

# Restoring our children: Why a restorative approach is needed to discipline South African children

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*Behavioural problems are commonly experienced in schools. This contributes to poor academic results and general disciplinary problems, among other things. It is argued that punitive disciplinary methods are aggravating unacceptable behaviours. This paper presents information about the use of punishment, how children react to these measures, and reasons why they react in the way they do. The Circle of Courage philosophy is linked to restorative practices as a response to disciplinary problems. By presenting this, the author contributes to the debate on approaches to discipline and aims to show that, since so many children are troubled, they need to be disciplined in a psychologically healthier way. High levels of caring and control could significantly reduce disciplinary problems in schools.*

**Keywords:** Restorative practices; discipline, punishment, school violence, shaming, school disengagement, Circle of Courage.

## Introduction

Children's social environment, diversity, the human rights culture, poorly qualified teachers, unprofessional conduct by teachers and the climate of the school and the classroom are some of the most common factors that contribute to school-based violence and other forms of misconduct (Van der Walt & Oosthuizen, 2008: 379-380; Barnes, Brynard & De Wet, 2012: 69). Some disciplinary practices that are used to manage these behaviours are exacerbating poor behaviour, further increasing the spiralling social and economic problems in communities.

Socio-economic problems at home and in the school environment are also contributing to the fact that millions of South African children are performing poorly

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in school, presenting with behavioural problems, and even dropping out of the school system. Children from all walks of life are living in broken families where, in 2011, only 34.8% of children lived with both their parents and 23% lived with neither parents. Orphans – children without a living biological father, mother or both parents (3.85 million) – and child-headed households (82 000) are on the increase (Statistics South Africa [SSA], 2013: ii, SSA, 2012; Berry, Biersteker, Dawes, Lake & Smith, 2013: 88). High levels of absent fathers lead to problems such as emotional disturbances and depression in children (Holborn & Eddy, 2011: 4-5). Furthermore, poverty levels are high in many communities. In 2011 approximately 64.5% of children lived in households that had a per capita income of less than R765 per month. It is estimated that 32.4% of children lived in households where there were no employed members (SSA, 2013: ii–iii). This shows that many children in South Africa experience high levels of poverty. Some of the foremost consequences of poverty include inferior education, malnourishment, criminal activities and a lack of psychological well-being (Bezuidenhout, 2004: 186-188).

Disciplinary problems could be experienced because many children have the perception that education is useless; they do not perform at school and experience exam failure. Generally speaking, they lack hope and a vision for their future. Adding to this are in-school factors such as a lack of care and support by teachers and poor stimulation which lead to the youth's disengaging from the school. Bullying, and the way that learners are treated in the disciplinary process, as well as school violence are also contributing factors (Burton & Leoschut, 2013: xii, Berry *et al.*, 2013: 101; Masitsa, 2006: 177-178; Mngambi, 2012: 8).

Difficulties with general discipline are experienced in most if not all schools (Wolhuter & Van Staden, 2008: 393). Currently, there are not any national surveys available that can provide the full extent of disciplinary problems in schools. However, the studies that have been completed do indicate certain trends showing that the main problems experienced include school-based violence in the form of violent crimes such as murder, attempted murder and assault, corporal punishment, rape, statutory rape and sexual assault and robbery. Other forms of school-based violence include bullying, gang activities, verbal aggression, crimes related to property and drug and alcohol abuse. Other types of misconduct that are reported are learners arriving or becoming intoxicated at school, ordinary class disruptions, rudeness, teasing of other children, a lack of commitment to school work, late coming and teenage pregnancies (De Wet, 2003: 113-121; Prinsloo, 2008: 27; Reyneke, 2013: 52-66). This shows that schools are not always safe environments where children can learn and prosper.

The most prominent disciplinary methods being used to discipline learners are the retributive approach that includes methods such as additional school work, withdrawal of privileges, menial tasks, detention, humiliation, behavioural management contracts and, although illegal, sometimes corporal punishment (Oosthuizen, Wolhuter & Du Toit, 2003: 469-475; Wolhuter & Van Staden, 2008:

395-396; Reyneke, 2013: 427, 430-431). Since problems in schools seem to increase, it can be said that this approach is not that effective. Wolhuter and Van Staden (2008: 390) hold the opinion that reactive methods to discipline dominate and that more preventative methods should be utilised to address discipline problems.

