

Appendix C. Sample Student Focus Group Guide

This document provides sample focus group guide questions. Student focus groups can be conducted with students at a school that already uses restorative practices to explore student perspectives on what is going well and what could be improved, or they can be conducted with students at a school that does not use restorative practices to identify student experiences, needs, and wants that may be addressed by adopting restorative practices.

Before starting the focus group, the facilitator should review the information in the study consent, including the fact that participants can choose not to answer questions and to end their participation at any time, and will check if there are any questions. Each participant will be asked to choose a made-up name to use during the discussion and will be asked not to use their actual name to protect confidentiality during the audio recording. If the focus group is being conducted on Zoom, participants will be told they can keep their cameras off and change their Zoom name label to the made-up name they chose. The facilitator will then let the students know when the audio recording begins.

- The first thing I'm interested in learning about from you has to do with how people treat each other and relate to each other at school. What does it look like when students and teachers have positive relationships with each other?
- What about when students have positive relationships with each other?
- What do you think would be the best way for your school to create positive relationships between students and teachers and across students?
- How much does your school already do this? Rate it from 1–5, with 5 being the best. Hold up 1-5 fingers (if in person) or drop a number into the chat (if online). Then write down why you gave the number you did. (Collect these statements later with nickname on it or have participants message you directly on Zoom.) Let's go around so that people can share your answers if you're comfortable doing that.
 - ▣ **What's one thing you wish your school would do differently to create positive relationships?**
 - ▣ **What's one thing your school does that you really like?**
- What do you think would be the best way for your school to handle conflict between students or between students and teachers?
- How much does your school already do this? Rate it from 1–5, with 5 being the best. Hold up 1-5 fingers (if in person) or drop a number into the chat (if online). Then write down why you gave the number you did. (Collect these statements later with nickname on it or have participants message you directly on Zoom.) Let's go around so that people can share your answers if you're comfortable doing that.
 - ▣ **What's one thing you wish your school would do differently to handle conflict?**
 - ▣ **What's one thing your school does that you really like?**
- What do you think would be the best way for your school to handle students who don't follow school rules?
- How much does your school already do this? Rate it from 1–5, with 5 being the best. Hold up 1-5 fingers (if in person) or drop a number into the chat (if online). Then write down why you gave the number you did. (Collect these statements later with nickname on it or have participants message you directly on Zoom.) Let's go around so that people can share your answers if you're comfortable doing that.
 - ▣ **What's one thing you wish your school would do differently to handle students who break school rules?**
 - ▣ **What's one thing your school does that you really like?**

If conducting the focus group with students at a school that already uses restorative practices, the following questions may also be useful.

- Now I want to switch gears a little and learn about **restorative practices** at your school. What does the term restorative practices mean to you?
- What kinds of practices does your school have? (Can probe specifically about restorative circles, restorative conferences, I statements, other practices.)
 - ▣ **Describe what those practices are like.**
 - ▣ **When are they used/how are they used?**
 - ▣ **Who leads them?**
 - ▣ **What do you think the goal of restorative practices is at your school? Why?**
 - ▣ **What do most students think about restorative practices at your school? What do you think?**
 - ▣ **How much do restorative practices make you feel seen and respected at your school?**
 - ▣ **What do you really like about RP at your school?**
 - ▣ **What do you wish were different about the way your school does RP?**
 - ▣ **How involved are students at your school in making decisions about restorative practices or helping to deliver restorative practices?**
 - ▣ **How do you think students should be involved in restorative practices at your school?**
 - ▣ **Is there anything else you'd like to share?**