



Restorative Justice and the School to Prison Pipeline: A Conceptual Framework to Address Racial & Ethnic Disproportionality.

SUMMARY

The article constructs a framework to combat the racial and ethnic inequalities of the school-to-prison-pipeline (STPP) with its foundation centering on restorative justice (RJ). Racist practices of exclusionary discipline (ED) have historically resulted in negative effects for students of color. Through the years of being racially profiled and criminalized by the school system, Black and Latinx students have an increased chance of entering the juvenile justice system. By practicing RJ, schools can provide an opportunity to promote belongingness and foster student accountability. Through prevention and interventions, the framework highlights the effects of institutional racism through ED and provides strategies to decrease the disproportionality of students of color in the STPP.

IMPORTANCE

School mental health professionals must be cognizant and actively combat ways institutionalized racism impacts students, such as exclusionary discipline. When students are suspended they are not able to engage in school, maintain academic achievement, and have positive association with their school community.

EQUITY CONSIDERATIONS

The framework presents a way to promote equity through restorative justice, but it is still a form of punishment. SMH professionals should validate and empower students, and work to rectify cultural mismatches.

PRACTITIONER TIPS

Schools must create a **positive school climate**. Students are more likely to have **emotional stability** and **willingness to learn** when they **feel connected**.

School staff should practice **connectedness** and **cultural humility**. Engaging in critical self-reflection is vital to recognizing implicit biases that may affect classroom and school methods.

Parental involvement has led to increases in school safety, with students less likely to participate in risky behavior.

Student-focused interventions (e.g., peer mediation & restorative circles) promote understanding, responsibility, and connectedness with students.

Community service interventions allow students to develop positive identities and rebuild relationship with community.

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