

SCHOOL OF LIFE FOUNDATION

Architecture of Grace · Master Documents Series

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES CROSSWALK

How the Architecture of Grace Aligns with Restorative Justice Practice

DOCUMENT 7 OF THE MASTER DOCUMENTS SERIES

Anchored to IIRP · With Acknowledgment of Zehr's Foundational Work and Indigenous Origins

Pilot Version · 2026 — 2027

James Anthony Ramsden, Founder

CONFIDENTIAL · FOR DISTRICT REVIEW AND BUILDING ADMINISTRATOR USE

A Note to the Building Administrator

This document is written for a specific reader: the assistant principal, the dean of students, the restorative practices coordinator (where one exists), or the building administrator who handles behavior incidents and discipline response. It is also written for the school counselor team that supports restorative practice and for the building leadership team that sets discipline philosophy.

In most schools — including the school where I have worked — behavior incidents are handled primarily by the assistant principal. The decisions made in those moments shape what students learn about accountability, repair, belonging, and dignity. Restorative practices in schools is the institutional commitment that those decisions be made in ways that build community rather than dismantle it.

The Architecture of Grace is not a discipline system. It is a Tier 1 universal SEL curriculum. But the framework's curriculum content and the school's discipline practice exist in necessary relationship. When a student in fourth grade learns the Repair Protocol on Tuesday and is then suspended on Wednesday for an incident that the Repair Protocol could have addressed, the curriculum is undermined. When a sixth grader writes a Letter of Release in October and then witnesses the building handle a serious harm with retributive discipline in February, the framework's foundation is compromised. This document exists because the curriculum and the discipline practice must align, or both fail.

Why Anchor Primarily to IIRP

Restorative practices in K-12 has multiple anchor frameworks. Three are foundational:

- Howard Zehr's restorative justice work (1990, 2002, 2015) — the foundational philosophical framework that defined contemporary restorative justice. Zehr's three pillars (focus on harms and needs, address obligations, engage stakeholders) and six questions provide the conceptual ground.
- The International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP) framework — the most widely adopted operational framework in K-12 settings. IIRP's continuum of practices, social discipline window, and structured affective statement protocols translate restorative philosophy into school-level operational practice.
- Indigenous restorative traditions — ho'oponopono, peacemaking circles, ubuntu-based practices, and First Nations restorative traditions — which predate both Zehr and IIRP by centuries and remain the deepest source of restorative wisdom.

This document anchors primarily to IIRP because IIRP has the strongest K–12 institutional uptake, the most developed school-level operational protocols, and the language most likely to be familiar to building administrators. Zehr's foundational work is named explicitly as the philosophical ground beneath IIRP. The Indigenous origins are acknowledged as the deepest source — not as a footnote, but as the foundational acknowledgment that restorative practice did not begin in the 1990s, did not begin in the West, and did not begin with the people whose names are on the contemporary frameworks.

How to Read This Document

Twelve chapters. Read in order if you are evaluating AoG within an existing or developing restorative practices program. Skip to Chapter 9 if you have an active behavior incident this week and need to know how AoG vocabulary applies. Use Chapter 12 as the working alignment summary for ongoing practice.

Restorative practice is not a discipline alternative. It is a different theory of what discipline is for. Punitive discipline asks: who is to blame, and what consequence do they deserve? Restorative practice asks: who has been harmed, what do they need, and whose obligation is it to make things right? The Architecture of Grace's curriculum is built on the second set of questions. This document documents how the school's discipline practice can be too.

Table of Contents

Foreword · A Note to the Building Administrator

Chapter 1 · Restorative Practices in Brief · The Working Vocabulary

Chapter 2 · The Acknowledgment of Origins · Indigenous Roots and Zehr's Pillars

Chapter 3 · The IIRP Framework · How AoG Aligns with the Continuum of Practices

Chapter 4 · The Repair Protocol · How AoG's Five Steps Map to Restorative Conferences

Chapter 5 · The Recovery Arc · How AoG's Four Phases Honor Restorative Sequencing

Chapter 6 · Calling In vs. Calling Out · The Adolescent Maturation of Affective Statements

Chapter 7 · The Boundary of Peace · Where Forgiveness and Reconciliation Diverge

Chapter 8 · Grace Culture · The Year-Long Restorative Practice

Chapter 9 · Working with Active Behavior Incidents · How AoG Vocabulary Applies

Chapter 10 · Where AoG and Restorative Practice Diverge · The Honest Differences

Chapter 11 · Building-Level Implementation · What the Assistant Principal Actually Does

Chapter 12 · The Working Alignment Summary · One-Page Reference

Chapter 1 • Restorative Practices in Brief

The working vocabulary

This chapter is for readers who need a brief refresher on restorative practices terminology before reading the alignment chapters. Readers operating fluently in restorative practice may skip to Chapter 2.

The Core Distinction

Restorative practice operates on a different theory of harm and accountability than retributive (punitive) practice. The distinction is summarized in two sets of questions:

Retributive Question Set	What rule was broken? Who broke it? What punishment do they deserve?
Restorative Question Set	Who has been harmed? What are their needs? Whose obligation is it to make things right?

These are not the same questions with different vocabulary. They are different questions producing different responses. The retributive frame seeks proportional punishment. The restorative frame seeks repair of the relationship and the community fabric that the harm damaged.

The Continuum of Restorative Practice

IIRP's framework distinguishes proactive practice (community-building) from reactive practice (response to harm). Both are essential; the proactive work is what makes the reactive work possible.

PROACTIVE PRACTICES	REACTIVE PRACTICES	WHAT EACH BUILDS
Affective statements Community circles Classroom agreements Relational greeting practices	Restorative questions Impromptu conferences Formal restorative conferences Reintegration meetings	Proactive: the relational fabric that harm later tears Reactive: the structured repair of the fabric when it does tear
Used daily Low-intensity Universal	Used when harm occurs Variable intensity Responsive	Together: a school culture in which harm is not normalized but also not catastrophized

The Social Discipline Window

IIRP's social discipline window — adapted from Wachtel & McCold (2001) — names four institutional postures based on the combination of high or low control and high or low support:

TO (High control, low support)	Punitive. Things done to students. Suspension, exclusion, retributive consequence. The dominant frame in pre-restorative discipline practice.
FOR (Low control, high support)	Permissive. Things done for students. Excusing, rescuing, removing consequence. Often well-intentioned, often counterproductive.
NOT (Low control, low support)	Neglectful. Things done not (or not done at all). Disengagement from discipline entirely.
WITH (High control, high support)	Restorative. Things done with students. Accountability AND support, simultaneously. The institutional posture restorative practice is committed to.

