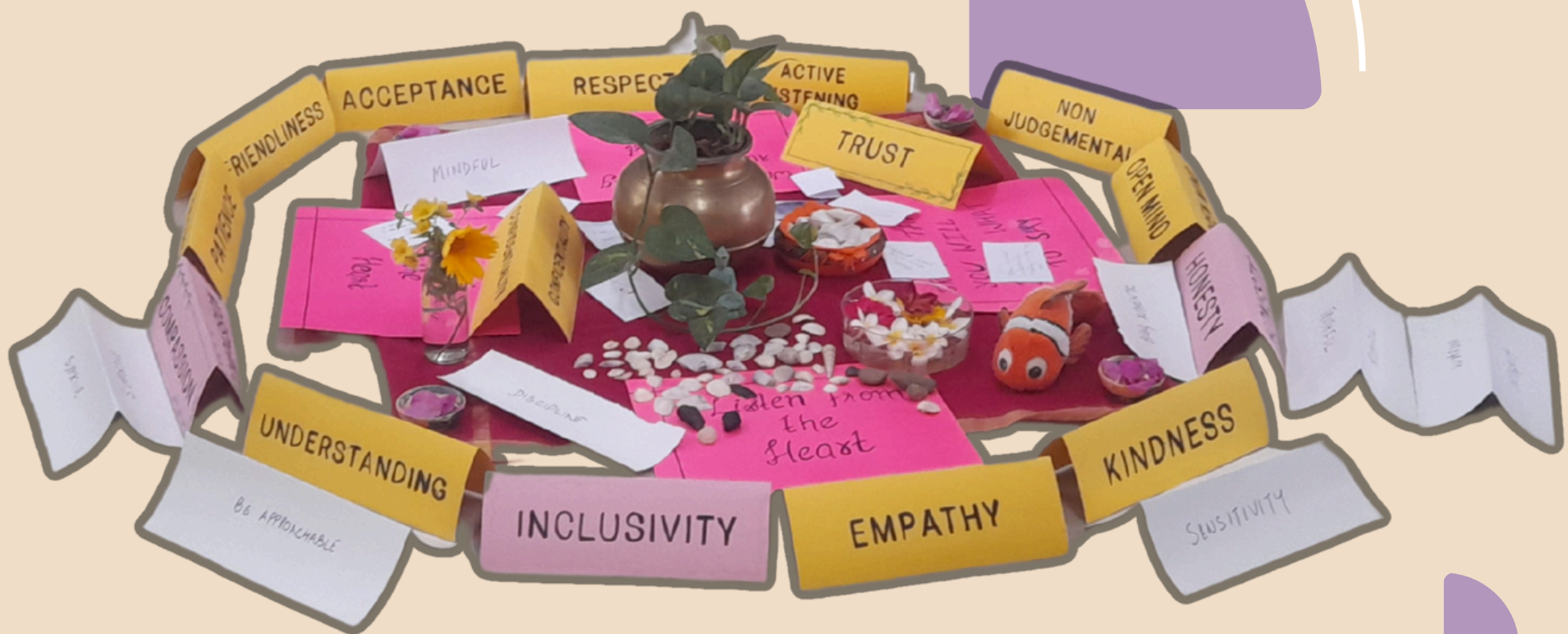


# BUILDING A RESTORATIVE CULTURE IN SCHOOLS



**Initiating Restorative Practices at  
Saandeevani Academy For Excellence,  
Bengaluru 2022 – 2024**





## »» A Note on Restorative Practices

**R**estorative Practices are mechanisms to build and strengthen communities, impart social and emotional learning, address misbehaviour or harm, and repair relationships. These are built around commonly agreed upon values, help create an empathic and mindful community sensitive to the needs of its members, and help strengthen relationships and restore one's faith in the humanity of oneself and others. Restorative processes can be used in different settings such as the school, educational institution, family, workplace, community, and the juvenile justice system to foster life skills and relatedness among students, staff, and management, and create a restorative culture. Respect, participation, and accountability are at the heart of restorative processes. Through restorative circles, a safe space can be made that helps to focus on values-based learning of life skills.

Restorative justice, which falls under the larger umbrella of restorative practices, views crime as harm done to people, relationships, and the community. Therefore, restorative justice entails involving persons harmed, persons who caused harm, and the community to repair the harm caused.





