that precede wrongdoing. (Summarized from Wachtel, *Defining Restorative*, 2013)

Here in Tucson and Southern Arizona there are several programs that fall under the Restorative Practices umbrella: Community Mediation, [Community Justice Boards](#), [Nonviolence Legacy Project](#), [Community Dialogue Forums](#), Bridge Ministries and Peace Circles. These programs are representative of both addressing wrongdoing after it happens and developing social capital as a way to prevent wrongdoing.

Traditional Methods	Restorative Approach
Library Code of Conduct is broken	People and relationships are harmed
Justice focuses on establishing guilt	Justice identifies needs and responsibilities
Accountability = Punishment	Accountability = understanding impact and repairing harm
Justice directed at offender - Victim is ignored	Offender, victim and library all have direct roles in the justice system
Rules and intent outweigh positive or negative outcome	Offender is responsible for harmful behavior, repairing harm, and working towards positive outcomes
Limited ability to show remorse or make amends	Opportunity given to make amends and express remorse

Part 2: History

Motivation behind the Library Restorative Practices for Youth pilot program

A newly-hired library services manager coming from using Restorative Justice within the public school setting recognized a need to address library youth suspensions and, at the same time, a manager and assistant manager at libraries with high youth incidents voiced similar concerns. A team was formed to explore a program to mitigate the problem.

Pima County Public Library's Code of Conduct

The program is closely tied to the [Code of Conduct](#) in that it led us to how we respond as an institution to youth who violate the Code in the Library. We have modified the guidelines staff use to be more in line with developmentally appropriate responses to children and teens. Additionally, we have given staff permission to respond creatively to youth, and work to make sure that suspension is a last resort.

Essentially, the Code of Conduct and this program work in tandem. While we have not changed any of the rules at the Library, we have shortened suspension periods for youth and have provided logical alternatives, such as removal from the computer area or a Library program, and not removal from the Library.

Steps taken to pilot project

1. The project initiators sought and received approval from Karyn Prechtel-Altman, Deputy Director of Public Services, to form a team.
2. We created the Library Restorative Practices for Youth (LRPY) team consisting of seven staff members and three community board members, led by Mary Sanchez and Em Lane.
3. At the Deputy Director's request, we wrote a proposal and presented it to the Library's Executive Team for approval. The proposal demonstrated a need for a program to address youth behavior and highlighted research on the success of restorative justice in other contexts.
4. Once permission was obtained from Executive Team, we consulted the Pima County attorney regarding suggested amendments to the existing Code of Conduct.
5. We then presented the program idea to the Library Advisory Board and the Library's Public Services managers to garner support for the project.
6. Staff of Eckstrom-Columbus Library, where the program was piloted, were trained in Restorative Practices by the Center for Community Dialog and the LRPY team.

Additional steps included collecting and sharing recent suspension data, which showed high numbers of youth suspensions and led to the rethinking of the Library's approach to behavioral issues among young adult customers.

Part 3: Engaging partners

Restorative practices research

Because we are not experts in restorative practices, our first step was to reach out to community leaders who work in this area.

We consulted with Brandy Finley at the Pima County Community Justice Board whose program for first-time youth offenders in the juvenile justice system served as a model for our Eckstrom-Columbus Library Program. We also worked closely with Catherine Tornbom from The Center for Community Dialog. She has trained staff in active listening, de-escalation, and restorative practice. Both have been members of our working team and provided priceless community insight and perspective.

We also read published studies about restorative practices effects on communities, connected with other library systems doing this work, and learned about school systems putting this process into place.

Collaboration with the community

This program relies heavily on collaboration with community. In fact, we believe our success is due largely to the fact that the board model takes the library out of its traditional role of determining “punishment” for youth offenses.

The Board, made up of community members, works to create a positive connection with youth where they are given the opportunity to have their voice heard and hopefully learn different coping mechanisms in order to make better choices in the library.

The key to our success is our collaboration with community members who have a vested interest in youth success and an ability to empathize with them in order to co-create alternatives to suspension.

LRPY Board

The Library manager and the LRPY team select Board Members. They are members of the community who work with youth, have a connection to the neighborhoods served by the library, and represent the diversity of the community. Branch managers sought people who have experience with the principles of restorative approaches.

The Board meets twice a month for 2 hours with young library customers who are facing suspensions. They are given tools and worksheets provided by the LRPY team, but they are welcome to brainstorm together and work with the child or teen to explore ways they can avoid that behavior in the future.

Part 4: Pilot program results

The pilot started in August 2017. Youth were referred to the LRPY Board at Eckstrom-Columbus Library during the pilot year.

