**Be Strong Day, March 23 2017 – Feedback Summary –**

Compiled from 100 feedback forms submitted by High School students and staff members. The wording is that of the respondents. In many cases, several respondents made similar comments about a topic which are consolidated into one that captures the essence of all of the comments.

A few points of clarification to consider:

The venue was chosen because it was the only one large enough to accommodate all of us – almost 150 students and adults. A recurring, and not unexpected comment, is that the mediocre acoustics and proximity of circle groups to each other made it difficult to hear everyone in a circle. We definitely will explore options that include breakout rooms for future events. After all, being able to clearly hear each other is essential.

With the exception of Sarah Bingham, Executive Director of Lanark County Community Justice and Andrew Lynch, Be Strong program director, all of the circle keepers were LCCJ volunteers. Some were trained restorative justice facilitators and some were new Be Strong volunteers. The circle keeping role they performed for Be Strong Day was a new experience for all of them – a challenge which they embraced in the spirit of learning and out their commitment to restorative justice principles. They worked from a script that they were briefed on earlier in the week and had the liberty to adjust as they saw fit during the circle activity. In the future, it might be possible with more lead time and advance work with students and staff to create opportunities for participants to assume circle keeper roles, further enriching their experience.

***What did you like most about today’s event?***

**General**

It was educational and fun.

The food…

Day off school

Getting opportunity to give feedback

Being reminded of restorative justice and brainstorming how we can do this in our school community.

**Circles**

Meeting and collaborating with students from other schools. Learning about them and sharing ideas.

I felt like my ideas mattered. The circle opened my mind to new ideas. Listening to…everyone’s opinions and stories People’s honesty. In the circle you didn’t have to answer if you didn’t want to or didn’t feel comfortable.

Being able to speak without being judged, with everyone listening. Everyone was welcoming…open.

**Trust**

Learning about what others think about trust…I really liked the trust exercise…trusting a complete stranger

**School Team**

Team building part with our school at the end…Being in the circle with students from my school. Planning future events as a group. Being reminded of restorative justice and brainstorming how we can do this in our school community.

**Role Playing**

Learning about different ways to resolve conflicts… and about new information that I can apply to my life.

***What was of greatest value to you?***

**General**

Food

You are not alone.

Thinking, communicating. Seeing excitement of my students about what can be done.

**Circles**

Understanding the concept of circles. We were able to all join in, and if we didn’t want to say something, we didn’t have to. Getting to know people and (hear) their stories. Circle was a really good way to meet people.

Judge-free zone. People being themselves. Support, truthfulness, honesty, respect. Expressing ideas and opinions and being able to listen without interruption. Being listened to. Hearing other ideas and opinions and also from those with a similar mindset. Working with people from other schools.

Teambuilding

**Trust**

Learning new things about trust. Learning about building strength in trust. Discussing the importance of trust in relationships and how different perspectives can change the definition of trust. Learning to trust new people. Trust and respect.

**Role Playing**

The intervention (conflict) role playing scenarios. Role play – great so see what I could do and also what others thought.

**School Team**

The support shown by the Be Strong group towards our initiatives

Group discussions at the end because I know more ways to help others now. Sharing with others and planning events with my school. Thinking of what we are going to do back at our school to continue this.

**Conlfict**

Learning about restorative conversations and dealing with problems. Being able to understand different ways to be able to discuss and resolve conflicts. Learning to help others in need. Value of restorative approaches.

***What should we change, add or remove?***

**General**

Nothing. It was perfect, great

Different foods…More food options – vegetarian, vegan

I feel it would be better if we were told what we are coming for.

People shouldn’t have to do things they don’t want.

Lead/keynote speaker to explain what restorative justice is – T chart.

**Venue – Access**

Make the set up easier to navigate by wheelchair.

**Venue - Acoustics**

Too much noise. Make people talk louder. Change the set up. Spread us out more so that we can hear better. It would have been nice to hear each other better. Talk louder.

Break out rooms – making it easier to hear. Acoustics were horrible

**Organization**

Have more people we know, from the same school, in each circle group.

Bigger circle groups to hear more opinions and meet others

Make the day longer so we can take our time to communicate with the circle group.

More time planning future changes in the (my) school. More time in the (school?) groups.

Change: meeting some people and not everybody.