## **Restorative practices in education**

are about "facilitating learning communities that nurture the capacity of people to engage with one another and their environment in a manner that supports and respects the inherent dignity and worth of all" (Evans & Vaandering, 2016). Under the restorative approach, misbehaviour in the classroom is viewed as a social and emotional learning opportunity for children. Instead of punishment and exclusion, restorative processes focus on values-based dialogues to set things right and repair relationships. Schools in Australia, Brazil, Canada, New Zealand, the UK, and the USA are using restorative practices to build a positive, respectful, and caring culture. It is used to address bullying, exclusion, and disciplinary issues, but is not confined to just these (Drewery, 2016).

## **Restorative language and practices**

are used with the awareness and intention that power can be experienced 'with' each other rather than 'over' one another. Power 'with' enhances power, as each person adds their power to the group, while power 'over' may result in part of it being used to keep the other(s) suppressed. Restorative language is the use of affective statements, words, and questions that communicate authenticity, respect, the desire to understand better (than the haste to judge), and inclusiveness.










## Training in Restorative Practices

Since 2016, Enfold staff and consultants have been trained in restorative processes by international experts in India and abroad. Since 2018, Enfold has started training people in different settings, such as organisations, social workers, counsellors, teachers, and child care institution staff.



Enfold's facilitators use restorative approaches, techniques, and language to the extent possible while facilitating sessions on Gender Equity, Sexuality, and Personal Safety.



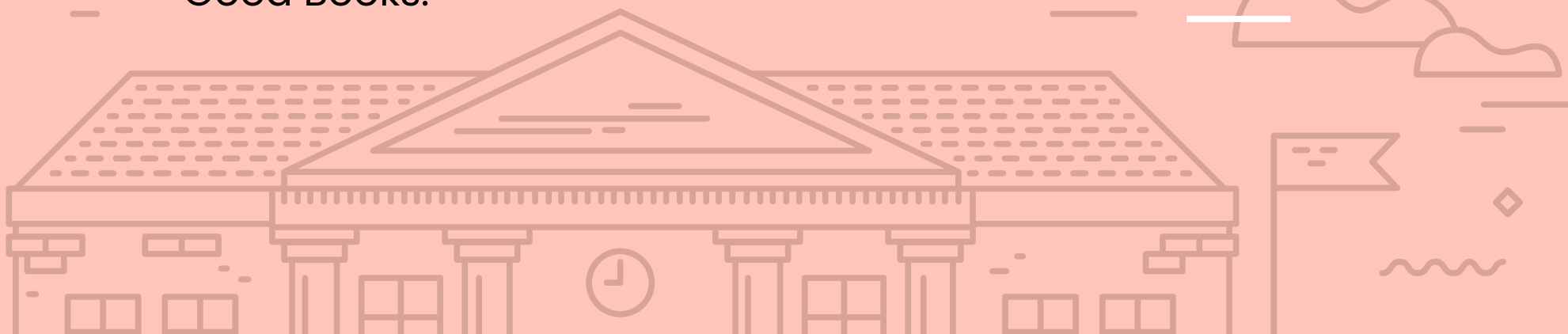

## References



Drewery, W. (2016). Restorative practice in New Zealand schools: Social development through relational justice. *Educational Philosophy and Theory*, 48(2), 191–203.



Evans, K., & Vaandering, D. (2016). *The Little Book of Restorative Justice in Education: Fostering Responsibility, Healing, and Hope in Schools (Justice and Peacebuilding)*. Good Books.





# Restorative Circles at Saandeevani Academy For Excellence facilitated by Enfold:

## Details of the Program in Year 1 and Year 2







# YEAR 1

## (2022-2023)




### **Introduction to Restorative Practices:**

Experience of a Restorative Circle and discussion on building a restorative culture in a school for the management and senior staff – (3 hours)



### **Teachers' / counsellors' training in keeping Restorative Circles:**

20 teachers/ counsellors trained in keeping Circles to enhance socio-emotional learning and other life skills, as defined by the World Health Organisation and the CBSE as 21st-century skills.