WITH is the restorative quadrant. It is also the quadrant most aligned with the Architecture of Grace's curriculum content. The framework's core teaching — that accountability and self-compassion coexist, that boundaries come from strength rather than retaliation, that grace is a chosen practice rather than excuse — is the curriculum-side expression of WITH.

What Restorative Practice Is Not

Three misunderstandings of restorative practice are common in K–12 settings:

- Restorative practice is not the absence of consequence. Real consequences exist; they are calibrated to repair harm rather than inflict proportional pain.
- Restorative practice is not soft on harm. The framework names harm explicitly, asks the harm-doer to face the impact directly, and requires concrete obligations toward repair.
- Restorative practice is not appropriate in every situation. Active safety threats, ongoing harm, and certain forms of victimization may require non-restorative response (removal, mandatory reporting, legal intervention) before restorative work becomes possible — or sometimes ever.

Chapter 2 • The Acknowledgment of Origins

Indigenous roots and Zehr's pillars

Contemporary restorative practice in K–12 schools draws from a body of work whose origins are older and broader than the contemporary names attached to it. This chapter names those origins explicitly. The acknowledgment is not a formality — it is institutionally important for at least three reasons.

Why This Acknowledgment Matters

First, restorative practice that operates without acknowledging Indigenous origins risks the same extractive pattern it claims to oppose. A school adopts language and practices developed by communities whose own children have been historically excluded, surveilled, and punished by school discipline systems — and proceeds without acknowledgment, citation, or accountability to those communities. This is its own form of harm.

Second, students from Indigenous, Black, immigrant, and other communities with their own restorative traditions encounter restorative practice in school as if it were new. It is not new to them. The acknowledgment honors what those students bring, rather than treating them as recipients of a practice their ancestors developed.

Third, the philosophical depth of restorative practice is incomplete without its origins. The contemporary frameworks (Zehr, IIRP, others) are operational distillations. The deeper wisdom — about community, harm, healing, and the long timeframes of repair — lives in the originating traditions.

Indigenous Origins

Restorative practice in its contemporary form draws — explicitly in Zehr's earliest writing, often less explicitly in subsequent frameworks — from Indigenous traditions of community-based response to harm. A non-exhaustive acknowledgment:

Maori (Aotearoa / New Zealand)	Family Group Conferencing, formalized in New Zealand law in 1989, is one of the most direct lineages from Indigenous practice into contemporary K–12 restorative conferences. The Maori tradition of whanau (extended family) decision-making in response to harm is the foundational practice.
Indigenous nations of North America	Peacemaking circles, talking circles, and community-based repair practices across many Indigenous nations. The Navajo Nation's Peacemaking Program is one of the most documented contemporary expressions; the practices themselves predate documentation by centuries.

Hawaiian	Ho'oponopono — the practice of setting things right within the family and the community. Includes acknowledgment of harm, explicit naming, restoration of relationship, and release.
Southern African	Ubuntu — the philosophical framework that 'I am because we are.' Tutu's Truth and Reconciliation Commission work, while operating at national scale, drew on ubuntu philosophy as its restorative foundation.
Other traditions	Confucian reciprocity practices, restorative practices in many religious traditions (Christian, Jewish, Islamic, Buddhist), Romani and other diasporic community-based response traditions. The list is not exhaustive.

Zehr's Three Pillars and Six Questions

Howard Zehr's contribution — first articulated in his 1990 book *Changing Lenses* and developed across subsequent work — translated Indigenous restorative wisdom into a framework legible to Western criminal justice and educational systems. Zehr's three pillars and six questions are the philosophical ground that contemporary K-12 restorative practice rests on:

The Three Pillars

1. Restorative practice focuses on harms and needs (rather than on rules broken).
2. Restorative practice addresses obligations resulting from those harms (the harm-doer's obligation to repair, the community's obligation to support).
3. Restorative practice engages stakeholders — those harmed, those who caused harm, and the affected community — in collaborative response.

The Six Questions

1. Who has been hurt?
2. What are their needs?
3. Whose obligations are these?
4. What are the causes?
5. Who has a stake in this situation?
6. What is the appropriate process to involve stakeholders in an effort to address the causes and put things right?

These six questions are the substrate of every restorative conference protocol, including the Architecture of Grace's Repair Protocol. The framework's curriculum does not reproduce Zehr's

questions verbatim, but the same six concerns animate the curriculum's most clinically important repair work.

How AoG Acknowledges These Origins

The framework's institutional acknowledgment lives in three places:

- This document, which names the origins explicitly. The acknowledgment is structural, not decorative.
- The Cultural Responsiveness Integration Statement (Document 8 of this Master Documents Series, in development), which will provide the integrated treatment of how AoG's grace/forgiveness/mercy vocabulary lands in cultural contexts where these concepts have specific religious, indigenous, or community meanings.
- The framework's commitment that families and communities are partners, not clients (Document 5 Chapter 10). Cultural and religious traditions of grace, forgiveness, and mercy belong to families. The framework's secular vocabulary complements those traditions rather than replacing them.

The framework's institutional honesty: this acknowledgment is incomplete until Document 8 provides the integrated treatment. Districts whose populations include significant Indigenous, Black, immigrant, or other communities with strong restorative traditions should know that the framework is still developing this dimension of its practice. The acknowledgment in this chapter is the floor, not the ceiling.

Chapter 3 • The IIRP Framework

How AoG aligns with the continuum of practices

The International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP) framework is the most widely adopted operational framework for restorative practice in K–12 schools. This chapter documents how AoG aligns with the IIRP continuum — the proactive practices that build relational fabric and the reactive practices that repair it when harm occurs.

