

**TUTKITTUA TIETOA KONFLIKTINHALLINNASTA YHTEISÖISSÄ**

Suomen Sovittelufoorumin ja Suomen YK-liiton järjestämä

**SOVITTELUSEMINAARI****26.-27.11.2009****Seminaaripäivä 26.11.2009 torstai**

- paikka: Kulttuurikeskus Caisa
- käyntiosoite: Fennia kortteli, Mikonkatu 17 C / Vuorikatu 14 / Kaisaniemen metroasema
- katso kartta alla

## Ohjelma:

- |             |  |
|-------------|--|
| 9.30-9.40   | <i>Seminaarin avaus</i>  |
| 9.40-10.00  | <i>Restoratiivisuus sovittelun lähtökohtana</i><br>SSF:n puheenjohtaja, laamanni emeritus Teuri Brunila  |
| 10.00-10.40 | <i>Työyhteisösovittelun tutkimuksen tuomat opit sovittelun merkityksestä</i><br>Tutkija Timo Pehrman, Lapin yliopisto  |
| 10.40-11.00 | <i>Promises of facilitative family mediation in Finland</i><br>Professor Synnöve Karvinen-Niinikoski, University of Helsinki   |
| 11.00-12.00 | <i>Peer mediation in Finnish schools: reflections on Jokela school shooting and the idea of a peer conflict resolution</i><br>Researcher Tomi Kiilakoski, Finnish Youth Research Society |
| 12.00-13.00 | Ruokailutauko  |
| 13.00-14.30 | <i>A whole school restorative approach</i><br>Dr. Belinda Hopkins, Transforming Conflict (see abstract below)<br>National Centre for Restorative Justice in Youth Settings, UK           |
| 14.30-15.00 | Kahvitauko   |
| 15.00-15.45 | <i>Koulusovittelutyön kokemuksia</i><br>Suomen YK-liiton kouluvierailijat<br>Helsingin normaalilyseon sovittelijaoppilaat ja ohjaajat  |
| 15.45-16.00 | <i>Seminaarin päätös</i>   |

Seminaari on maksuton. Ruokailu ja kahvi omalla kustannuksella Cafe Caisassa tai lähialueen ravintoloissa. **Ilmoittautuminen välttämätön!** Katso ilmoittautumisohjeet alla!

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|-------------|--|
| 16.30-18.30 | SSF:n sääntömääräinen vuosikokous eli Syyskokous SSF:n jäsenille (paikka ja asialista ilmoitetaan myöhemmin) |
|-------------|--|

**Koulutuspäivä 27.11.2009 perjantai**

- Aika: klo 9-14, ruokatauko klo 11-12
- Paikka: Helsingin normaalilyseon auditorio A107, Ratakatu 6, Helsinki
- kouluttaja: Dr. Belinda Hopkins, koulutuskieli englanti
- varattu ensisijassa SSF:n ja Versohankkeen kouluttajille sekä YK-liiton toimijoille
- teemana restoratiivisen ajattelun ja sovittävän työotteen syventäminen
- max. osallistujamäärä 35 henkeä
- Ruokailu omalla kustannuksella

**TERVETULOA!**

**Seminaari ja koulutuspäivä ovat maksuttomia**

**Seminaarin kieli on pääosin englanti**

**Ilmoittautumiset viimeistään 12.11.2009 sähköisesti osoitteeseen**

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**Kartta: Kulttuurikeskus Caisa**

## Pääpuhujan esittely

**Dr Belinda Hopkins** is the Director of Transforming Conflict. She pioneered the application of restorative principles in school settings in the UK in the late 90's and developed the first training course specifically developed for teachers. All this pioneering work was disseminated through many published articles and eventually as a book - 'Just Schools'- which is referred to by some as 'the bible' in the field.

In order to remain at the cutting edge of developments in the field Belinda has spent the past 6 years researching the experiences of those who have been implementing restorative approaches in their schools. The results form the first doctoral thesis in this field, and will soon be turned into an accessible practical book for senior managers and project leaders.



**A brief summary of how she came to call her approach 'Restorative Justice in Education'**

**Restorative Justice is an innovative approach** to offending behaviour, which places relationships and healing the damage done to relationships at the heart of a crime reduction policy. It is an approach that has the support of the Home Office, and Youth Offending Teams are being encouraged to consider restorative approaches when dealing with young offenders. Research is suggesting that young people who have met face to face with the people who have been affected by their criminal behaviour, together with trained mediators, have tended to re-offend less. Victims of criminal

behaviour have also attested to the value of the process and many have been able to move on and put the trauma behind them.

