

# *Restorative Justice & Driving Social Comprehension at OWWMS*



OLIVER W. WINCH  
Middle School

SOUTH GLENS FALLS  
Central School District

# The link between suspension and dropping out:

- 49% of students who entered high school with three suspensions on their record eventually dropped out of school\*
- Students chances of being suspended increase from 2.4% to 11% when moving from elementary to secondary programs (middle/high school). \*\*
- Students who were suspended one time in 9th grade dropped out of high school twice as often as their peers who were not suspended. \*\*

\* Source: "Sent Home and Put Off Track" - Robert Balfanz, Johns Hopkins University

\*\* Source: The UCLA Civil Rights Project



# Restorative Practices: What is it?

- Originated in the world of Criminal Justice
  - Giving victims a voice
- Community Building
  - Creating shared values
  - Building a school community focused on learning both inside and outside of the classroom
- Response
  - Addressing incidents on multiple fronts - Combining traditional & non-traditional consequences
  - Support for the victim and accountability for the offender, Address harm - Physical, Emotional, Community
  - Successful school community re-entry



# Types of Restorative Conversations

- Community Building Circles
- Problem Solving Circles
- Re-Entry Circles
- Restorative Conversations
- Restorative Conferences  
and Mediation



# Restorative Practices: Our journey so far...

**“If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together.”**

- September 2015 - Introduced to staff at faculty meeting, main office procedures
- January 2016 - Training for interested staff, Skidmore College K-12 RJ Consortium
- 16-17 School year - Ongoing restorative discipline, Skidmore Collaboration
- 17-18 - Community Circles Year-long staff PD with monthly meetings for interested faculty led by MS and HS principal - blended learning via Google Classroom
- 18-19 - Ongoing proactive community circles work, Social Comprehension



# Social Comprehension at OWWMS

## What is ***Social Comprehension***?

“Social Comprehension, like academic comprehension, is how we make meaning from and mediate our relationship with the world”

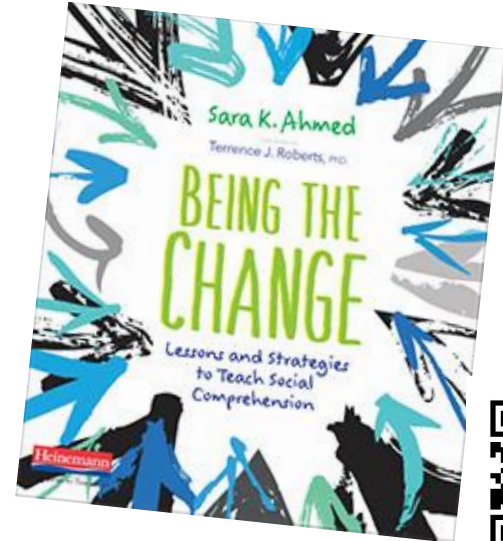
### ***Getting to the root of the behavior or conflict***

**Rude** - *inadvertently saying or doing something that hurts someone else.*

**Mean** - *purposefully saying or doing something to hurt someone once (maybe twice).*

**Bullying** - *intentionally aggressive behavior, repeated over time, that involves an imbalance of power.*

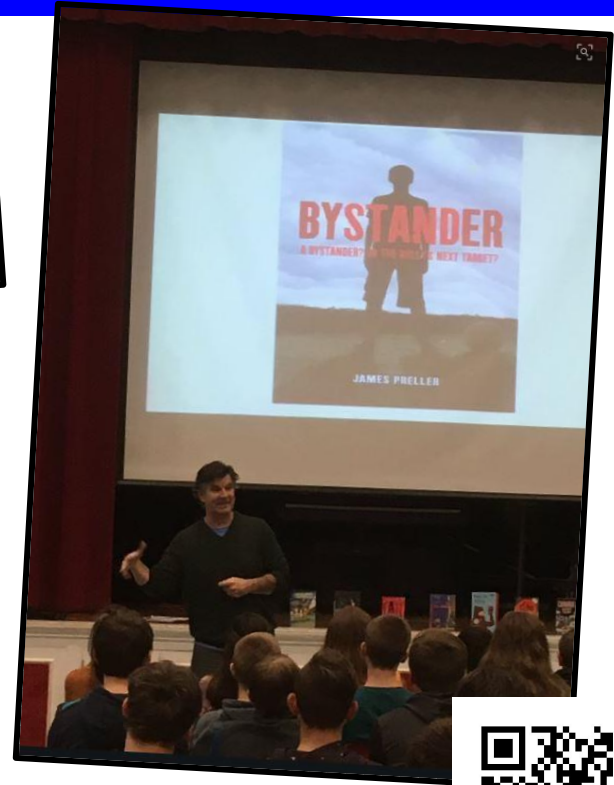
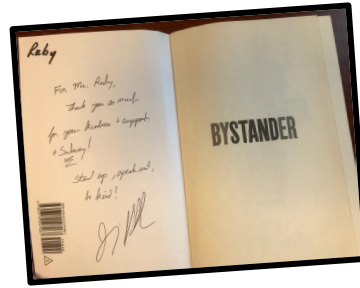
-Signe Whitson, Child & Adolescent Therapist



