Dear Friends,

We are a few weeks into Sheltering in Place and I have to be honest – it is an ongoing struggle. As online meetings and check-ins become our new normal, we at PiRI have been reflecting on what “connection” looks and feels like during this challenging time.

Now more than ever, we are drawing deeply on our knowledge and experiences as Restorative Practitioners to lift each other up, even as we keep our distance. As Education Coordinator, I am especially attuned to the voices of our District Partners who are engaged in the important work of staying connected with students. The challenges seem especially fraught when we take into consideration that teaching, learning, and social emotional connections usually occur daily while we are in close proximity to one another. With limits on our physical interactions come many challenges - not just for students and teachers - but for so many others as well.

As we strive to maintain our relationships within our schools, workplaces, families and communities, as Restorative Practitioners we are also reminded of who holds power and privilege during times of crisis. For our most vulnerable and disadvantaged, this pandemic shines a harsh light on the critical risks to the physical, social and emotional health of our entire community. Our responsibilities to one another and the opportunities to create meaningful societal transformation have never been more clearly aligned.

Perhaps “connection” in the time of our health crisis looks more like an invitation. Restorative Practices invite us to turn towards one another, to create opportunities for authentic human connection, and to engage in participatory practices for inclusion and transformation. As writer and human rights activist Arundhati Roy recently wrote:

“Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with the past and imagine their world anew. This one is no different. It is a portal, a gateway between one world and the next. We can choose to walk through it, dragging the carcasses of our prejudice and hatred, our avarice, our data banks and dead ideas, our dead rivers and smoky skies behind us. Or we can walk through lightly, with little luggage, ready to imagine another world.”

I invite you to reach out beyond your regular circles to connect with all of us who are imagining another world. We at PiRI look forward to staying connected with you through our online support Circles, and via email and social media. Please let us know about your ideas and requests - we are here, we are listening, and during these uncertain times - we are ever reminded that we each depend on and belong to one another.

Holding you in thoughts of peace, safety and warmth,

Mahreen Mustafa George

Education Coordinator

“There is comfort in knowing that everything is temporary.”
- Kamal Chandra Lenka
HOW HAS THE PiRI COMMUNITY BEEN COPING DURING THIS GLOBAL PANDEMIC?

“through the joy of conducting care consultations on the phone”
• Dina Johnson, Board Member

“I have been hiking a lot, and reminding myself to take time to journal. I also have been creating new recipes, and dropping dishes off to family members’ doorsteps”
• Taylor Converse, Communications Associate

“coping with the pandemic has meant taking “time in” to acknowledge how I’m feeling and give myself some gentle TLC. This includes journaling, taking a walk, talking with a friend, going for a scenic drive, and to be honest sometimes just eating junk food or staying in bed”
• Shira May, Executive Director

“For me it’s limiting media viewing and spending as much time as possible outdoors”
• Phil Burrows, President of the Board

“By going for walks with my family, enjoying the outdoors together and spending intentional time disconnecting from technology”
• Mahreen Mustafa George, Education Coordinator

Additional Tips from the CDC:

• Take breaks—from watching, reading or listening to the news
• Take care of your body—breathe, stretch or meditate. Eat healthy & exercise. Get plenty of sleep. Avoid drugs & alcohol.
• Make time to unwind—try new activities, or activities you once enjoyed
• Connect—with others over the phone or through virtual chats

Need Help? Know Someone that Does?
Disaster Distress Helpline: 1-800-985-5990 or text TalkWithUs to 66747
National Domestic Violence Hotline: 1-800-799-7233
PiRI Education Coordinator Mahreen Mustafa George had the opportunity to sit down (virtually) with 4th Grade Teacher Kerry Robertson to discuss some of the challenges related to online learning and maintaining connections with students. Kerry currently teaches in the Rochester City School District at World of Inquiry School, which is the district’s only K-12 school. She has been with the district for 21 years, serving as a student teacher, classroom teacher and instructional coach. She has received training in Restorative Practices, which she draws upon in many areas of her professional and personal life.

*Are you an educator who utilizes Restorative Practices? Share your stories and techniques with us! Email tconverse06@gmail.com to be featured.*
Our Calendar

APRIL 2020

- April 6—Talking Circle Series to End Hate—OPEN TO THE PUBLIC—Virtual
- April 14—Educator Support Circle—OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
- April 15—Cultivating Mindfulness Within—Educator Support Group—Virtual
- April 15—Overview of Restorative Practices with Greece Code of Conduct Team—Virtual
- April 15—Overview of PiRI Trainings and Services—PAB Group—Virtual
- April 21—Educator Support Circle—OPEN TO THE PUBLIC—Virtual
- April 27—Monthly Talking Circle—FREE AND OPEN TO THE PUBLIC—Virtual
- April 28—Educator Support Circle—OPEN TO THE PUBLIC—Virtual

For more information and to register, visit our website at www.pirirochester.org and click Events or contact us at 585-473-0970 or office@pirirochester.org.

SAVE THE DATE!

Join us for our Annual Meeting, Virtually!

May 20, 2020 from 4:30 PM—6:00 PM

more information to follow

talking piece

is the monthly newsletter of Partners in Restorative Initiatives. A talking piece is used in circles to create a space for each person to speak and for others to listen.

Contributing writers: Taylor Converse, Mahreen Mustafa George, Shira May, Phil Burrows, Dina Johnson

Send mailing updates, corrections and submissions to:
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