**This short article** will describe our involvement in initiatives designed to take the values and principles of Restorative Justice into schools.

### The experience in Great Britain

**In some instances the starting point** for the school focus had been a concern that certain schools were becoming involved in victim-offender mediation and conferencing (mediation involving a wider group of people affected by the offending behaviour) without appreciating the need for an environment conducive to restoration, rehabilitation and re-integration. The process of mediation and conferencing creates opportunities for active listening, recognition of the others' situation, empowerment and, often, apology and forgiveness. For real healing to take place, however, there is an implicit suggestion that the wider community has a role to play in supporting both victims and offenders to move on after the mediation. There has been anecdotal evidence to suggest that sometimes the safe and healing atmosphere of a conference or mediation has been undermined by unthinking responses from students and teachers. An important consideration then, is what skills the community might need to be able to support this process of reparation.

**Another line of enquiry** was inspired by a key idea in Restorative thinking - the importance of repairing harm. Restorative Justice stresses the importance of relationships over and above rules. It seeks at all times to restore relationships between people in a community when these have been damaged by inappropriate behaviour. The question arose as to whether it is always possible to assume that damage has been done to relationship. What if there was no relationship in the first place?

**It became clear** that a truly Restorative Approach, putting relationship at the centre of the community, needed to be working at both a preventative and a reparative level. Things started to slot into place! For several years Belinda had been working in schools developing Peer Mediation projects, working with young people and a few key staff. However she had come to the conclusion that such projects can only flourish if the whole school takes ownership of the philosophy of mediation and builds the practice and principles into their everyday interactions at every level.

**A major influence on this work** has been Kingston Friends Workshop Group, which had devised a wonderful analogy for considering conflict and conflict management. They suggest that the behaviours we see or hear in a group

in conflict (perhaps a classroom or staff room on a bad day!) are merely the tip of this iceberg. Beneath the surface we can be fairly certain that what needs addressing are issues of low self-esteem, poor communication skills and lack of co-operation. A comfortable, harmonious classroom or staff room, on the other hand, would be full of people with high self-esteem, who communicated easily and effectively and who enjoyed working together. Not an Iceberg but a Tropical Island! Belinda had therefore began encouraging schools to develop Circle Time as a starting point from which to develop an environment conducive to problem solving and mediation, using the 'Iceberg to Tropical Island' model as a basis for planning the programme. Her starting point had increasingly been the adults in the school community, who need to be modelling the ethos and skills of creative conflict management and restorative practices. Without regular staff Circle Time student Circle Time is difficult to sustain. Staff training has revealed many staffroom icebergs and a willingness to work towards that tropical island.

**From this basis** the staff themselves can develop the model which will work best for their own school. Restorative Justice is about dialogue, about involving everyone in the process of finding ways forward, about mutual respect. Circle Time provides the forum and indeed the structure, for developing other kinds of circles - problem-solving circles, mediation circles, conference circles, school councils and so on.

**None of this is new.** Richard Cohen in his book 'Students resolving Conflict' advocates establishing a positive ethos first and foremost, then developing one-to-one problem solving skills and only then considering interventions like mediation. Belinda's contribution has been to link all this together with the ideas and practice of Restorative Justice and call it a Whole School Restorative Approach.

**Of course there is also** the radical aspect of Restorative philosophy which asks us to look afresh at rule breaking and punishment. In his stimulating and challenging book 'Restoring Respect for Justice' Martin Wright writes:

**'Restorative Justice in the area of criminal justice** is based on the idea that the response to crime should be to put right the harm, as far as possible and not, as hitherto, to inflict harm on the offender'.

**In the school context** this might mean responding to inappropriate behaviour by considering who has been affected and ensuring that any response takes into account the relationship between those involved. Those people familiar with mediation will recognise the importance of dealing not only with the behaviours that have caused conflicts but also addressing the underlying difficult emotions. Failure to do this leaves resentment and the conflict is likely to erupt again, maybe in a different form. This principle can apply in schools even when the conflict is between adult and student or adult and adult. Furthermore, as Martin Wright says:

**'The example set** by those who punish is an anti-social one, it tells people that you can use superior force to stop other people doing what you don't want them to do.'

**A Restorative Approach then**, endorses practices like negotiating groundrules with all those affected by the rules- a common practice in schools using Circle Time. It encourages mediation as a way of dealing with conflicts. It promotes dialogue and negotiation, mutual respect and empowerment. It provides a template for developing a truly democratic school, encouraging active Citizenship skills in staff and students alike. It suggests processes by which harm can be repaired, not soft options to punishment, but processes which make people far more accountable for their actions than punishment. Punishment without the opportunity to hear from the people affected by an inappropriate action can breed alienation and hostility. The 'wrongdoer' may feel unheard, the people affected remain resentful or possibly complacent and the tensions on all sides remain, to bubble up at a later date. A face to face meeting, mediated by a neutral facilitator, might be tough, but experience suggests that there is more chance of all sides feeling greatly relieved by the chance to air their feelings, to explore ways forward and sometimes to offer or accept apologies.

**These are radical ideas.** They are inspiring ideas. They touch people's hearts as well as their minds. Schools are excited by them. They want to engage in the experiment of seeing what will happen if enough time and support is given over to making them work. Belinda is about to embark on some projects in the Thames Valley, for example, which could take at least two years to be self-sustaining.

### **The Northern Ireland experience**

**"Understanding of conflict** and non-violent ways of responding to it' is an objective of Education Mutual Understanding (EMU), a cross curricular theme in the curriculum in Northern Ireland. Peer Mediation was first introduced into primary schools in 1993 as an EMU initiative of the then Quaker Peace Education Project, an action research project at the Centre for the Study of Conflict.

**During the next five years** peer mediation programmes were undertaken in a number of primary and secondary schools in different parts of Northern Ireland. State school, Catholic schools, and Integrated schools were all represented in these programmes. The outcomes of these programmes illustrated a paradox. On the one hand, children were well able to internalise, adapt and apply peer mediation skills both in terms of providing formal

mediations, and using them informally at home, and with friends. But on the other, hand, Jerry Tyrrell's research team found that very few schools were able to sustain the programmes, because the environment was not necessarily sufficiently child-centred. Matching Belinda's experience, they found that schools needed to reflect the same values throughout its community

**This was brought home** to Jerry, when after a demonstration of peer mediation by a group of pupils, at a school which had been training children for some time, a teacher said, "That's all very well, but what about blame and punishment." The values of peer mediation, which included empathy, inclusion, volunteering, being future focussed, and above all involving the parties in the conflict in the solution, are not necessarily those of the educational system.

**In this sense** the Northern Irish experience is similar to the rest of the UK, and as previously argued, schools have to create environments which are conducive to these values, if programmes such as conferencing or mediation are to flourish and grow.

**The politics and reality of Northern Ireland** have a way of creating baggage around even the freshest ideas. Justice is a contentious issue, and restorative justice has been dragged into the policing debate, because the restorative justice programmes in Republican/Nationalist areas tend to be community based, whilst those in the Loyalist/Unionist areas are police based.

**So restorative justice** has quite a high if confused profile, and perhaps a public misconception of what it is and what it can achieve. Nevertheless the children and the adults alike make the link between the skills children use to address conflicts in the playground and those needed in the Northern Ireland peace process. Empathy underpins peer mediation and politicians have gone on record acknowledging that empathy is a key skill in negotiation.

### Conclusion

Those of us engaged in promoting programmes in schools based on restorative principles could point to anecdotal evidence that they have transformed the teaching and learning environments in individual schools. The reality is that for schools to take on such programmes in a sustainable way changes are needed in the environment of the whole school. Teaching is an undervalued, under appreciated, stressed profession, where the arbitrary measure of academic achievement is considered more important than life skills. The challenge for us is to harness the creativity, passion, vision and vocation that drew teachers into the profession and encourage them to reflect on their own practice.

**We are feeling our way. We are all taking risks. We are learning together. Watch this space!**

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### References

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Wright, Martin (1999) Restoring Respect for Justice  
Winchester: Waterside Press

Kingston Friends Workshop Group (1996) Ways and Means Today

Tyrrell, Jerry (2001) Peer Mediation - a process for primary schools (ed. Marian Liebmann) London, Souvenir Press.