In this article the need for an approach to discipline which takes the personal circumstances and needs of children into account will be discussed. The paper will explain how troubled children could be managed through the application of a restorative disciplinary approach. I will argue that, contrary to common belief, a punitive approach to discipline is not what is needed in the present day. Punishing children for misbehaviour is not the best way to teach them to be responsible. It will be explained that a punitive approach is actually aggravating disciplinary problems. I will further reason that a restorative approach to discipline is a more educational and psychologically healthier way to discipline youth and that it could significantly reduce disciplinary problems in schools.

I will start the discussion by explaining the concept of discipline, followed by the use of punishment in educational settings. Then a discussion on how children respond to punishment will follow. It will be indicated that the use of punishment is counterproductive and I will explain how misbehaviour could be deconstructed by using the Circle of Courage philosophy. Subsequently, I will explain how the restorative approach could change the climate and the culture of a school.

## **The concept 'discipline'**

The original concept of discipline, whereby the adult provides guidance through teaching the child social responsibility and self-control and the child as the "young disciple" follows, became distorted over time to the point where many dictionaries include punishment as a synonym for discipline (Brendtro, Brokenleg & Van Bockern, 2002: 109; Wehmeier, 2002: 330). According to Oosthuizen, Roux and Van der Walt (2003: 374), some dictionaries describe the discipline concept as:

*order, orderliness, ordered behaviour, control, self-control, to restrain, punishment, chastisement, to train oneself in obedience, obedience to rules, set rules of conduct, teaching, training resulting in ordered behaviour, improved behaviour due to training, training in obedience, a subject of instruction, and a branch of learning or instruction.*

Just by examining these concepts, it is clear that discipline is a broad term used for different notions. From this it seems that there are broadly five categories, namely order and control, obedience, teaching, behaviour modification, and punishment. What is interesting to note is that punishment seems to be only a small part of what is generally understood by this term.

Reyneke (2013: 47) argues that the discipline concept has the dimensions of control and order at its essence while aiming to create an environment that is conducive to teaching and learning, but that it should also focus on the holistic development

of the child. It should develop the child's self-discipline and contribute to making him/her a responsible citizen. Punishment is seen as an acceptable part of discipline, but it should be the last resort and used in a trusting relationship. It is necessary to emphasise the fact that, to discipline a child, is not *per se* to punish the child as so many adults would like to think. When 'punishment' does take place, it should be a natural consequence of the bad behaviour. This means that the consequences of bad behaviour should be logical (Brendtro *et al.*, 2002: 110). To give detention for a child who damaged property, is not necessarily going to teach him to respect the property of others. If the child has to fix what was damaged and experience working to get the necessary money to pay for the repairs, it is much more logical and it also teaches that bad behaviour has consequences. Illogical punishment will only fuel the anger of troubled youth and make them more uncontrollable (Brendtro *et al.*, 2002: 110). Discipline techniques should thus contribute to the personal development of children. They need to be supported into becoming socially responsible citizens of their schools and their communities.

### **Punishment in educational settings**

At-risk children will bring all the social ills they are exposed to in their communities into the classroom. Since punishment is toxic to children who have experienced rejection and abuse, this could lead to disciplinary problems, causing teachers to feel helpless and, in many instances, overwhelmed (Brendtro, Ness & Mitchell, 2005: 32 & 49). The school's response to these problems is mostly punitive in nature. This creates a climate of fear and, according to Kohn (2000:97), leads to anger and resentment. Teachers are thus unknowingly contributing to the anger that they experience from learners.

Redekop (2008: par. 61) poses that the practice of punishment could not be justified on moral, religious or utilitarian grounds. In analysing this practice he also concludes that punishment does more harm than good. Many teachers who experienced punishment as children are more likely to justify the use of corporal punishment (Shaukat, 2013). They will use what Redekop (2008: par. 76) argues as the 'moral' argument in that punishment should be used for poor behaviour since it is deserved and it will restore the imbalance that was caused by the offence.

Unfortunately, when it comes to troubled youth, punishment only suppresses negative behaviour temporarily, but does not necessarily change it in the long run (Redekop, 2008: par. 1799). Punishment also has a compounding effect in children who are dealing with high stress levels and trauma (Thorsborne & Blood, 2013: par. 366). Punishment will add to their stress and will contribute to their feelings of anger and rage. Brendtro *et al.* (2005: 32) are of the opinion that it can also contaminate relationships. If there is a break in the relationship with the adult it can elicit avoidance and escape behaviour. This could lead to learners' not making contact with adults who could teach them appropriate behaviours (Brendtro *et al.*, 2005: 80). Besides that, a punitive response creates fear and mistrust of certain adults, it does not teach

appropriate life skills such as assertiveness, negotiation and problem solving, and the inner locus of control is not developed (Nelsen, Escobar, Ortolano, Duffy & Owen-Sohocki, 2001: par. 304). Furthermore, it does not eliminate the negative attention that children receive when being punished, the child still receives a 'payoff,' even though it could be negative. Lastly, punishment teaches aggression, not just is the act of some forms of punishment physically and emotionally violent, but also the reaction of the child could be to attack the punisher or someone else as retribution for being punished (Maag, 1996: 8-12).

Children who experience difficult personal circumstances often experience emotional disturbance and outward social maladjustment. They display problems such as depression, defiance, delinquency, school failure, substance abuse, premature sexual activity, rule breaking and risk-taking behaviour, to name but a few (Brendtro & Larsen, 2006: 23). It can be concluded that they are in pain (because of their circumstances at home or at school) and they react to these circumstances with pain-based behaviour. When they are then punished with harsh discipline techniques, it is all about returning hostility with hostility (Brendtro & Larson, 2006: 12). Their reactions could be highly unpredictable since one does not know how troubled youth might react. It could lead to their becoming even more rebellious and aggressive, sneaky, and experiencing impeded cognitive development, antisocial behaviour or self-blame (Redekop, 2008: par. 103, Brendtro & Larsen, 2006: 26-27).

Looking at punishment from a resilience perspective, it is also not the best way of dealing with troubled children because it does not create a caring climate (Bernard, 2004: 70). Brendtro *et al.*, (2005: 86-87) refer to a need for a positive approach to youth development which ensures an environment that provides connections, continuity, dignity and opportunity. It is submitted by these authors that teachers who punish children will experience difficulty in connecting with them. Punishment could further accentuate patterns of failure and broken relationships, continuing negative pathways that disrupt positive youth development (Redekop, 2008: par. 1637).

There is no dignity in being punished, especially in front of the peer group – it is humiliating (Redekop, 2008: par. 1240). This further diminishes the self-worth of the wrongdoer and proliferate a climate of disrespect. Dignity is nurtured only in environments that teach respect. Even though adults try to teach children to be respectful when punishing them, it only communicates disrespect to them. Teaching self-discipline will require time, patience and, above all, respect (Armstutz & Mullet, 2005: 10), something a punitive approach is lacking.

### **Children's response to punitive disciplinary practices**

For generations we have been using punishment to manage behaviour. The main focus of this approach is to determine what rule was broken, who is to blame, and what the punishment is going to be (Jansen & Matla, 2011: 85). This is a tough

adversarial process that could create a great deal of negative emotions and feelings with all the parties involved. The practices used to punish are known to teachers. What is probably unknown and needs to be considered is that punishment leads to shaming, and that shaming leads to negative behaviour.

A person does not need to do something wrong to experience shame, the individual just needs to experience something that interrupts his/her positive affects (Nathanson, 2003: 42; Wachtel, 2013: 5). When this connection is being interrupted by hurtful or disrespectful behaviour, it leads to a sequence of negative thoughts, feelings and behaviour such as violence and poor academic performance (Brendtro *et al.*, 2005: 14; Costello, Wachtel & Wachtel, 2009: par. 158). This means that a child who did not do anything wrong could potentially experience feelings of shame since the experience of another's shame could trigger own feelings of inadequacy or shame. Behaviour that disrupts a relationship with another person is also a common trigger to the shame affect (Hansberry, 2009: 35). Other experiences that triggers the shame affect include (Nathanson, 2003: 5):

- Matters of personal size, strength, ability, and skill. This can relate to feelings of incompetency, weakness and cognitive inability, e.g. not being able to perform well in school.
- Dependence and independence, e.g. feeling helplessness because of socio-economic circumstances.
- Competition, e.g. feeling good when you are a winner but shameful when a loser.
- Sense of self, e.g. a negative self-concept could lead to bully behaviour.
- Personal attractiveness, e.g. feeling ugly or deformed, bullies tend to use this type of shaming.
- Sexuality, e.g. feeling that there is sexually something wrong with him/her.
- Issues of seeing and being seen, e.g. poverty could lead to the urge to escape from the eyes before which we were exposed.
- Wishes and fears about closeness, e.g. feeling unlovable and the wish to be left alone.