The program has been very successful and has helped us build better relationships with the youth in our community. The majority of youth that have attended LRPY have shown improved behavior and better attitudes towards Library staff and other customers. Library staff interact with youth in a more positive way and are now more thoughtful in how they talk to youth and respond to incidents.

2017 Youth incidents and suspension statistics

Dates	Incidents	Suspensions	LRPY referrals	LRPY participation
Jan–July 2017	32	18	-	-
Aug–Dec 2017	40	5	22	18
TOTALS	72	23	22	18

In total, suspensions **dropped by 75%** within six months of launching the program at Eckstrom-Columbus Library.

Types of infractions

- Disruptive behavior, including running and horseplay, loud talking and yelling, fighting or threatening behavior, inappropriate and disrespectful language, not listening to staff and guard requests to stop inappropriate behavior
- Computer issues, including trying to get extra time, using more than one pass or library card, turning off other people's computers, eating at computers, grouping together
- Property issues, including theft or damaging property that belongs to the Library or other people

Anecdotal information

One LRPY participant told board members that he was once suspended for a month from the Library and it was the worst month of his life.

During sessions, the LRPY Board finds out a lot about the challenges youth are facing. In one case, they met a participant who struggled with reading and they were able to refer him to the Library's ReadStrong program.

Another participant told board members that he had a lot of anger issues and they helped him think of several things he could do whenever he felt mad instead of acting out, such as counting to 10, taking a deep breath or just getting up to walk around.

One of our most successful LRPY referrals involved a youth that attended three different times. There were many behavioral issues involved, including getting into fights, loud talking and yelling, being rude to staff, and bypassing the computer system. During one of the sessions, we asked his older sister to attend, and she brought their mother and was able to translate to the mother during the session. The youth was so much more attentive and seemed to respect what his mother and sister had to say. We think having them come to the session with him made a big impact. Afterwards, both his attitude and behavior dramatically improved.

Part 5: The future of LRPY at Pima County Public Library

Next steps

The team is offering a continuum of restorative approaches to library managers and staff who are interested in implementing the program at their branches.

We are systematically trying to educate as many staff as are interested in starting to change the culture at their libraries, namely how they deal with youth in general, through focused meetings and trainings.

We will work with one library at a time when the choice is to launch the program because we want to make sure they are getting the training needed to be successful and receiving assistance identifying potential board members representative of the community. In addition, we will work with that Library to develop a tracking system.

Improving the program

We have broadened our LRPY team to include racially diverse members from the community as well as from within the Library system. We are actively recruiting LRPY board members from community organizations that work with youth. These individuals are knowledgeable about young adult developmental milestones and can receive pay from their agencies to serve on our boards, which contributes to retention.

We are also reaching out to high schools that incorporate restorative justice into their curriculum to recruit youth members in addition to our Library pages, who are paid as youth members. Ideally, we would like to identify alternate board members so that we can offer youth the option of meeting with a board of mentors weekly rather than biweekly.

Every guard at a library involved with this model receives the training along with staff.

We are committed to keeping flexibility within the program so that it can truly meet the needs of the specific community that a particular library serves.

Hopes for the future

We would love for LRPY to become a customer service model for the Pima County Public Library system so that its principles extend to all members of the community, not just youth. We would like to create LRPY ambassadors—young people who have had a positive experience with the program and decide to contribute by serving as youth members to help their peers. It is also our hope that youth will choose to meet with the board not just as an alternative to suspension, but as an opportunity to work on life skills and receive mentoring.

Part 6: Additional Information

Resource list

[Conflict as Opportunity](#): Library Restorative Practices for Youth, LRPY Team Members for PLA 2018