# Social Comprehension at OWWMS

## Bystander

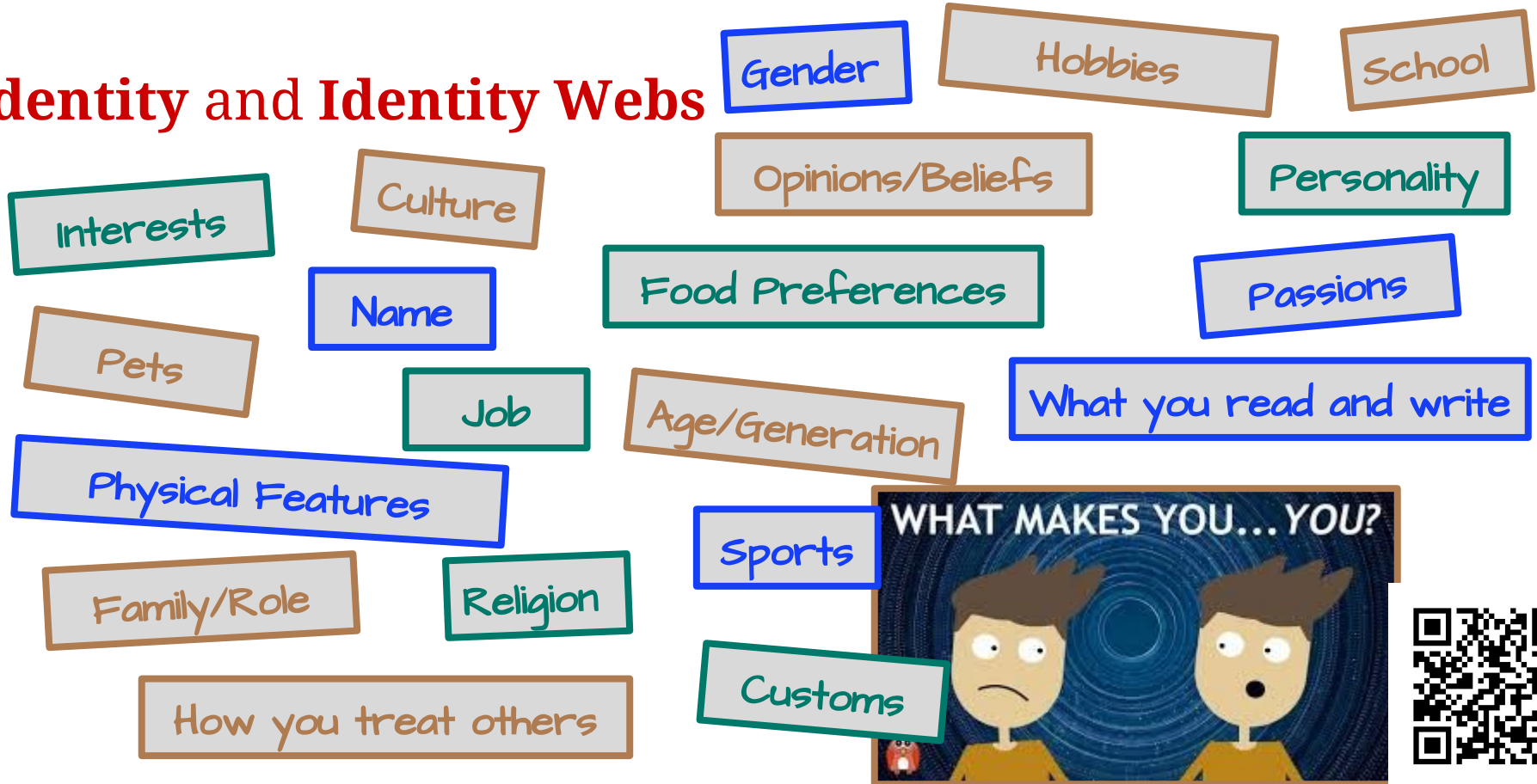
- *Building-wide read*
- *Author visit that included small-group discussions about writing, character development and character interactions*
- **Goals:**
  - *Teach Lessons on Social Comprehension*
  - *Promote Literacy*
  - *Develop Building & Classroom Community*
  - *Address New York State Social Emotional Learning Benchmarks*