The IIRP Continuum at a Glance

IIRP organizes restorative practice along a continuum of intensity, from low-intensity daily practice to high-intensity formal response. The continuum below names each practice and its AoG curriculum alignment:

Affective Statements	Brief 'I' statements naming impact in real time. Daily practice. AoG alignment: the framework's vocabulary discipline (Document 2 Chapter 8) provides the precision instruments — 'when X happened, I felt Y, because Z.' The Friend Test (Books 3 and 4) trains the same skill.
Affective Questions	Restorative questions used informally during the school day to surface impact and need. AoG alignment: Impact vs. Intent (Book 3 U3 L1) trains the cognitive structure underlying these questions.
Small Impromptu Conferences	Brief teacher-facilitated conversation between students after a small harm. AoG alignment: the Repair Protocol (Book 2 WS-R3 / REP-1) provides the explicit five-step structure.
Group or Circle Work	Classroom-level circles for community-building or response to shared concern. AoG alignment: the Community Charter (Book 3 U4 L7) and Class Legacy (Book 4 U4 L7) provide the curriculum-side artifacts that complement circle practice.
Formal Restorative Conferences	Structured multi-stakeholder conferences with trained facilitator after significant harm. AoG alignment: the framework does not deliver formal conferences as Tier 1 curriculum — formal conference work belongs to building staff with restorative training. AoG provides the vocabulary and the relational substrate that make conferences more effective.

How AoG Strengthens IIRP Practice

Schools implementing IIRP-aligned restorative practice often face a specific operational challenge: the practices require a vocabulary, a relational fabric, and a disposition that students and staff bring to the practice. Without those substrates, the practices land as procedural ritual rather than meaningful work. Restorative circles become forced check-ins; affective statements become performed scripts; conferences become extended detention.

The Architecture of Grace addresses this substrate directly. Three specific contributions:

Contribution 1 • The Precision Vocabulary

IIRP affective statements work when participants can name impact precisely. AoG students arrive with — by the upper grades — distinctions between guilt and shame, identity and behavior, impact and intent, forgiveness and trust and reconciliation. These distinctions allow affective statements to do real work rather than function as ritual. A ninth-grader who has been in AoG since Kindergarten brings working vocabulary that an IIRP-only school must build from scratch.

Contribution 2 • The Relational Substrate

IIRP circles and conferences work when participants experience the room as relationally safe. AoG's universal Tier 1 delivery, year-long Sammy ritual at K-2, the Compassionate Witness practice at 9-10, and the systematic teacher wellbeing infrastructure (Document 5 Chapter 9) build the relational substrate. A school running IIRP without this kind of curriculum-side substrate is asking circles to do work the rest of the school day is undoing.

Contribution 3 • The Self-Compassion Foundation

IIRP restorative work asks the harm-doer to face impact directly. This is genuinely difficult psychological work. Students who arrive at the conference without self-compassion — who experience accountability as evidence of unworthiness — cannot engage with the conference honestly. AoG's Unit 2 work across all grade bands builds the self-compassion that makes restorative accountability possible. Without it, the conference produces shame; with it, the conference produces growth.

IIRP teaches the practices. The Architecture of Grace builds the substrate. Schools that adopt both find that each strengthens the other; schools that adopt either alone often find that the practice does not produce the cultural shift it promises.

Chapter 4 • The Repair Protocol

How AoG's five steps map to restorative conferences

AoG's Repair Protocol — formalized as anchor chart REP-1 in Book 2 Unit 3, recapitulated through every subsequent grade band — is the framework's most direct alignment with formal restorative practice. The five steps of the protocol map directly to the structure of an IIRP-aligned restorative conference. This chapter documents the alignment and shows how the Repair Protocol functions as the curriculum-side teaching of skills that restorative conferences require.

The Five Steps

Step 1 • Both Regulate First	Neither party can do the work outside the Window of Tolerance. Both parties pause until they are inside the regulated state where thinking, listening, and connection are possible. IIRP correspondence: the pre-conference preparation phase, in which the facilitator ensures both parties are emotionally available before the conference begins.
Step 2 • One Speaks, the Other Listens	Structured turn-taking. One person speaks about what happened from their experience. The other person does not interrupt, defend, or correct. IIRP correspondence: the affected party's narrative phase of a conference. The harm-doer listens without interruption.
Step 3 • Impact Acknowledged	The person who caused harm names what they have understood about the impact — without minimizing, defending, or shifting blame. IIRP correspondence: the harm-doer's response phase. Genuine acknowledgment of impact, distinct from apology.
Step 4 • Repair Action Named	Concrete action toward repair is identified and committed to. Specific, behavioral, time-bounded. IIRP correspondence: the obligations phase of a conference. What will the harm-doer do? What does the affected party need? What does the community require?
Step 5 • Re-entry Agreed	How the parties move forward — what is and is not restored, what conditions apply, what monitoring or follow-up exists. Often skipped; the most clinically important step.

	IIRP correspondence: the agreement and reintegration phase. How does the harm-doer re-enter the community? What does ongoing support look like?
--	---

Why Step 5 Is the Most Skipped

AoG's Book 2 explicitly names Step 5 as the most-skipped step of the protocol. This pattern is true in formal restorative conferences as well, and the parallel is institutionally important.

Steps 1 through 4 produce visible content: regulation, narrative, acknowledgment, repair action. Step 5 produces something subtler — the explicit agreement about what is and is not restored, and what follow-up is required. Without Step 5, the conference can feel complete in the moment but produce no durable change. The harm-doer apologizes, the affected party accepts, and within two weeks the same dynamic recurs because no one named what would actually be different.

AoG's Book 2 teaching on this is direct: "Step 5 is the step that makes the other four steps last. If you skip it, you have not really repaired — you have just had a conversation about what happened."

How the Repair Protocol Develops Across the K–12 Arc

GRADE BAND	REPAIR PROTOCOL FORM	ALIGNMENT WITH RESTORATIVE PRACTICE
K–2	Saying Sorry and Meaning It (U2 L3) — three-part real apology	Foundation for affective statements; not yet conference-capable
3–5	Repair Protocol formalized as REP-1 (U3 Strand WS-R3)	Conference-capable for low-intensity peer harm; teacher-facilitated impromptu conferences possible
6–8	Repair Protocol applied (U3 throughout); Letter of Release (U3 L6 ★★) is the unilateral version	Adolescent-capable for moderate-intensity harm; small-group conferences possible
9–10	Repair Protocol embedded with Boundary of Peace (U3 L3 ★) and Calling In language (U3 L4)	Adult-capable; formal restorative conferences feasible with appropriate facilitator
11–12	Repair Protocol matures into the Living Amend (U2 L1) — sustained behavioral change over time	Adult relational practice; carries into post-graduation life

What the Repair Protocol Requires of the Building

Three institutional commitments make the Repair Protocol function in an actual school:

- Time. A genuine repair conversation cannot be conducted between the bell and the next class. The building must allow time for Step 1 (regulation), Step 2 (narrative), and the rest. Schools that try to compress the protocol into hallway moments produce the same failure pattern restorative conferences produce when compressed.
- Skilled facilitation. Steps 2 through 5 work better with a third party — a teacher, counselor, or assistant principal — facilitating. Skilled facilitation is not the same as parental authority; it is structured neutrality that helps both parties stay in the protocol.
- Follow-through on Step 5. The building must support whatever Step 5 agreement emerges. If the agreement names check-in points, those check-in points must actually happen. The protocol's institutional credibility rests on Step 5 follow-through.

Chapter 5 • The Recovery Arc

How AoG's four phases honor restorative sequencing

AoG's Recovery Arc — formalized as anchor chart ARC-1 in Book 2, recapitulated through Grade 12 — names the four phases between when something hard happens and when a person is ready to repair: Activated, Regulating, Reflecting, Reintegrating. The Arc is not a discipline tool; it is a developmental description of how human nervous systems actually move from rupture to repair.

The Recovery Arc is significant for restorative practice because it names what every experienced restorative facilitator already knows: people are not ready for the conference at the same moment. Forcing the conference at the wrong phase of the Arc produces failed conferences.

The Four Phases

Activated	Sympathetic mobilization (or dorsal vagal shutdown). Outside the Window of Tolerance. The capacity to think clearly, listen to others, or take responsibility is offline. Restorative work in this phase is impossible — and attempting it produces re-traumatization for the affected party and shame-flooding for the harm-doer.
Regulating	The body returning toward ventral vagal. The work of this phase is co-regulation — a calmer adult presence, a regulating routine, time. Restorative work can begin to be set up in this phase but not delivered.
Reflecting	Inside the Window of Tolerance. The prefrontal cortex is online enough to think about what happened, who was affected, and what one's own role was. Restorative work becomes genuinely possible in this phase.
Reintegrating	Sustained ventral vagal capacity. Repair has been initiated or completed. The work of this phase is rebuilding relational and community connection. The Step 5 work of the Repair Protocol lives here.

Why Restorative Conferences Often Fail

The most common failure pattern in school restorative conferences is timing — specifically, holding the conference while one or both parties are still in the Activated or early Regulating phase. The conference is institutionally scheduled (the assistant principal's morning calendar, the Friday discipline review) rather than developmentally scheduled (when the parties are ready).

The pattern produces three failure modes:

- The harm-doer remains defensive throughout the conference because they are still in sympathetic activation. The conference produces compliance language but no genuine acknowledgment.
- The affected party shuts down or escalates because their dysregulation has not been honored. The conference produces a procedural appearance of restoration without any actual restoration.
- Both parties leave the conference with their nervous systems still rough. The conference becomes an additional source of dysregulation rather than a path back to regulation.

How the Recovery Arc Redirects Restorative Practice

Schools using the Recovery Arc as part of their restorative practice operate on three calibrations:

First, the conference is held in the Reflecting phase. Sometimes that is two hours after the incident. Sometimes that is two days. The institutional commitment is to schedule the conference when both parties are ready, not when the discipline calendar wants the conference.

Second, the assistant principal or building administrator handling the incident becomes the Recovery Arc facilitator before becoming the conference facilitator. The work of the Activated and Regulating phases is co-regulation — a regulated adult presence holding space until both parties are ready for the actual repair work. This is institutionally different from "sending the student to the principal's office to wait."

Third, Step 5 of the Repair Protocol — re-entry agreed — is calibrated to the Reintegrating phase. The reintegration is not finished when the conference ends. It is finished when the harm-doer has actually re-entered the community and the affected party has experienced the agreed safety. This is days or weeks of follow-through, not a single conference.

The Recovery Arc is not just developmental psychology. It is restorative practice timing. Conferences held outside the Reflecting phase produce failed conferences; conferences held inside it produce real repair. The institutional commitment is to wait — and to use the waiting as active co-regulation.

Chapter 6 • Calling In vs. Calling Out

The adolescent maturation of affective statements

AoG's Book 4 Unit 3 Lesson 4 — Calling In vs. Calling Out — introduces a distinction that is institutionally important for restorative practice in high school settings. The distinction names two different ways to address harm: calling out (public, often performative, oriented toward exclusion or punishment) and calling in (private or semi-private, oriented toward growth, with relationship preserved as the implicit context).

The Distinction

Calling Out	Public address of harm. Often performative — directed at audience as much as at the harm-doer. Frequently oriented toward exclusion, accountability-as-punishment, or social positioning. Has its place — particularly when private channels have failed, when the harm is ongoing, or when the harm-doer holds power that makes private address ineffective. Failure mode: produces defensive shutdown, social-position-mediated response, or hardened refusal. The harm-doer experiences the calling out as social attack rather than relational invitation.
Calling In	Private or semi-private address of harm. Oriented toward growth — directed at the harm-doer with the implicit assumption that they are capable of doing better. Holds the relationship as the context within which the harm is being addressed, even when the relationship itself is being renegotiated. Failure mode: produces avoidance of the harder confrontation. The relationship-protection orientation can become an excuse for not addressing serious harm.

Why This Distinction Matters Restoratively

Affective statements in IIRP practice are calling-in moves. The 'when X happened, I felt Y, because Z' structure is private (or semi-private), addresses the harm-doer directly, and assumes capacity for response. But adolescents — and adults — operate in social environments where calling out is sometimes the more visible practice. Adolescents in particular may have learned calling-out behaviors from social media culture, peer dynamics, or family modeling, without yet learning the calling-in alternative.

The Calling In vs. Calling Out lesson teaches the alternative. It does not invalidate calling out — there are situations where calling out is the appropriate move. It teaches both as available practices, with attention to when each is appropriate.

The Five Considerations

AoG Book 4 names five considerations students apply when deciding between calling in and calling out:

1. Does the harm-doer have a relationship with me, or with my community, that we both want to preserve?
2. Has private address been tried and failed, or is this the first attempt?
3. Is the harm ongoing, or has it occurred and ended?
4. Does the harm-doer hold institutional or social power that makes private address structurally ineffective?
5. What is the goal — change, accountability, exclusion, growth, safety? Different goals call for different moves.