When a person experiences any of the above-mentioned, it will trigger shame; conversely, success will lead to experiences of pride. These matters are significant for the teacher seeing that traditional punitive approaches tend to trigger some of these shaming experiences. The Compass of Shame helps us to understand how a person experiencing shame will react (Nathanson, 2003: 5-7; Hansberry, 2009: 35; Wachtel, 2013: 5). The four poles of the compass refer to negative behaviours such as withdrawal, self-attack, avoidance and attacking others, which the shamed person will use to manage his/her shame. These behaviours are discussed briefly.

Withdrawal refers to behaviour where the individual will isolate him/herself or hide from others. This behaviour could range from being shy to experiencing

depression. The person also avoids social contact (Hansberry, 2009: 37; Wachtel, 2013: 5).

Self-attack refers to behaviour where the person will use self-put-downs, maintaining an attitude of being a lesser human being. It could include self-harming or masochistic behaviour. These individuals could also demean themselves by placing themselves in a dependent relationship with someone else in order to ensure that they are not alone (Hansberry, 2009: 37; Wachtel, 2013: 5).

Avoidance behaviour is linked to denial, drug and alcohol abuse to escape shameful feelings (rejection), distraction through thrill-seeking behaviour, sexual activity to protect themselves against feelings of inadequacy, or purchasing goods to make themselves look good in the eyes of others. They could also behave in an unauthentic manner by trying to highlight attributes that they might not possess. They will then be seen as fake or insincere (Hansberry, 2009: 37; Wachtel, 2013: 5).

Attacking others pertains to behaviour that is deliberately causing harm to other people. It includes lashing out verbally or physically, attempting to make others feel shame, or blaming the victim for what happened. Bully behaviour is seen as conduct on this pole. Feelings of inferiority lead to behaviour that will break down others in order to feel bigger and better. In doing this, limitations are placed on the ability to negotiate, moderate, love and nurture others (Hansberry, 2009: 37; Wachtel, 2013: 5).

According to Nathanson (2003: 7), we can start to understand youth violence and other behavioural problems when we understand the Compass of Shame. When young people lash out at others, it could be because of feelings of shame, or that they feel helpless or incompetent. Drug and alcohol abuse could be a defence against acute shame which might be related to issues of not being recognised. A positive self-esteem and stable and affirming relationships with significant others could assist a person in managing feelings of shame (Hansberry, 2009: 35). In order to help them to manage their shame and reduce the intensity of feelings of shame, people need to express their shame and other emotions (Wachtel, 2013: 5). It is submitted that schools where negative behaviour is common need to consider where the shaming comes from and ensure that processes are in place to manage this. It is also crucial to create a caring and safe environment (Thorsborne & Blood, 2013: par. 2114) where shaming will be decreased and where children can express their pain in order to heal. Unfortunately, where a punitive approach to discipline is used, such an environment cannot be created.

Teachers tend to react to children's pain-based behaviour with punitive disciplinary measures which only further contribute to school disengagement, learners' leaving school or even more behavioural problems (Flannery, Fenning, Kato & McIntosh, 2013: 2). Thus, a punitive approach to discipline is actually exacerbating the problem, not reducing it. This is echoed by numerous studies that have found

that punishment is not an appropriate way to discipline children and that it, in fact, contributes to problem behaviour and children's disconnecting from the school (McKee, Roland, Coffelt, Olson, Forehand, Massari, Jones, Gaffney & Zens, 2007: 187; Parent, Forehand, Merchant, Edwards, Conners-Burrow, Long & Jones, 2011: 531).

This loss of connectedness to the school not only increases dropout rates, but also contributes to higher levels of truancy, substance abuse (Gregory & Weinstein, 2004: 408), increased disciplinary problems and violence (Ward, 2007: 21; Barnes *et al.*, 2012: 69). This is in sharp contrast to restorative practices that have shown the ability to improve connectedness in that they can strengthen relationships, and develop social and emotional literacy in the classroom and the staff room (Thorsborne & Blood, 2013: par. 666).