Different groups throughout the day.

Less people. Made me very anxious.

**Activities – Circles, etc.**

Something about mental health.

Get us up and moving more…too much sitting.

More games to engage people. Questions asked in circles were very slow and not very engaging. Make the circles more hands on and interesting. Make the beginning circle more fun – interactive games.

More communication between group members in the circle.

Change the circles around so that we can meet more people. More interactions with others, other than our circle. Change so everyone has to talk. I want to hear everyone’s opinion.

More personal stories and experiences.

More questions = more discussions in circles.

More icebreakers to make people feel comfortable. Add a part where everyone has to mingle and find new people to talk to. More getting to know people personally.

More meaningful activities.

The role play. (Change or remove?)

More videos of other schools trying the circle groups. More videos…I found them inspiring. Remove video at the end, add karaoke.

Make the talking circle more interactive and less obvious answers.

Remove the amount of time making list about responsibility (trust?) as we already know that.

**Circle Keepers**

Circle keepers that are really well-versed in both restorative practices and working with students / youth (e.g. H.S. staff) Circle keepers need more training. Inform the group leaders more on their job so that they know what is going on.

More excited staff members (circle keepers). Group leader (circle keeper) should talk faster.

**School Teams** (Contest of these comments was not clear, but I noted them anyway.)

Some of the leaders could have supported us more when we were trying to change the circle activities to make it work for our school. Volunteers should be more supportive of the students’ ideas instead of shooting them down.

***How do you intend to apply restorative approaches in your personal and school life?***

I don’t know

Tell my family and friends about it.

**Listening, communication & relationships**

Listen more…listening skills in my friendships.. value others opinions to a reasonable point..listening to everone’s voice and thoughts..when there is conflict, I will try to listen to everyone. I plan to be an active listener to others and show them that I care and support them. Be more supportive and listen to others and not interrupt…not speak over people

Less judgement

To try and talk if needed.

Sit down with my friends for an hour a day in a quiet room and let each other talk without interrupting

Treating people with more respect and listening more to my friends.

Develop stronger relationships with my friends now and with people I don’t usually interact with daily.

Seeing both sides of the story with my students in class

**Attitude**

Always maintain an open and approachable attitude. To be more open-minded…about people’s feelings

I will watch my actions and others to make sure I don’t hurt anyone’s feelings or trust. I intend to take a different approach to things.

Trust and value (people) more. Be less angry. Be nicer.

Helping others….being more open to people’s conflicts and problems…consciously engaging with others…speak to , help those struggling with mental issues

I will try to be more positive.

I will not be afraid to take a risk

**Inclusion**

Be more inclusive…include everyone.

Say “Hi” to someone I usually don’t. I will use it (what I have learned) to engage with and meet new people.

**Leadership**

Use the circle and talking stick.

A day (at school) to make everyone feel connected.

Add it to our Sources of Strength.

Working as a team member with my school

Providing younger children with the same knowledge…at elementary school

I will spend more time in school groups that focus on making our school more safe.

I intend to get everyone involved in my school and bring everyone together

**Conflict resolution**

Use the questions we came up with to help settle arguments…resolve conflicts…apply in my future conflicts and the conflicts of those around me that I witness. Be more calm, quiet and collected when trying to resolve problems…I’m going to ask questions before getting angry with my sister and parents… talk and communicate through problems without jumping to conclusions in tough situations. Think things through (more) when dealing with situations in my life. Get to the root of a problem before I attempt to solve it. I will notice who is affected by fighting.

**Other Comments:**

**General**

I want to thank everyone who helped today. I really enjoyed it and I took a lot from it. I appreciate everyone coming together to do this. (Student)

**Learn**

About other initiatives that Be Strong does. More about your organization and your role in our community.

I would like to learn more about the restorative approach and how it has helped people fix problems in their everyday life…why we should use it for solving issues. Learn more about what people are thinking and how or what we can do to help.

I’d like to learn more about how to help others in need or when the have a problem. Today we focused a lot on how we should deal with our own problems. I’d really like to learn about how to help other people. How to help people and be a better facilitator

Do these practices work? (evidence)

I would like to learn more about how to conduct a restorative circle.

**Recommend**

Add stuff about Mental Health and LGBTQ

Talk more on trust.

More about how I can help.

More icebreakers