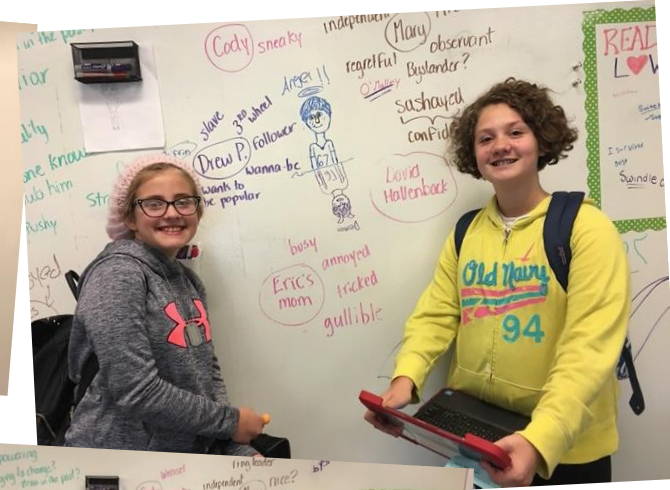
# Social Comprehension at OWWMS

## Identity and Identity Webs





# Identity Webs of Bystander Characters



# Social Comprehension at OWWMS

## Our Own Identity Webs



# Social Comprehension at OWWMS

## Connection to The Essential Elements

- *2.1 - A standards-focused middle-level educational program that emphasizes not only intellectual development but also **personal, social, physical, and ethical development.***
- *2.13 - Encourages students to pursue personal interests, engage in school and community activities (e.g., sports, clubs, etc.), explore potential futures and careers, **develop useful social, interpersonal, and life skills needed to live a full and productive life,** and nurture a “love of learning.”*
- *2.14 - Provides targeted and timely academic intervention services that are based upon a careful assessment of the academic, **social, and emotional needs of students at risk of not meeting the State’s learning standards.***
- *2.15 - Engages and involves the family, local community, and the world outside school in the education and **personal development of young adolescents.***





# Social Comprehension at OWWMS

## Connections to The Core Social & Emotional Competencies



# Social Comprehension at OWWMS

## Restorative Practices - **Implementation at OWWMS**

- Empowering students to repair harm and rebuild trust
- Learning empathy
- Developing the skills needed to appropriately communicate during difficult times