How This Maps to Restorative Practice

Calling in is the relational orientation of restorative practice. The Repair Protocol is institutionalized calling in. Affective statements are everyday calling in. Restorative conferences are formal calling in. The framework's curriculum gives students practiced familiarity with calling in as a relational skill — which makes them more capable of meaningful participation in the school's restorative practice.

Calling out is not opposed to restorative practice — sometimes calling out is what surfaces the harm that restorative practice then addresses. But calling out without calling in becomes social shaming. Restorative practice without calling out can become avoidance of serious harm. The framework teaches both, with attention to the appropriate use of each.

This distinction is institutionally important for high school administrators. Students whose primary social environment is calling-out culture (in person or online) may experience formal restorative conferences as foreign. The framework's Book 4 Unit 3 work prepares students for that experience by giving them practiced familiarity with calling in as an alternative. Schools that adopt formal restorative practice without curriculum-side teaching of calling in often find that students engage with the conferences procedurally without engaging with the underlying skill.

Chapter 7 • The Boundary of Peace

Where forgiveness and reconciliation diverge

AoG's Book 4 Unit 3 Lesson 3 — The Boundary of Peace — introduces a relational practice that is institutionally important for restorative work and that distinguishes the framework's approach from approaches that conflate forgiveness with reconciliation.

The Three Independent Decisions

From Book 3 onward, AoG teaches Forgiveness, Trust, and Reconciliation as three independent decisions. Document 1 Strand 4 (Forgiveness) and Document 5 Chapter 5 (Operational Element 3 — Never-Required Forgiveness) document this commitment in detail. The brief recap:

Forgiveness	Internal release of resentment. Done by the affected party for the affected party's benefit. Does not require the harm-doer's participation. Independent of trust and reconciliation.
Trust	Earned through demonstrated behavioral change over time. Cannot be granted as a gift. Independent of forgiveness and reconciliation. A person can forgive without trusting; a person can trust without having forgiven the original harm.
Reconciliation	Relational restoration of connection. Requires both parties' active participation. Voluntary on both sides. Independent of forgiveness and trust.

The Boundary of Peace

The Boundary of Peace is the relational practice that emerges from holding the three constructs as distinct. It names a specific relational position: 'I have forgiven (or am working toward forgiving), but I am not reconciling — and the conditions of my non-reconciliation are these.'

The Boundary of Peace is institutionally important because it provides students — and adults — with language for relational positions that retributive frameworks do not name. A student who has forgiven a harm-doer but does not want to be in close relationship with them is not failing at restoration; they are exercising a sophisticated relational position. A student who reconciles fully is not the only restorative outcome; equally restorative is the student who forgives, holds the boundary, and continues life with that boundary respected.

Why This Matters for Restorative Practice

Restorative conferences sometimes fail because they treat reconciliation as the only legitimate outcome. The harm-doer apologizes, the affected party accepts, and the implicit institutional pressure is for full reconciliation — "now you can be friends again." This pressure is itself a form of harm, particularly for affected parties who have legitimate reasons to maintain distance.

The Boundary of Peace allows the restorative conference to produce a genuine restorative outcome that is not full reconciliation. The harm has been named. The impact has been acknowledged. The repair has been initiated. The Step 5 re-entry agreement specifies the relational shape going forward — which may be 'we share the same hallway, we are not enemies, we are also not friends.' That is a restorative outcome.

How Schools Can Operationalize the Boundary of Peace

Three specific practical applications for building administrators handling behavior incidents:

First, the conference outcome menu. When facilitating a restorative conference, name multiple possible outcomes from the start: full reconciliation, working relationship, peaceful coexistence, structured distance, or — in serious cases — separation with safety conditions. The conference's job is to find the right outcome, not to produce reconciliation as the default.

Second, the affected party's autonomy. The Boundary of Peace names that the affected party gets to set the conditions of their own re-entry into the relationship. The harm-doer's apology does not entitle them to access. The conference may produce 'I forgive you AND I am not interested in friendship' as the restorative outcome. Both parts are equally restorative.

Third, the institutional follow-through. If the conference produces a Boundary of Peace outcome, the building must support it. If the agreement specifies that the harm-doer does not attempt to engage the affected party socially, the building monitors that. If the agreement specifies separated lunch periods, the building schedules them. The Boundary of Peace is not a feeling — it is an enforceable institutional agreement.

Restorative practice is sometimes misunderstood as a path to forced reconciliation. The Boundary of Peace is the framework's institutional commitment that genuine restoration may be a sustained boundary, mutually respected — not necessarily a restored friendship. The affected party's autonomy is the operational expression of that commitment.

Chapter 8 • Grace Culture

The year-long restorative practice

AoG's Book 4 Unit 4 — Grace Culture — extends the framework's restorative work from individual repair to community-scale practice. Grace Culture is the institutional condition under which restorative practice actually works. This chapter documents what Grace Culture is, how the framework builds it across the year, and how it interfaces with restorative practice at the building level.

What Grace Culture Is

Grace Culture is a community in which:

- Mistakes are expected and named, not catastrophized.
- Repair is normalized as ordinary practice, not exceptional event.
- Charitable interpretation is the default attribution, with the understanding that it can be revised when behavior contradicts.
- Calling in is preferred to calling out, when calling in is sufficient to address the harm.
- Forgiveness is honored as a practice without being required.
- The Boundary of Peace is recognized as a legitimate restorative outcome.
- The Recovery Arc is honored — people are given time to come back.

Why Grace Culture Is Restorative Practice's Necessary Substrate

Restorative practice without Grace Culture is procedural restoration without cultural restoration. The conferences happen. The protocols are followed. But the everyday school culture remains punitive, judgmental, or shame-based. Students return from successful restorative conferences to peer cultures that mock the work, hallway cultures that catastrophize mistakes, and adult cultures that model the opposite of what was taught in the conference.

This is not theoretical. It is the most common failure pattern in K-12 restorative practice implementations. Schools adopt the conferences, train the staff, schedule the circles — and find that the cultural dial does not move, because the substrate is missing.

Grace Culture is the substrate. It is built daily, across thirteen years of curriculum content, by every adult in the building modeling it consistently, and by an explicit institutional commitment to it as the school's working culture.

How AoG Builds Grace Culture Across the K–12 Arc

GRADE BAND	GRACE CULTURE WORK	BUILDING-LEVEL REINFORCEMENT
K–2	Grace as posture toward another person. The Pause Practice. Small Acts, Big Difference.	Building-level Grace Culture: adults model the pause; mistakes are not catastrophized; recovery from rupture is visible.
3–5	Grace as practice. Mercy. Giving the Benefit of the Doubt. Grace Gap launch.	Building-level: explicit charitable interpretation modeled by staff; recovery and re-entry visible after disciplinary moments.
6–8	Grace as community work. Grace Audit. Community Charter.	Building-level: middle school cultural identity centers grace as community practice; restorative conferences are normalized.
9–10	Grace Culture (Unit 4 throughout). Class Legacy as the year's collective artifact.	Building-level: Grace Culture as the explicit working culture of the building; restorative conferences are the default response to harm.
11–12	Systemic Grace. Charitable Interpretation at Scale. Counseling vs. Canceling.	Building-level: senior Grace Culture extends beyond the school into community engagement; the Mentor Path operationalizes Grace Culture as legacy.

How the Building Reinforces Grace Culture

Five building-level commitments that operationalize Grace Culture institutionally:

First, adult modeling. Adults in the building practice Grace Culture toward each other as well as toward students. The faculty meeting where one teacher addresses another teacher's mistake with charitable interpretation — visibly, with students aware — is one of the most powerful Grace Culture reinforcements available.

Second, public re-entry. When a student has been in the principal's office for a behavior incident and returns to class, the re-entry is normal — not whispered about, not stigmatized, not made a public spectacle. The Class Legacy commitment from Book 4 Unit 4 is, at the building level, this re-entry practice.

Third, restorative response as default. The building's first response to harm is restorative, not retributive. Punitive consequences (suspension, exclusion) are reserved for situations where restorative response is not appropriate or has failed — they are not the first move.

Fourth, language discipline at the building level. Adults in the building use the framework's vocabulary precisely. Forgiveness is not used as a synonym for reconciliation. Shame is not used as a synonym for guilt. Grace is not used as a synonym for niceness or weakness. The vocabulary discipline is institutional, not optional.

Fifth, the Boundary of Peace recognized institutionally. When a student's restorative conference produces a Boundary of Peace outcome, the building recognizes and supports the boundary. Schedules accommodate it. Adults respect it. The boundary is treated as a legitimate restorative outcome, not a failed reconciliation.

Chapter 9 • Working with Active Behavior Incidents

How AoG vocabulary applies

This chapter is the working operational guide for assistant principals and building administrators handling active behavior incidents. It assumes a student has been sent to the office for a behavior issue and walks through how the framework's vocabulary, protocols, and dispositions apply across the response. The chapter is structured around the actual decision points administrators face, in the actual order they face them.

Decision Point 1 • Where Are We on the Recovery Arc?

Before any other decision, locate the student on the Recovery Arc. This determines what is and is not possible right now.

Activated	The student is dysregulated. Sympathetic activation (heightened, agitated, defiant, escalating) or dorsal vagal shutdown (withdrawn, dissociated, unable to engage). The work right now is co-regulation, not conversation. Sit with them. Offer water. Let the nervous system come back. Do not attempt the conference. Do not lecture. Do not problem-solve.
Regulating	The student's body is starting to come back. Heart rate slowing. Breath returning. Eye contact possible. The work right now is to support the regulating process — not to push past it. The conference is not yet possible.
Reflecting	The student is inside the Window of Tolerance. They can think about what happened, hear another perspective, and consider their role. This is the phase where the Repair Protocol or restorative conference becomes possible.
Reintegrating	The student is ready to re-enter the community. The conference has happened or is not needed. The work now is the actual re-entry — back to class, back to the lunchroom, back to the relational space the incident damaged.

If you take only one thing from this chapter: do not attempt restorative conversation in the Activated phase. The conference will fail, the student will harden, and the work becomes harder. The single most institutionally protective move you can make is to wait — and to use the waiting as active co-regulation.

Decision Point 2 • What Was Actually Harmed?

Once the student is in the Reflecting phase, identify the harm. Use Zehr's restorative questions adapted to school context:

- Who has been hurt by what happened?
- What do they need?
- Whose obligation is it to address that?

These questions are different from 'What rule was broken?' The retributive question produces blame; the restorative questions produce understanding. AoG's vocabulary applies directly:

- Impact vs. Intent (Book 3 U3 L1): the harm is real even if it was not intended.
- Three Sides of Every Story (Book 3 U3 L2): the harm-doer's experience, the affected party's experience, and the observer's experience are all real and may differ.
- Identity vs. Behavior (taught from K–2): the student is not a bad person; they did something that produced harm.

Decision Point 3 · Is This a Calling-In or a Calling-Out Situation?

Most school behavior incidents are calling-in situations. Private or semi-private address. Relationship preserved as the implicit context. The Repair Protocol applies.

Some are calling-out situations. Public harm with public address required. Patterns of harm that have not been addressed by private channels. Power dynamics that make private address structurally ineffective. In these cases, restorative work happens but in different format — sometimes with broader community participation, sometimes with documentation of pattern, sometimes with calibrated public consequence as part of the response.

The five considerations from Chapter 6 apply: relationship preservation, prior attempts, ongoing-or-ended, power, and goal. Use them as a working frame.

Decision Point 4 · Who Should Be at the Conference?

The IIRP-aligned restorative conference includes those who were affected and those who caused harm. The framework's curriculum supports this directly. Three specific configurations:

Two-Party Conference	Harm-doer and affected party. Building administrator or counselor facilitates. Most common configuration for everyday harm. Repair Protocol applies directly.
Multi-Party Conference	Multiple affected parties or multiple harm-doers. Group facilitation. May require trained restorative facilitator if harm is significant. The Class Legacy work in Book 4 Unit 4 prepares students for this configuration.

Family-Inclusive Conference	Significant harm warranting family participation. Includes families on both sides where appropriate. Building administrator coordinates; counselor or restorative coordinator facilitates.
------------------------------------	--

Decision Point 5 · What Does Step 5 Look Like?

The Repair Protocol's Step 5 — re-entry agreed — is the institutional follow-through. For active behavior incidents, Step 5 specifies:

- What changes in behavior, on whose part, by when.
- What check-in points exist (one week, two weeks, one month).
- What conditions apply to re-entry into the affected community (classroom, lunchroom, team, group).
- What happens if the agreement is not honored.
- What support exists for the harm-doer's growth (counselor check-ins, peer support, family communication).

Step 5 is the institutional commitment that the conference produced a durable change. Without Step 5, the conference is a conversation. With Step 5, it is institutional repair.

When Restorative Practice Is NOT Appropriate

Three categories of behavior incident where restorative practice is contraindicated, at least initially:

- Active safety threats. Weapons, threats of violence, ongoing predatory behavior. Safety response comes first; restorative work, if it ever happens, is a much later question.
- Sustained victimization. The affected party should not be put in a conference with their abuser, regardless of how the building thinks the conference might go. The affected party's autonomy includes the right to refuse the conference entirely.
- Mandatory reporting situations. When mandatory reporting applies, the report comes first.

Restorative work happens, if at all, after the legal process has begun and only with the affected party's full consent.

In all three categories, the framework's never-required forgiveness commitment applies institutionally as well as personally. No student is required to participate in a restorative conference that would re-traumatize them.

Chapter 10 • Where AoG and Restorative Practice Diverge

The honest differences

Most of this document has documented alignment. Honesty requires also documenting where AoG and restorative practice diverge. There are real differences. Building administrators implementing both should know them.

Divergence 1 • The Self-Compassion Foundation

AoG's Unit 2 work across all grade bands is dedicated to self-compassion as the foundation for everything else. The framework explicitly claims that self-compassion precedes empathy, that empathy precedes forgiveness of others, that forgiveness precedes grace. The sequence is the framework's developmental claim.

Most restorative practice frameworks do not include this developmental claim explicitly. IIRP's framework focuses on the relational and procedural dimensions of repair without specifying the interior architecture that makes repair possible. Zehr's work names the importance of the harm-doer's capacity to face impact but does not specify how that capacity is built.

This is not a contradiction. It is a complementarity. Restorative practice provides the relational architecture; AoG provides the interior architecture. But districts adopting only restorative practice without curriculum-side self-compassion work may find that students struggle to engage with conferences honestly because the interior foundation is missing.

Divergence 2 • The Never-Required Forgiveness Commitment

Restorative practice frameworks generally do not require forgiveness, but they also do not name forgiveness-as-non-required as an explicit institutional commitment. The framing tends to be implicit.

AoG names the never-required forgiveness commitment explicitly, repeatedly, at every grade band, in every Pre-Year Letter to families. "I choose not to forgive yet" is treated with the same respect as "I choose to forgive." The commitment is institutional, not implicit.

This divergence matters in active restorative work. A conference protocol that implicitly assumes forgiveness as the desired outcome — even subtly — produces pressure on the affected party to forgive. AoG's explicit commitment guards against this pressure within the curriculum; the building's restorative practice should hold the same commitment institutionally.

Divergence 3 • The Boundary of Peace as an Outcome

Restorative practice frameworks generally treat reconciliation as the implicit goal of restorative work, with various outcomes possible along the way. AoG's Boundary of Peace concept (Book 4 U3 L3) names that genuine restoration may be a sustained boundary rather than full reconciliation — and the framework treats this outcome as equally restorative, not as a failure of full restoration.

This divergence matters in conference design. If the building's restorative practice implicitly aims at full reconciliation, conferences will produce procedural reconciliation that does not last. If the building's restorative practice recognizes the Boundary of Peace as a legitimate outcome, conferences can produce durable arrangements that honor the affected party's autonomy.

Divergence 4 • The Tier 1 Universal Posture

AoG is delivered as Tier 1 universal SEL — every student, every grade band. Restorative practice in most schools is implemented as a discipline approach that activates when harm has occurred. The two operate at different scales.

This divergence is more about timing than philosophy. AoG's curriculum is preventive infrastructure; restorative practice is responsive infrastructure. Both are needed. Neither replaces the other.

Divergence 5 • The Vocabulary Discipline

AoG's vocabulary discipline is non-negotiable (Document 2 Chapter 8). Forgiveness, trust, and reconciliation are three distinct constructs. Guilt and shame are different. Grace is not a synonym for niceness.

Restorative practice vocabulary is less codified. Different practitioners use 'restoration' to mean reconciliation, repair, return-to-normal, or full relational healing — sometimes interchangeably. This vocabulary looseness is sometimes a feature (allowing flexibility across contexts) and sometimes a bug (producing miscommunication about what the conference is actually trying to achieve).

Schools implementing both AoG and restorative practice should adopt AoG's vocabulary discipline at the building level. Restoration in a conference may produce reconciliation, working relationship, peaceful coexistence, or Boundary of Peace — these are different outcomes and should be named differently.

The divergences between AoG and restorative practice are not contradictions. They are complementarities. AoG provides the curriculum-side interior architecture; restorative practice provides the building-side relational architecture. Together they form a coherent system. Apart, each is partial.

Chapter 11 • Building-Level Implementation

What the assistant principal actually does

This chapter is the operational guide for the building administrator implementing AoG-aligned restorative practice. It is structured around the assistant principal's actual workflow — the day-to-day choices that build (or undermine) Grace Culture across the year.

Daily Practice

The First Question When a Student Arrives

When a student is sent to the office for a behavior issue, the first question is not 'what did you do?' The first question is the Recovery Arc question: where is this student right now, and what does their nervous system need?

This is institutionally different from how many discipline conversations begin. The shift is small in time (a few minutes) and large in effect (the difference between a productive conference and a failed one).

The Co-Regulation Move

The administrator's regulated nervous system is the room's primary safety instrument. This is the same operational principle from Document 5 Chapter 9 (teacher wellbeing as curriculum fidelity), applied to the discipline office.

Practical: take a slower breath before the student enters. Both feet on the floor. Soft eye contact, not direct stare. Do not match the student's activation. Do not match the student's flatness. Be the regulated ground.

The Vocabulary Discipline

Use the framework's vocabulary precisely in your office. "What was the impact?" rather than "What was the consequence?" "Who was affected?" rather than "Who got hurt?" "What does repair look like?" rather than "What's your punishment?"

This is not just terminology. The vocabulary shapes what the conversation can produce. Retributive vocabulary produces retributive outcomes. Restorative vocabulary produces restorative outcomes.

The Weekly Pattern

Monday Morning • Open Cases Review

Brief review with counselor: which restorative conferences are pending Step 5 follow-through? Which Boundary of Peace agreements are this week? Which students are mid-reintegration and may need building-level support?