In the next part the Circle of Courage will be discussed. This philosophy provides us with an understanding of what learners potentially need to develop connectedness and self-discipline.

## **The Circle of Courage**

The Circle of Courage philosophy helps us to understand the basic developmental needs of children. It also provides some insight into the dangers of a punitive approach. This philosophy emerged through research on how Native American cultures reared their children to be respectful and courageous without using coercive discipline. This could also be linked directly to the development of resilience in youth. According to this philosophy, belonging, mastery, independence and generosity are seen as the fundamental and central values to help create a positive educational culture in educational settings (Brendtro *et al.*, 2002: 45; Brokenleg, 2010: 9). This links to the basic psychological needs of people (Bernard, 2004: 68). The question could be asked as to how this is relevant to South African youth. Brokenleg (2010: 9) answers by stating that, during presentations of this philosophy in South Africa, Zulu-, Xhosa- and Sotho-speaking people said that it represented some of their cultural traditions in child rearing. Brokenleg also explains that he experienced the same feedback from people with European roots. It could thus be concluded that the Circle of Courage exemplifies a model that is useful to all population groups in South Africa.

The Circle of Courage covers four basic human needs, namely belonging, mastery, independence and generosity (Brendtro *et al.*, 2005: 102). Belonging refers to a strong need to belong to something or someone. When children are connected to the school, they will be more receptive to learning and being guided by authority figures. Mastery refers to mastering one's environment. When a caring adult guides them, children could feel more competent and motivated to achieve. However, when achievement is not experienced, troubled behaviour could surface through signs of helplessness and inferiority. Children experience independence when they have power over their own behaviour and their environment and are able to influence others. They demonstrate an internal locus of control and intrinsic motivation. The



last element of the circle is generosity. This refers to being generous, unselfish and empathetic. Not only could troubled youth improve their self-worth when they help others, they could also experience that they have a purpose in life (Brendtro *et al.*, 2002: 45; Brendtro *et al.*, 2005: 102).

So, before we punish youth for misbehaviour we need to determine where their circle is broken. If it is broken in belonging we might see signs of rejection, loneliness and distrust. A lack of mastery might reflect in arrogance, low motivation, a craving for affection and acceptance or a giving-up attitude. The child who is irresponsible, consistently in a power struggle, manipulative or ill-disciplined might need help with independence. Lastly, the affectionless, disloyal, antisocial and selfish child's circle might be broken in the generosity part of the Circle (Brendtro *et al.*, 2002:62-65). When we have determined where the Circle is broken, we could start to mend it, without punishment, but through support and warm, caring relationships.

### **Restorative practices as a response to disciplinary problems**

Restorative practices are not a specific programme, but are built on the philosophy of restorative justice (Amstutz & Mullet, 2005: 4). However, the International Institute for Restorative Practices sees restorative justice as a subset of restorative practices (Wachtel, 2013: 1). Restorative justice is a reactive strategy that is used after wrongdoing has taken place, while restorative practices follow formal and informal processes that precede the wrongdoing as well as reactive strategies after wrongdoing has taken place (Thorsborne & Blood, 2013: par. 646). Restorative practices are, consequently, seen as a social science that studies how to build social capital and achieve social discipline through participatory learning and decision making. The use of restorative practices helps to reduce crime, violence and bullying, improve human behaviour, strengthen civil society, provide effective leadership, restore relationships and, lastly, but very importantly, repair the harm that was created during misconduct (Wachtel, 2013: 1). The same cannot be said of punitive practices. Some of the restorative strategies used to repair the harm, include affective statements and questions, small impromptu conferences, circles (community and peace making), and formal conferences (family group conferencing and community conferencing) (Chmelynski, 2005: 17; Hansberry, 2009: 22).

Restorative practice can be defined as all the strategies, approaches, programmes, models, methods and techniques used on a preventative level to prevent misconduct, as well as on an intervention level to address the harm caused by misconduct (Thorsborne & Vinegrad, 2009: par. 12; Reyneke, 2013: 467). It is thus a whole-school approach that is used to discipline children (Thorsborne & Blood, 2013: par. 646) and not just an approach that focuses all the energy of teachers on the small group of children with behavioural problems – children without behavioural problems also benefit from this approach. During these interventions, people in authority will consider that 'people are happier, more cooperative and productive, and more likely to make positive changes in behavior when those in authority do things with

them, rather than to them or for them' (Wachtel, 2013: 06). This is central to working restoratively.

It is submitted that, when a school decides to use the restorative approach, children do not learn to act socially responsible only in the school environment, but also in the broader community. This happens since the preventative work empowers children with skills and knowledge that a punitive approach does not necessarily do. This makes discipline much more of an educational learning process, linking it to the original aim of discipline (Sugai, 2009: 39). The outcomes of restorative practices in schools are identifiable in the key goals of restorative discipline (Amstutz & Mullet, 2005: 10) namely:

- Creating a healthy culture of caring and support
- Changing systems when they contribute to the harm
- Understanding the harm that was done and developing empathy for both the harmed and the harmer
- Really listening and responding appropriately to the needs of the harmed and the harmer
- Encouraging accountability and responsibility through personal reflection within a collaborative planning process
- Reintegrating the harmer and, if necessary, the harmed, back into the community so that they still feel valued and contributing members of the community.

Although most of these goals focus on when harm was done, the opinion is held that the first two goals are essentially the most important starting point for schools. If the culture of the school is not healthy, it would lead to an array of behavioural and other problems in the school community (Ross, Grenier & Kros, 2005: 6).

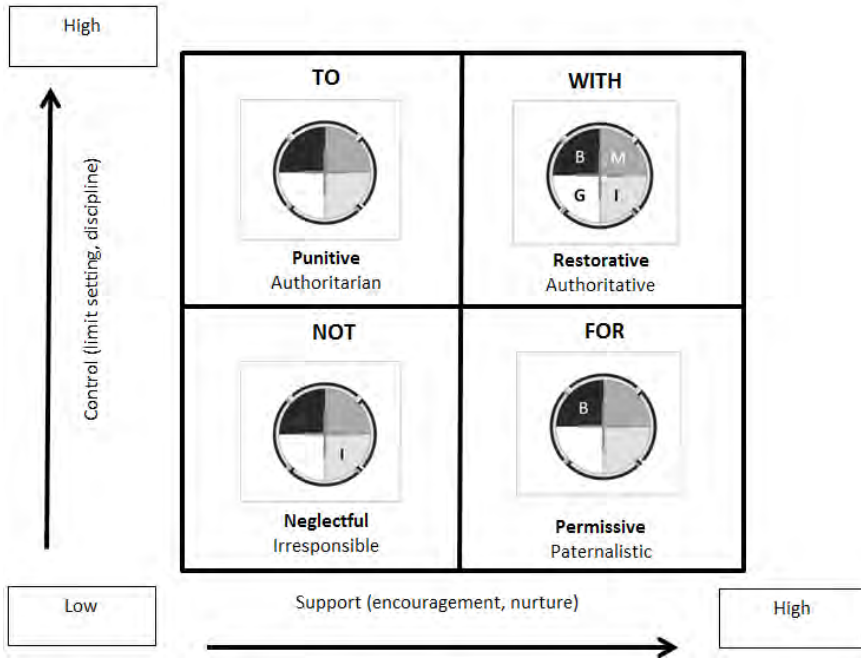


Figure 1: Circle of Courage integrated with the Social Discipline Window (Brendtro et al., 2005: 97 & Wachtel, 2013: 3)

The social discipline window (Wachtel, 2013: 3) provides another perspective of the difference between the punitive and restorative approaches. Figure 1 shows that, when control is high and support low, a punitive disciplinary approach is used. In this approach, we do things to children. This could lead to rebellion and further negative behaviour. High levels of support, but low levels of control, will mean that a permissive style is used and everything is done for these children. The third discipline style is where one finds low levels of support and control, the neglectful style. Teachers using this style will do nothing and children can do as they wish. The last discipline style is where there are high levels of control as well as high levels of support. This is where the restorative approach comes in. It is important to notice that, with this style, things are not done to children, but with them. It is a collaborative approach that aims to empower children with skills which will set them up to be successful adults. It is submitted that this style highly supports the Circle of Courage philosophy because all four elements of the Circle are covered in a restorative approach. Depending on individual circumstances, the same cannot be said for the other styles.

A comparison between the punitive and restorative approaches to discipline (table 1) shows that there are differences in the methods used to achieve justice (Jansen & Matla, 2011: 85). The restorative approach is a far less adversarial approach than the punitive approach. It is much more people centred with a greater focus on who was affected by the misconduct, what their needs are (victim plus wrongdoer) and,

lastly, how the wrongdoer is going to make things right. A main difference between the two paradigms is that in the restorative approach the focus is on trying to identify why the child needs to misbehave. This is done through dialogue and healing. When healing has taken place, acceptance back into the community becomes much easier. The Circle of Courage and the Compass of Shame are conceptual frameworks that could inform interventions during the implementation of a restorative approach to discipline.

**Table 1: Comparison of punitive and restorative approaches to disciplinary problems (Jansen & Matla, 2011:85)**

<p><i>Traditional punitive response to disciplinary problems</i> (Focus on punishment)</p>	<p><i>Restorative response to disciplinary problems</i> (Focus on responsibility, healing and needs)</p>
<p>Questions asked:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What rule has been broken?</li> <li>2. Who is to blame?</li> <li>3. What is the punishment going to be?</li> </ol>	<p>Questions asked:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 Who has been affected?</li> <li>2 What does he/she need?</li> <li>3. What has to happen in order to make things right and who is responsible for that need? (Zehr, 2002: 21)</li> </ol>
<p>Response focuses on establishing blame (whose fault is it?) and delivering punishment, pain.</p>	<p>Response focuses on identifying the needs created by harm and making things right.</p>
<p>Justice is sought through making people prove who is right and who is wrong.</p>	<p>Justice is sought through understanding, dialogue and reparation.</p>
<p>Justice is achieved when someone is proven to be guilty and punished.</p>	<p>Justice is achieved when people take responsibility for their actions, people's needs are met, healing of individuals and relationships is encouraged.</p>
<p>Limited possibility for full acceptance back into school/family/community.</p>	<p>Maximises possibility for full acceptance back into school/family/community.</p>

One of the main challenges faced when implementing this approach is that some administrators, policy makers and school communities are unwilling to accept the positive outcomes of this approach and still believe that, to have order, discipline practices can only be pain based. Punishment is such an inherent part of most school cultures that it is very difficult for school communities to move away from this (Mccluskey, Kane, Lloyd, Stead, Riddell & Weedon, 2011: 112-113). Furthermore, this is a time-consuming exercise, especially in the beginning when the school has to start to change its culture (Ashworth, Van Bockeren, Ailts, Donnelly, Erikson & Woltemann, 2008: 23). Experience has shown that support might not always be

available to teachers to facilitate conferences and community circles as well as some of the outcomes thereof. Community involvement and a multi-disciplinary approach will be important for long-term success. This implies that the involvement of parents and other role players such as NGOs and corporations will have to increase, which is costly and time consuming.

## **Conclusion**

When teachers discipline children they need to remember that it is about teaching the child social responsibility and self-control. The methods used to do this should be psychologically friendly and add to child development. Many children come from broken homes and experience socio-economic difficulties which contribute to their experiencing high levels of stress. It was explained above that the traditional punitive response to disciplinary problems in schools is exacerbating problems and adding to the stress children experience.

Harsh punishment techniques could lead to feelings of shame. Children manage shame by withdrawing, self-attack, attacking others or showing avoidance behaviour. This usually leads to disruptive behaviour in the classroom. The Circle of Courage philosophy contributes to this discussion since it provides a developmental approach to understanding the basic needs of children. When children experience that they belong in the school, it is easier to master the tasks expected of them and they have sufficient control over what is happening to them. They could then start to show generosity in their relationships with others. Unfortunately, when schools do not provide a caring climate that is linked to the developmental needs of children, behavioural problems could escalate. The restorative approach to discipline could change the face and climate of a school. This approach focuses on responsibility, healing and identifying the needs created by harm and addressing these needs. Restorative practices could lead to a reduction in school violence and bullying, improve human behaviour, restore relationships and, lastly, but very importantly, repair the harm that was inflicted during misconduct.

The need to punish negative behaviour comes naturally to adults and many of them believe that it is the best way to teach children appropriate behaviour. However, evidence suggests that punishment is not as effective as we would like to believe. This article argues that, if we want to ensure that our classrooms are environments where troubled children can learn and thrive, the restorative approach could prove to be what is needed for future generations.

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