**Training was conducted in three parts in the academic year 2022-2023**



### **PART 1**

#### **Theoretical inputs and experiential learning**

A 5-day (6 hours per day) training (2 days - theoretical discussions on restorative practices and life skills; experience of Circles, 3 days - Participants practice keeping Circles with the group and receive feedback, life skills are discussed from a restorative lens)



## day 1

- Introduction to Restorative Approaches and Restorative Justice
- Understanding the role of Restorative Approaches in education, especially in a school setting
- Elements of a Circle Process

## day 2

- Understanding how Restorative Approaches draw upon life skills as identified by WHO: Self-awareness (values and qualities); empathy; Communication—listening and speaking, building relationships, managing emotions, managing stress, conflict resolution, problem solving, decision-making, and creative and critical thinking.
- Experiencing facilitation of life skills through the Restorative Circle process - Self-awareness (Values, qualities); Empathy, Communication - listening and speaking, building relationships.
- Experiencing facilitation of life skills through the Restorative Circle process - managing emotions when in conflict.
- Experiencing facilitation of life skills through the Restorative Circle process- Stress and problem solving/ decision making using creative and critical thinking.

## days 3,4&5

Participants practised keeping circles within the group on life skills and received feedback from Efold facilitators.

## circle



**on values – A value  
important to me, when I  
stood up for it, and how I  
felt then**



**circle 2** on power – how I experienced it, how I practice it

**circle 3** on relationships – people I like to be with/ people I don't like to be with

**circle 4** on success and failure –  
decision making, goal setting

circle **5** on anger

**circle 6** on relationships/ friendship  
- betrayal

**circle 7** on taunting bullying –  
when I was bullied/ when I  
bullied, what I needed then

**circle 8 on changing beliefs**

**circle 9** on safety – boundaries, consent, respect/ insult and its effect on relationships

**circle 10** on justice – what it means to me

## Self-learning by the trainees:

- Study preparatory material on Restorative Practices and Circle questions on life skills for each grade
- Watch videos on RP.
- Develop Circle plans for Circles with their students



## **PART 2** **Circles with students**

The school scheduled Circles with primary, middle, and high school students within a week of concluding Part 1.

Circle plans were discussed with Enfold trainers.

Enfold facilitators observed the ten pairs of teachers keeping Circles for students over 5-6 days. Each pair was observed keeping a minimum of two Circles. Feedback was discussed with the teachers.

16 circles were observed and feedback was discussed with Circle keepers in 2022-23

## **PART 3** **Mentoring**

A WhatsApp group was formed, and the teachers continued to receive mentoring throughout the year via this communication channel.

# **YEAR 2** **(2023-2024)**

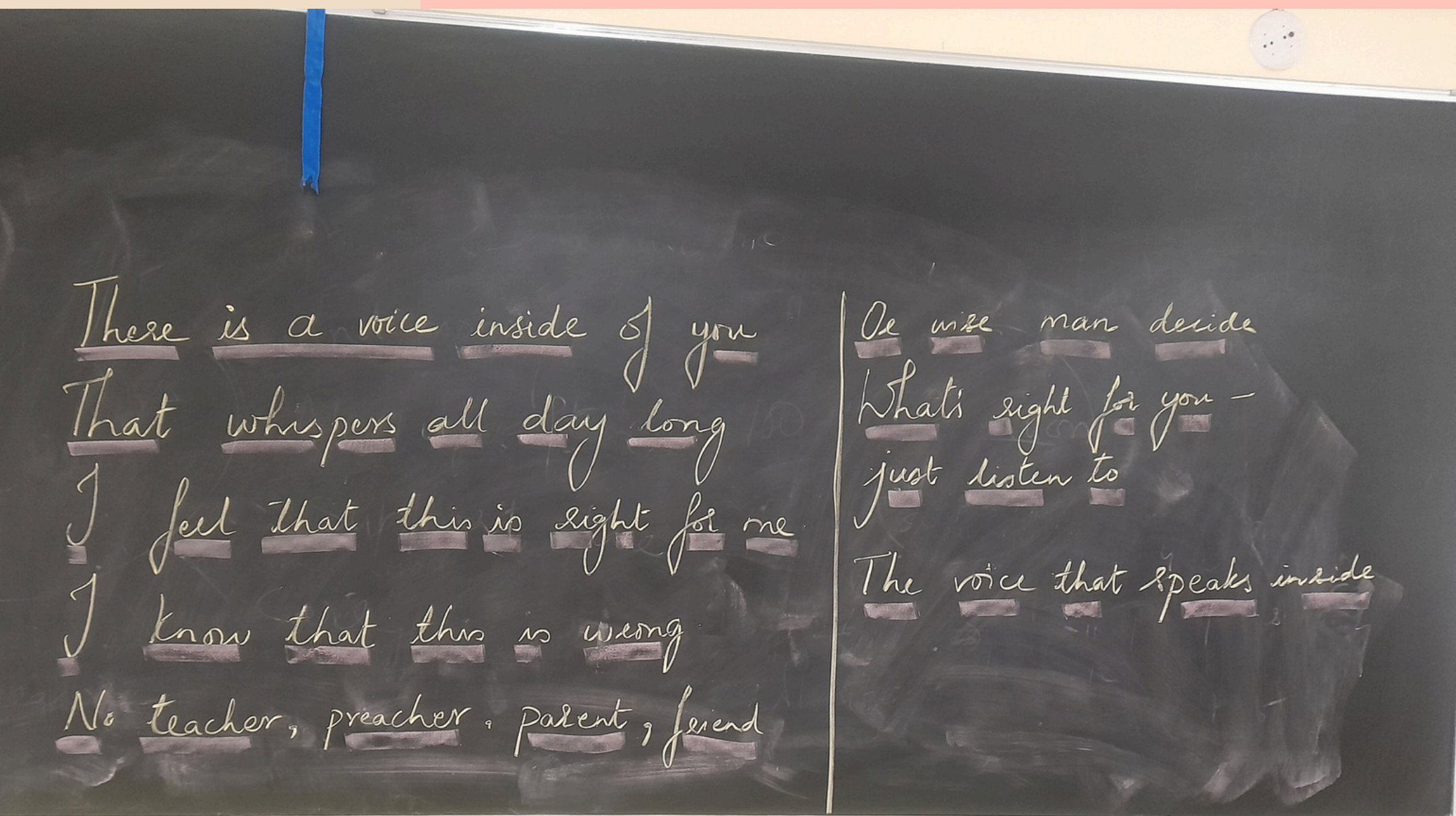
**Refresher training – 6 hours in May 2024**

**Teachers kept circles with students. 23  
Circles were observed, and feedback was  
discussed with Circle keepers**

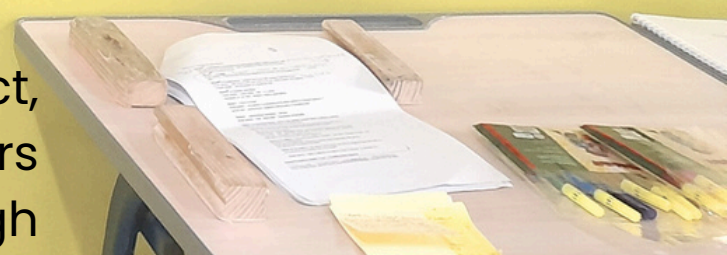
**Mentoring through the WhatsApp group  
continued**



# Experience and Impact of Restorative Circles Shared by Saandeepani Academy for Excellence



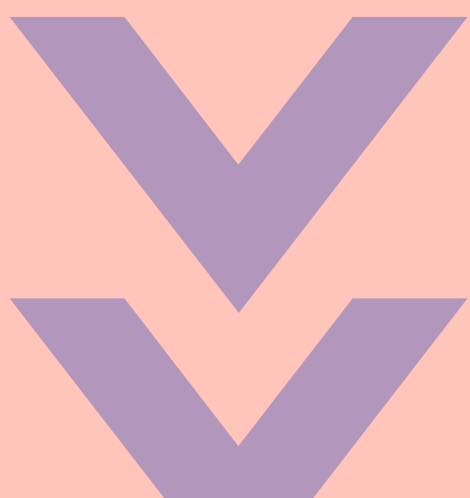
**W**e, at Saandeepani, have adopted restorative circles as a transformative approach to behaviour management and to nurture positive relationships based on trust and respect, responsible citizenship and empathy. After two years of on implementing them across our middle and high school classrooms, we have witnessed how wonderfully they are reshaping the relational fabric of our school. The conversations have moved from “Who broke the rule and what should the punishment be?” to the harm that was caused and the reparations that need to be done.





# >>> Impact

- We have observed a marked improvement in resilience and exercising restraint when our students are dealing with their peers on the playground, in the classrooms and other common spaces. There have been instances where our students have requested for circles to resolve internal disputes.
- Restorative circles have strengthened the peer-peer, student-teacher and teacher-teacher bonds by providing structured respectful spaces that enable dialogue. The SEL competencies, notably the emotional vocabulary, have gradually been improving. This is essential for both self-growth and community well-being.
- Additionally, circles have supported us in addressing classroom issues before they escalate. Our students are better equipped to navigate tense situations proactively and constructively. Some of our students have even effectively planned and conducted circles with appropriate question prompts.
- They are increasingly serving as a practical guide for teachers, helping them address classroom challenges through dialogue, empathy, and shared responsibility.





# >>> Enablers

- Trained Faculty – The comprehensive training by Enfold facilitators has played a vital role in building the capacity of teachers to lead circles with confidence and utmost emotional sensitivity. Routine internal (peers) and external (Enfold) observation and feedback have helped teachers refine their circle-keeping skills. The collaborative team culture that Saandeevani nurtures on campus provides flexibility for teachers to seek support from each other in planning and conducting circles (Eg :- a teacher who may not be confident in keeping a circle on a sensitive issue may request their team member who may be well-informed and adept in that area to conduct a circle in her class)
- Regularly scheduled circles help normalize open dialogue, build trust, and transform classrooms into safe spaces.
- A committed and sustained effort towards creating a space where every participant feels seen, heard, and valued. Establishing ground rules that honour diversity of thought and build a sense of belonging.

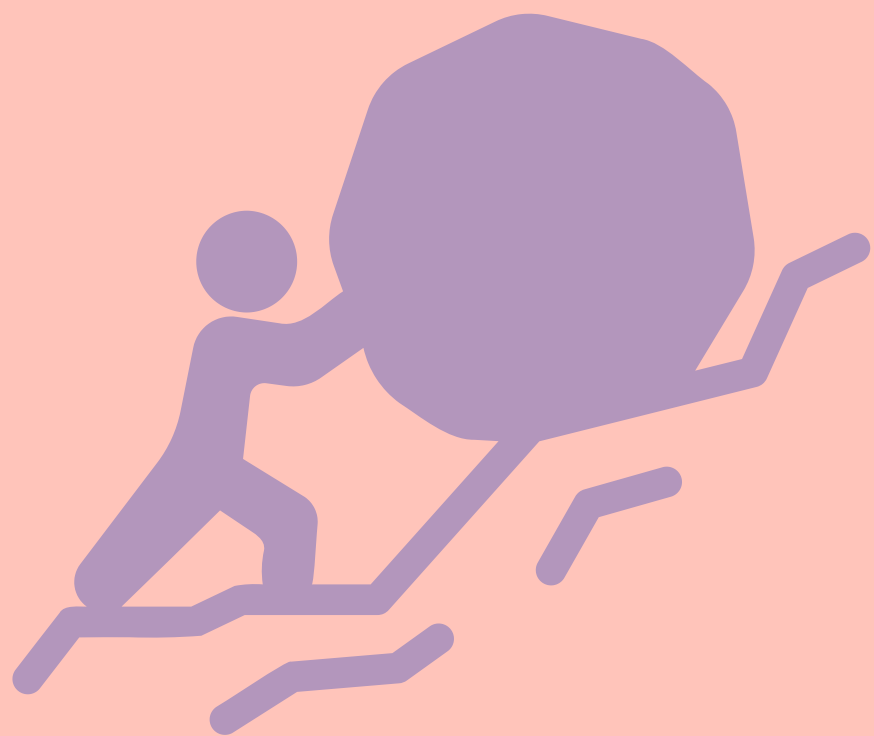






# >>> Challenges

- Intentional planning to integrate restorative circles into the school timetable. Time must be set aside for teachers to plan circles, debrief on completion, and rigorously follow through on the concluding actions / agreements without compromising on the teaching time.
- Inconsistency in practices, especially in following the prescribed steps authentically, carefully choosing the appropriate discussion prompts, guiding discussions with emotional intelligence and a nonjudgmental presence, and concluding effectively with actions to follow through. We need to build strong support systems for teachers to help them navigate the challenges and sustain their interest and enthusiasm through constant encouragement by building a collaborative team culture.
- Transitioning a classroom culture from consequences to conversations can take time and face resistance. It takes sustained effort from adults and students to internalize and model the values and principles of restorative circles.







As education is shifting towards nurturing the whole child and building an inclusive and equitable school culture, restorative circles have immense potential in aiding in this transformation. In our experience over the last two years, this is possible only when they are implemented intentionally and thoughtfully, with consistency. While challenges persist, we need to remind ourselves of the long-term benefits of restorative circles for the larger community that far outweigh the challenges, making them a worthwhile investment in the future of education.

**-Ms. Latha Mudduramaiah**

*School Director*

*Saandeevani Academy For Excellence*

*Bengaluru*

*May 2025*

THANK  
YOU

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