Wednesday · The Pulse Check

Walk the building. Notice what is being said in classrooms — vocabulary use, tone, restorative or punitive frame. Notice what is being said in hallways. Notice the lunchroom. Grace Culture is built or undermined in these everyday spaces, not only in the office.

Friday Afternoon · The Week's Review

Brief reflection: how many restorative conferences this week? How many produced Step 5 agreements? How many had follow-through scheduled? Which incidents went retributive when they should have gone restorative? Which staff need coaching? Which students need additional support?

The Annual Pattern

August (Pre-Year)	Faculty-wide PD on framework vocabulary discipline and the Recovery Arc as discipline frame. Set building-level Grace Culture commitments. Calendar the year's risk-designated lessons (★/★★) with counselor capacity blocked.
September–October	Heavy classroom presence as Identity work happens. Restorative response to early-year incidents establishes the year's discipline culture. Avoid retributive responses to small incidents — the building is reading what the year will be like.
November–December	Self-Compassion unit is active. Watch for students whose Internal Critic shows up in behavior. The Compassionate Witness work in Book 4 may surface students who need additional support.
January–March	Forgiveness unit is active. The most clinically sensitive curriculum work of the year. Brief counselors on building-level patterns; coordinate with classroom teachers on students who may need conference work this period.
April–June	Grace unit is active. The year's culminating restorative work. Build the bridge to next year — what worked, what needs adjustment, what the building learned about its own discipline practice.

The Five Common Mistakes

Five operational mistakes the framework warns against:

First, the conference-too-fast mistake. The student is sent to the office, and within ten minutes the conference is happening. Both parties are still in the Activated phase. The conference fails. Wait. The waiting is not avoidance — it is co-regulation.

Second, the implicit-reconciliation mistake. The conference is run as if reconciliation is the only acceptable outcome. The affected party feels pressure to accept; the harm-doer learns that procedural apology produces release; nothing actually changes. Name the outcome menu explicitly. The Boundary of Peace is a legitimate restorative outcome.

Third, the no-follow-through mistake. The conference produces an agreement. The agreement is recorded. No one checks back in. Within two weeks, the same dynamic recurs. Step 5 is not optional. Schedule the check-ins on the calendar.

Fourth, the punitive-fallback mistake. A serious incident occurs and the building reverts to retributive response under pressure. The message to students: restorative practice is for small things; for serious harm, the school still punishes. This message undermines the entire restorative culture. Reserve retributive consequences for situations where restorative response is genuinely contraindicated, and even then, attempt the restorative work afterward when possible.

Fifth, the vocabulary-drift mistake. Building staff use "forgiveness" when they mean "reconciliation." Use "shame" when they mean "guilt." Use "grace" when they mean "niceness." The drift undermines the curriculum-side teaching and produces miscommunication in restorative conferences. Vocabulary discipline at the building level is non-negotiable.

Chapter 12 • The Working Alignment Summary

One-page reference for the building administrator

This final chapter consolidates the document into a single working reference. Print this chapter for your office; the rest of the document is supporting context.

AoG and Restorative Practice • The Alignment in Brief

Curriculum side (AoG)	Tier 1 universal SEL. Builds interior architecture for self-compassion, empathy, forgiveness, and grace. Year-long work with cumulative artifacts.
Building side (Restorative Practice)	Discipline philosophy and operational practice. Responds to harm through repair rather than retribution. Calibrated to actual incidents.
The relationship	Curriculum builds the substrate; building practice activates and reinforces it. Together: a coherent system. Apart: each is partial.

The Working Vocabulary

Recovery Arc	Activated · Regulating · Reflecting · Reintegrating. The four phases between rupture and repair. Conferences belong in the Reflecting phase.
Repair Protocol (REP-1)	Five steps: Both regulate first · One speaks, one listens · Impact acknowledged · Repair action named · Re-entry agreed. Step 5 is the most-skipped and most-important.
Forgiveness ≠ Trust ≠ Reconciliation	Three independent decisions. Never assume one implies the others.
Boundary of Peace	Forgiveness without reconciliation. A legitimate restorative outcome.
Calling In vs. Calling Out	Two ways to address harm. Most school incidents are calling-in situations. Some are calling-out. Five considerations distinguish them.
Grace Culture	The building-level culture in which restorative practice actually works. Built daily, by every adult, across the year.

The Five Building-Level Commitments

A building implementing AoG-aligned restorative practice commits to:

1. Adult modeling of Grace Culture — toward students AND toward each other.
2. Recovery Arc-honored timing — conferences in the Reflecting phase, not the Activated phase.
3. Restorative response as default — punitive consequences reserved for situations where restorative response is contraindicated.
4. Vocabulary discipline at the building level — the framework's precision instruments held institutionally.
5. Step 5 follow-through — every restorative conference produces a re-entry agreement that is institutionally honored and monitored.

The Decision Frame

Should our building adopt restorative practice alongside AoG?	Yes if the building leadership team can commit to the five building-level commitments above and can support the calendar capacity for restorative conferences. Defer if the leadership team cannot or will not commit, or if the school's discipline culture is currently dominated by retributive response in ways that would undermine AoG's curriculum content.
What if we already have restorative practice and are now adopting AoG?	Excellent foundation. Use this document to align the existing practice with the framework's vocabulary, the Recovery Arc, and the Boundary of Peace. The five building-level commitments still apply.
What if we have AoG and are now adopting restorative practice?	Strong sequence. The curriculum-side substrate is already being built. This document provides the building-side activation. Begin with affective statements and small impromptu conferences (lower IIRP intensity); build toward formal conferences over the implementation year.
What if we have neither?	Begin with AoG. The curriculum builds the substrate that makes restorative practice possible. Add restorative practice in Year 2 or Year 3 of AoG implementation, when students have begun building the interior architecture and staff have begun internalizing the framework's vocabulary.

The Architecture of Grace and restorative practice are not the same thing. They are not in tension either. They are complementary architectures — the curriculum-side and the building-side of one coherent commitment to building, sustaining, and repairing community across the years students spend with us. Buildings that hold both well find that students arrive at adulthood with both the interior tools and the relational practiced experience to do this work for the rest of their lives. That is the institutional aim. This document is the working tool.

— END OF RESTORATIVE PRACTICES CROSSWALK —