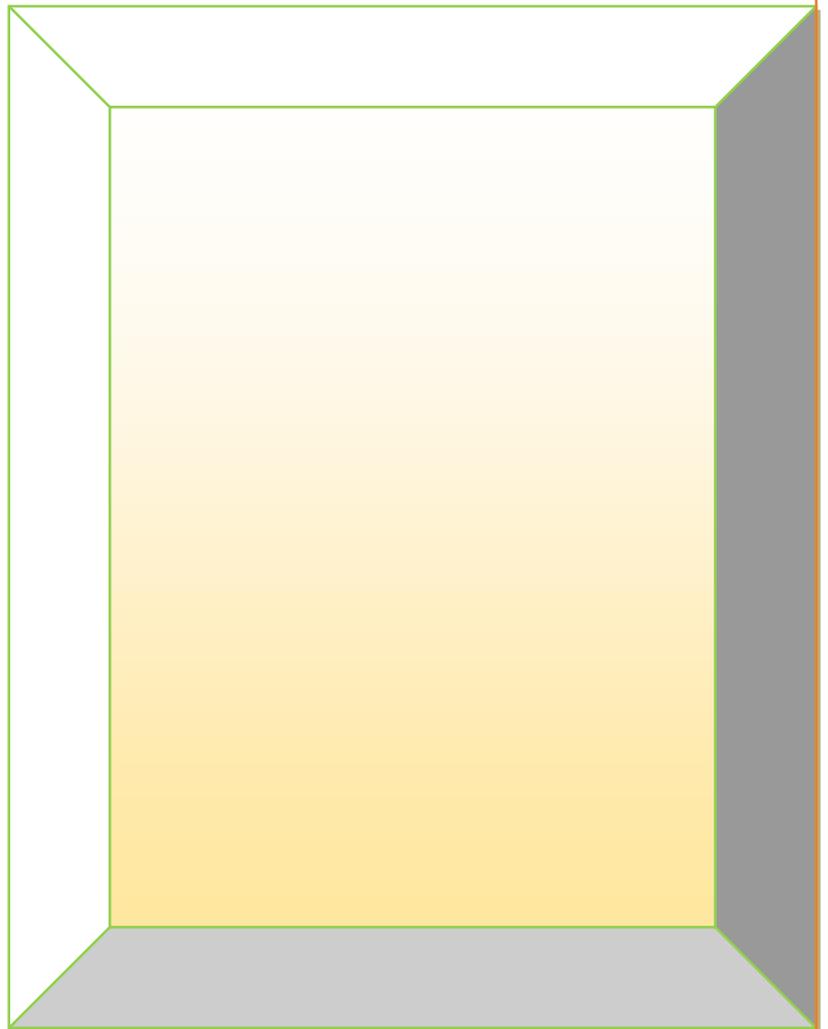
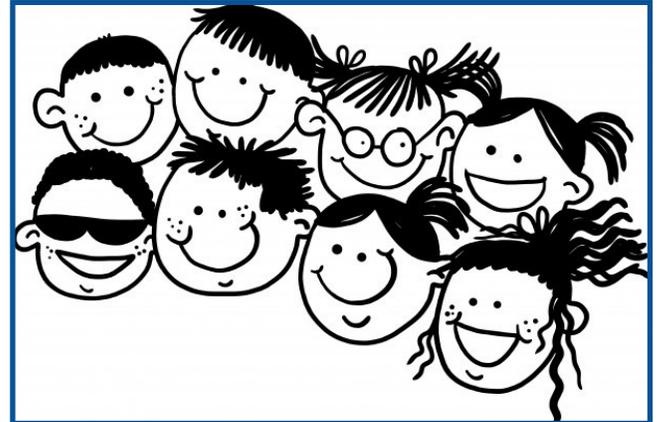
- [Community Justice Boards](#), Pima County Attorney's Office
- [International Institute for Restorative Practices](#)
- [LGBTQ Youth of Color: Discipline Disparities, School Push-Out, and the School-to-Prison Pipeline](#) (published by the [GSA Network](#) and the [Crossroads Collaborative](#))
- [Restorative School Practices Resources](#) (PDF) published by the University of Maine's Peace & Reconciliation Studies
- [Undoing Harm: Applying restorative justice approaches to teen behavior in the library](#) (American Libraries Magazine)
- [The 5 universal truths of human interaction](#), PoliceOne.com
- LRPY samples:
 - How does the world see me?
 - If I were in charge
 - Picture project
 - Anger map
 - Apology letter

Questions? Contact: library.news@pima.gov

How does the world see me?

Choose words or phrases from the blue box that you think other people would use to describe you, and write them in the yellow mirror. Add your own words if you don't see them.

Funny	Healthy
Messy	Athletic
Loud	Bad-tempered
Talkative	Lonely
Troublemaker	Kind
Bossy	Fair
Sad	Worrier
Quiet	Caring
Fun	Leader
Shy	Creative
Problem-solver	Generous
Helpful	Lazy
Adventuresome	Reliable
Confident	Cheerful
Cautious	Brave



Read the descriptions you put in the mirror.

Circle the ones you like in blue.

Circle the things you would like to change in red.

What would it be like to be friends with someone like you?



If I were in charge

Name _____

Imagine that you are in charge of the library, and are responsible for making all final decisions about the behavioral problems and consequences at your library. Describe why breaking each rule is a problem and what you think fair consequence would be for each of the problem behaviors. Discuss your responses with members of your Library Restorative Practices for Youth, (LRPY) board. Use back of sheet if needed.

Problem	How it impacts the library community	Suggested Consequences
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1. Stealing



2. Harassment of people



3. Vandalism



4. Fighting/
roughhousing



5. Weapons in the library



6. Profanity/disrespect
of others



7. Abuse of computer
privileges



Picture Project

Take pictures with a phone/camera or clips from a magazine, that represent each of these 10 words for you. Gather and organize the images into a collage. Be creative and have fun!



What does kindness look like?



What are your wishes or dreams?



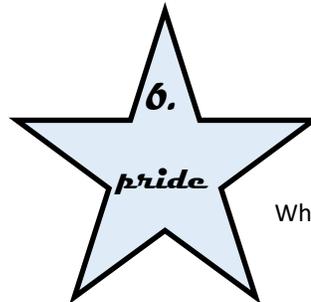
What do you find beautiful?



What inspires you?



What are you grateful for?



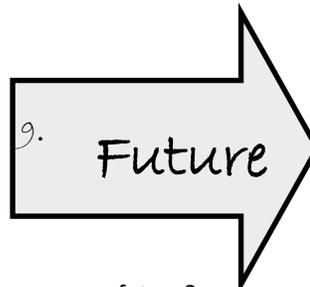
What makes you proud?



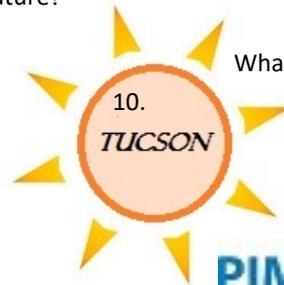
What/who do you care about most?



What makes you , you?



How do you see your future?

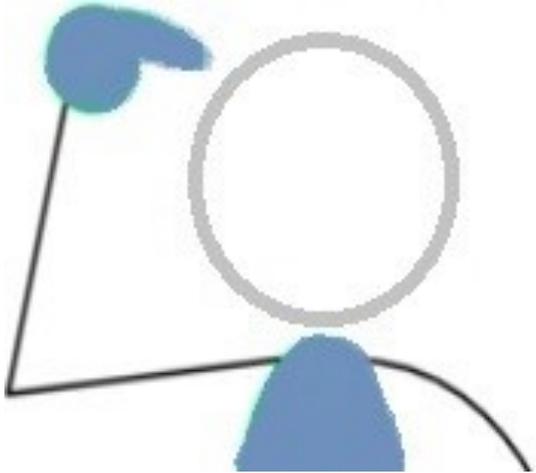


What about Tucson is special to you?

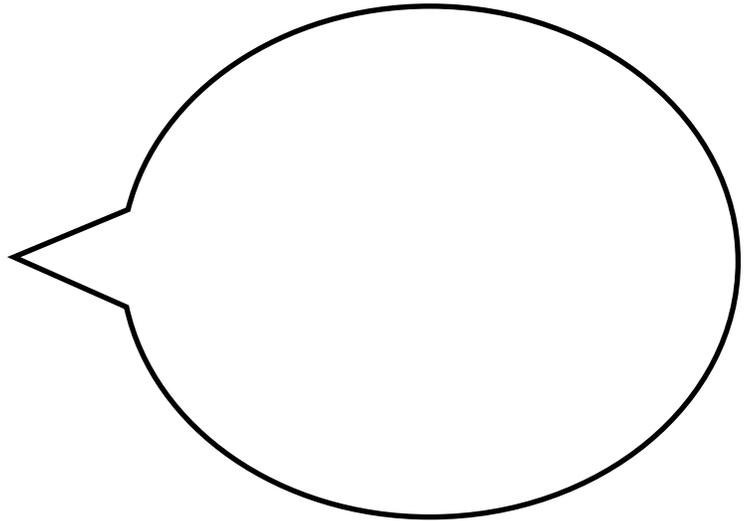
Name

Anger Map

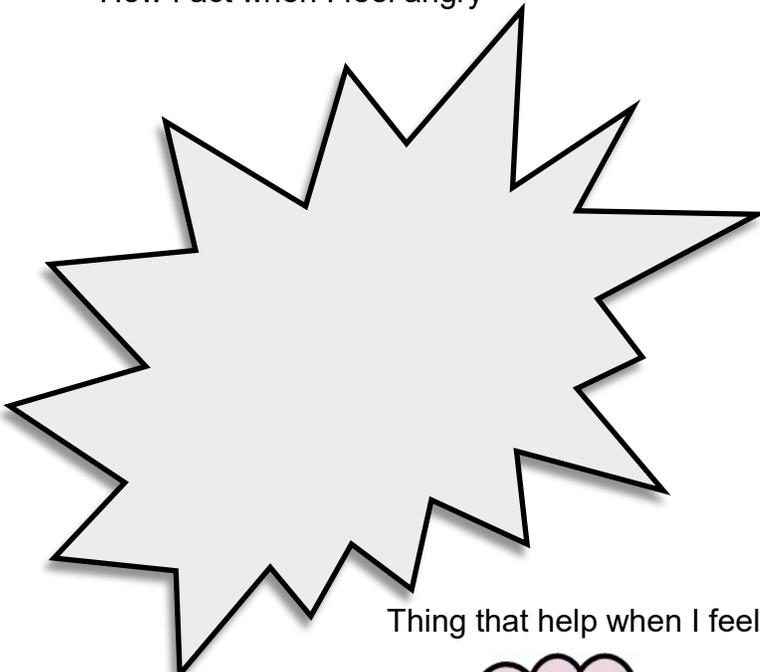
My face when I feel angry



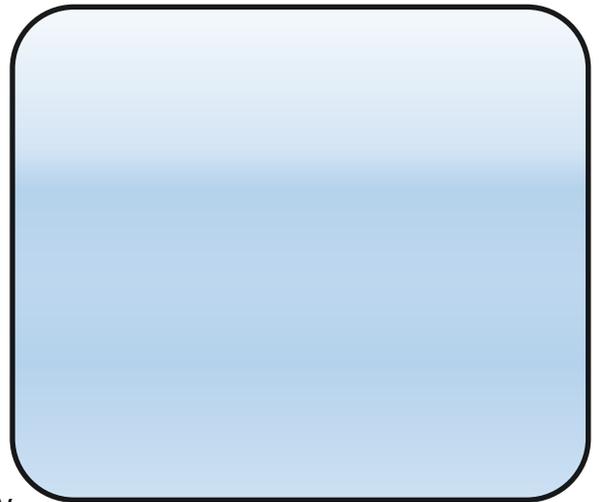
Things I say when I feel angry



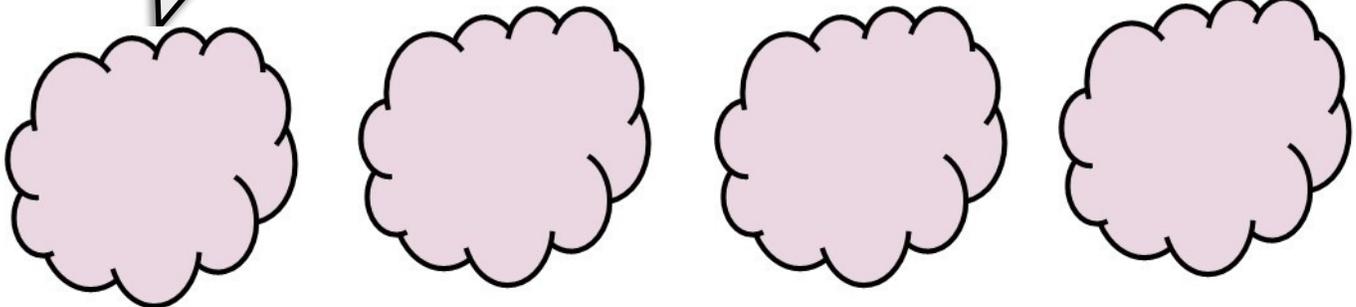
How I act when I feel angry



Better ways that I could handle my angry feelings



Things that help when I feel angry



LRPY

Helpful Hints for writing an apology letter.

1. **Reason for writing** – Make a statement about your concern for how your behavior/action affected others feelings. For example:
I am writing to you because I am feeling _____ about how I treated you .
I am writing to you because I am feeling _____ about you and _____ about what I have put you through.
I am writing to you because I am feeling _____ about the way my behavior impacted you by _____.
2. **Statement of apology** – Give clear and specific details of the offence and harm caused. For example:
I am very sorry for _____
I want to apologize for _____
3. **Statement of responsibility** – Make a statement about who is responsible for what happened. For example:
 - a. I know I am fully responsible for what happened and my actions that day. I should not have _____ because _____.
 - b. I know _____ (co-offenders names if appropriate) and I are responsible for what happened that day. I know I am accountable for my actions and the choices I mad that day. We should not have _____ because _____.
4. **Understanding of impact to others** – Write about what you have learnt about how the offence has impacted people. For example:
 - a. I am starting to realize some of what I have put you through. I must have been _____ when _____