# Social Comprehension at OWWMS

## Restorative Practices - Community Building Circles



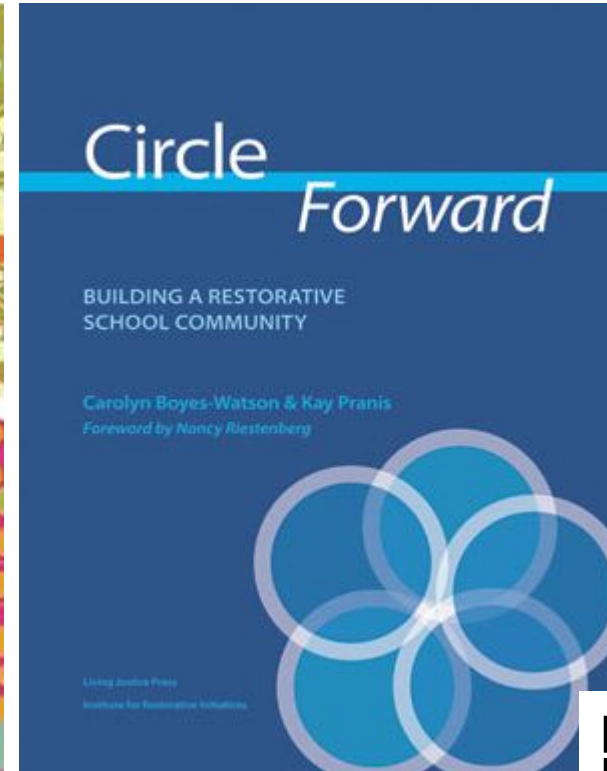
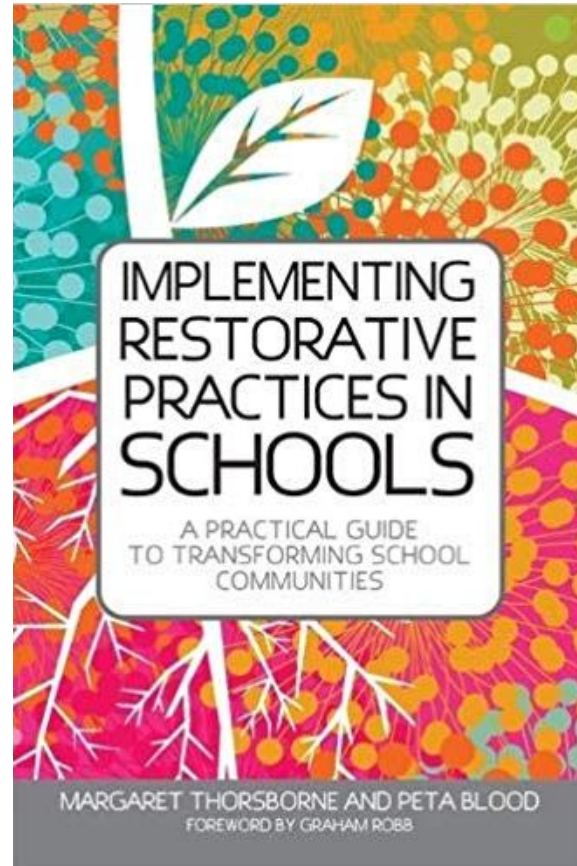
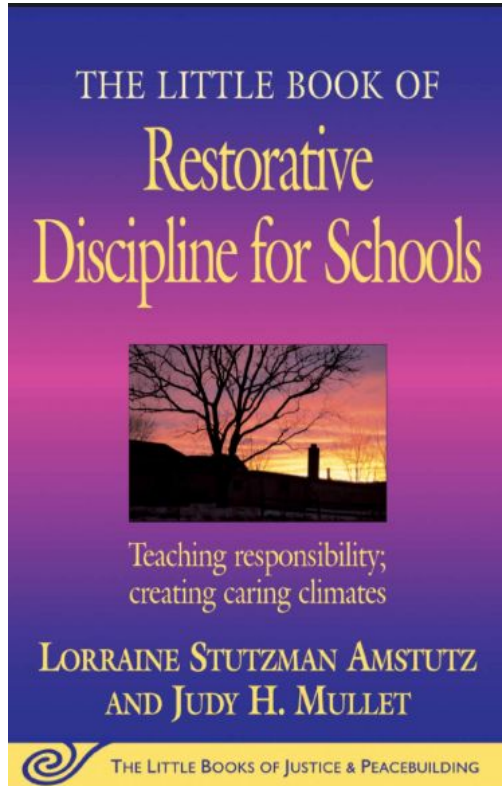
I like restorative circles because I can let my feelings out without being critically judged. I also like it because I can relate to other students too. And it just creates a good environment for the class because we can get more comfortable with our peers.

Student Feedback





# Restorative Practices: Resources





# Restorative Practices: Resources



SKIDMORE

PROJECT ON  
RESTORATIVE JUSTICE



# Restorative Practices:

