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A Pirate Turns 40: Creating Movement within a Shipwrecked System

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Abstract

This manuscript describes the lived experiences of a group of researchers as they navigated the community development and movement toward the implementation of restorative justice as an alternative to zero tolerance policies for high school youth Cannabis offenders. The manuscript explains and describes events, conflicts and results of navigating the process of how a community developed movement toward restorative justice and restorative practices using implementation science. Eight steps toward community implementation, including stake holders meeting, restorative justice trainings, conferences and connection circles in local schools, are described using a creative pirate theme which illustrates the treasures uncovered over the 2 year-long work toward change. Deliberate reflection is given to marginalized and oppressed populations. The article offers insightful analysis and critique of the change process including the treasures and limitations of community change. An emphasis is placed on describing the analysis of the issues from multiple perspectives so that movement can seamlessly evolve into momentum.

Keywords: lived experiences, community, restorative justice, restorative practice, change, adolescents, *Cannabis*, zero tolerance, schools, high schools, marijuana, stakeholders, movement, descriptive analysis, community development, community change, implementation science, marginalized populations, oppressed populations, LGBT, connection circles, change process

Just as Jimmy Buffet tried to make sense of his life in his song, *A Pirate Turns 40* (1975), we attempt to look back at our lived experiences (van Manen, 1997) over the last years to understand and explain how we created movement in restorative justice with youth within our port (See pirate lingo below). In examining our lived experiences, the following questions guided our description: What happened here? How did it happen? How can we make sure it happens again? How can what happened evolve?

As we began our work, we kept uncovering more and more people interested in joining us on this adventure. Each new group that joined us, led to multiple treasures within the port: resources, spaces, funding sources...treasures of all kinds to continue and expand our work. It is in the vein of the Buffet song which we developed our theme for writing this descriptive analysis: pirates. *Mother, Mother Ocean* (Buffet, 1975), we heard the call.

Pirate Lingo: How We Used Pirate Terminology

Backing	– institutional, theoretical and/or financial support
Belly	– full implementation of restorative justice
Captain	– anyone who can approve restorative justice as an alternative action to zero tolerance; decision-making disciplinary actors
Code of Conduct	– steps followed in the study
Commission	– to receive funding
Commissioner	– funding source(s) or agencies
Constellation	– a subgroup within the deck hands
Crew	– the study researchers; group of seadogs
Deck	– a place of attendance and participation
Deck Hands	– students, youth in schools, adolescents, teens
Harbor Master	– the review of literature
Hearties	– mates, community stakeholders
Mates or Matey(s)	– community stakeholders
Navigation	– a process
Navigational Map	– the process of developing a philosophical and theoretical paradigm shift
Pardon	– dismissal of an offense with no consequences or harm repaired
Parlay	– request for an alternative strategy which allows the offender to repair harm
Pirate	– the initiators of a movement, the first of their kind
Port	– a community, a school community, neighborhood, town, city or region
Rogue	– someone who deviates from acceptable norms
Sail	– to explore, install and implement the restorative justice process
Scallywag	– juvenile who exhibits delinquent behavior
Seadogs	– the researchers
Set Our Watches	– gathering of background information about the community
Ship	– restorative justice practice
Shipwrecked	– when a system does not work, causing harm
Treasure	– benefits of restorative practices which may not be readily explicit
Voyage	– the change process

Table 1: List of pirate terms and definitions used in the article

Each of us, the crew members, has sailed the waters of restorative practice in some form or other since we began our work as educators, social workers and judicial employees using restorative circles, port accountability, restorative conversations, and restorative justice. [*Restorative justice (RJ) is a system of dealing with criminal offenses that seeks to repair the harm to victims and the offender so that the port becomes healthier. The RJ process is described in more detail later.*] To say the least, we are the pirates of

restorative justice; with many of us practicing RJ in some form for 40 or more years. When the Colorado legislature issued monies to Colorado State University Pueblo for creating an Institute for *Cannabis* Research, ICR, the crew seized our opportunity to set sail on that ship. The crew had watched those before us try to implement RJ practices within the port; however, nothing became permanent or lasting. The crew sought to use restorative justice with teens using *Cannabis* at school that previously only faced punitive discipline that further separated youth from society. As one stakeholder states,

The several previous attempts to implement restorative justice programs in Pueblo were typically characterized by the opportunistic securing of available grant funds (usually from well-intended, change-oriented state government sources), without integrous implementation which held to core restorative practices values. For the lack thereof, the funds were unfortunately withdrawn when the change efforts fell short of the grant objectives. Another challenge to building the critical mass of restorative justice advocates needed to gain traction for a movement were the frequent turnover of those who owned the vision, but for personal reasons left the community for greener pastures (Stakeholder 11, personal communication, January 26, 2020).

The crew knew within the belly of RJ we held *the treasures few have ever seen* (Buffet, 1975) and possibly the best proposed response to these *Cannabis* teen offenses. The crew knew we could help the port of Pueblo if we could just keep the ship on course, but first we had to get our wind by creating movement within the port. Our crew needed to set our watches to determine the frequency of student *Cannabis* use at school, and more importantly, the K-12 school administration's responses to the offense on school campuses in the southeastern Colorado region where dispensaries are numerous. The crew also needed to meet with port stakeholders to understand their needs and encourage them to voluntarily join the crew onboard ship and not be pressed to join. The first tool for navigation was to ensure everyone had a shared meaning of RJ and practice. The crew sought the Harbor Master, the review of literature, to determine that shared meaning in addition to the literature of related waters.

Harbor Master: Restorative Justice Is a Parlay, Not a Pardon

Restorative justice "at the simplest level, may be understood as bringing together the people most impacted by a crime or conflict to decide together what harm has been done and how that harm may be repaired" (Title, 2011, p. 1). RJ is defined as

a collaborative decision-making process that includes victims, offenders, and others who are seeking to hold offenders accountable by having them (a) accept and acknowledge responsibility for their offenses, (b) to the best of their ability, repair the harm they caused to victims and communities, and (c) work to reduce the risk of re-offense by building positive social ties to the community (Karp, 2013, p. 4).

The five concepts of RJ work were adopted by the crew and are known as the *5 R's*; they are "relationship, respect, responsibility, repair, and reintegration" (Title, 2011, p. 3). The crew embraced the philosophy of RJ which assumes someone's offense is the port's responsibility and allows all harms to be repaired in such a way that dignity is restored for all, leading to reintegration back into society (reduced recidivism). And this philosophy also recognizes that "punishment, even when imparted with the best of intentions, focuses on balancing the pain rather than restoring the loss, and it often brings unwanted side effects" (Title, 2011, p. 2). The mechanism for this process is a RJ circle. Circles were implemented throughout our port (community) schools. A **RJ circle** follows the following steps:

1. **Preconference** – A preconference is held with a youth offender, parent/guardian and RJ practitioner(s) to discuss an incident in depth. The practitioner assesses whether or not this is a case appropriate to move

forward to a RJ circle. A practitioner is looking for acceptance of responsibility for the harm caused and a willingness to repair the harm. During the preconference, a list is made of the youth's assets, such as a sport they like, if they are an artist, and such.

2. **Restorative Justice Circle** – A RJ circle is comprised of the youth who committed an offense (*Cannabis*), their parent(s)/Guardian(s) or a support person, the victim or person harmed, individuals from the community representing the harm done to a part, any individual impacted or involved in the offense, and the RJ practitioner(s) as facilitator(s). Everyone sits in a circle; each person shares what happened and how they were impacted from their perspective. The circle is respectful and designed so that more harm does not occur. Offenders are held accountable with the goal to provide support and guidance in taking responsibility.
3. **Restorative Justice Agreement** – At the conclusion of the RJ circle discussion, the focus shifts from what happened and what harms occurred to how the youth might repair the harm. The asset list is shared with the circle members. Everyone in the circle has a voice on how the harm might be repaired. Suggestions are narrowed down into an agreement that everyone is comfortable will repair the harm while also help the youth offender reintegrate. Deadlines for evidence of completion are established.
4. **Questionnaire** – Everyone in the circle evaluates the process through a satisfaction questionnaire.
5. **Deadlines** – The youth is in contact with a practitioner throughout the agreed time. Evidence is presented to an RJ practitioner assigned to the case. For example, if a youth is an artist, they might make antidrug posters. These posters and photos of where those posters were hung in the school might serve as evidence. If the agreement is not fulfilled within the designated time, more punitive consequences may result; for example, school suspension or being issued a court ticket.

The use of RJ practices in our port educational setting has been gaining traction, as early grassroots practice is being met with established theoretical underpinnings (Evans & Vaandering, 2016). Specifically, the application of RJ in our port educational setting involved “creating just and equitable learning environments...nurturing healthy relationships...(and) repairing harm and transforming conflict” (Evans & Vaandering, 2016, p. iii). This restorative approach to crime and conflict stands in stark contrast to punitive zero-tolerance policies frequently applied to juveniles in our area in violation of marijuana laws in educational settings, which disproportionately impact children of color, those suffering from mental health issues, and other marginalized youth (Dickerson, 2014; Hoffman, 2014; Males & Buchen, 2014; Rosa, Keelan & Krueger, 2015; Banys, 2016). When juveniles alone are criminalized for *Cannabis* use, following adult legalization of marijuana in states such as our state, Colorado, the consequences of arrest and probation often exceed the harm of the drug itself (Banys, 2016). It has been found that “(s)tudents who experience out-of-school suspensions or expulsions are as much as 10 times more likely to drop out of high school” (Banys, 2016, p. 5). Anecdotally, area teachers have the same concerns.

I have been in K-12 education for the past 30 years and have spent more than half that time teaching middle school and high school students. Over these many years, I have spent quite a bit of time teaching in districts with zero tolerance and have been deeply saddened by the negative impact zero tolerance has, particularly on our most needy students. Many times the students who are experimenting with drugs or exhibiting violent behavior come from home situations that are not stable and, in many cases, are unsafe, so when we expel them from school, we are [potentially] cutting them off from the only safe, stable environment they have and from the adults who have the best chance of helping them to make better choices and move toward a brighter future (K. Hopkins, personal communication, January 2019).

Yet more disconcerting is the correlation of such zero-tolerance policies with youthful offenders starting down the proverbial “school-to-prison pipeline,” since school administrators fail to distinguish between serious and trivial policy violations, and the criminalization of minor infractions by troublesome students serve as a “direct conduit into the prison pipeline” (Heitzig, 2014, p. 21).

The power of RJ practices to counter punitive sanctions for school behavior issues is supported by our “Colorado’s Statutes [that] implement restorative justice through a declaration of legislative intent in CRS 19-2-102 and through provisions enacted pursuant to five bills; HB 07-1129, HB 08-1117, HB11-1032, HB13-1254 and HB15-1094.1” (Lee,

2016). In addition, more recently, our state bills HB17-1039 and SB17-220 were passed, each expanding and extending the opportunities for application of RJ practices as a form of criminal justice reform in our local schools (Lee, 2017). For example, Colorado Statute HB11-1032 specifically encourages schools in “the use of restorative justice as a first consideration to remediate” a variety of offenses (Colorado General Assembly, 2011, p. 12). Significantly and most importantly to our descriptive analysis, HB12-1345 eliminates mandatory expulsions or suspensions and alternatively mandates restorative responses to most possible forms of misbehavior by students in schools (Colorado General Assembly, 2012). However, despite the intent of the Colorado Legislature, zero tolerance policies resulting in expulsion or suspension, as well as arrests leading juveniles into the criminal justice system, are still enforced in many of our school districts as uncovered by our survey, with disproportionate impact on students of color, those suffering mental health issues, and other marginalized populations (Rosa, Keelan & Krueger, 2015). As one port principal adds,

As judicial districts across our nation are becoming more inclined to look at the layers of racial and ethnic disproportion, we are seeing a grassroots effort to change what is taking place at the school level in hopes of bringing a more compassionate and proactive state to our youth, especially those of color. Restorative justice is now becoming more in-grained in our school communities as a function of how to do corrective intervention so that suspensions and expulsions are lessened. One of our local school districts will be piloting a matrix that has restorative justice practices as one of the interventions in lieu of citations for various altercations. The zero tolerance policy is still intact in many school districts, but the hope is a wave of change will make restorative justice the route to corrective behavior (C. Vincent, personal communication, January 31, 2020).

Buried Treasure: The Treasures of Restorative Justice



- Repairs harm done
- Long lasting effects
- Participants feel respected and heard
- Dialogue that heals
- Redirection of developing youth
- Generates understanding and empathy
- Alternate to punitive consequences
- Offenders accept responsibility
- Solution based
- Reintegrates with less recidivism
- Relationships form and/or strengthened
- Cost effective
- Strengths and assets of offender are confirmed

Figure 1: *Buried treasure: The treasures of restorative justice*

Harbor Master: Ye Deck Hands & Ye Cannabis

Possibly the leading public concern with legalizing *Cannabis* for an adult in Colorado, and especially within our community, is the impact of this legalization on the rate of *Cannabis* use by under aged youth. The crew, a group of interdisciplinary researchers, consulted our Harbor Master, the review of literature on student *Cannabis* use and the legalization of *Cannabis* in Colorado and the United States and found concerns. Regarding student use an increase was, indeed, a leading concern cited by opposition. In Palisade, Colorado, former teacher Diane Cox voiced this concern, "When you normalize behavior, you see it spread; when you have shop fronts and grow operations, the kids assume that it's safer and, in fact, it isn't" (Moore, 2016, para. 10).

Our crew analyzed data from the Healthy Kids Colorado Surveys of 2013 and 2015 (Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment 2018), a survey of over 25,000 Colorado high school students in 2013 and over 15,000 students in 2015. Brooks-Russell, et al. (2018) noted that even though dispensaries opened in Colorado in 2014, there was no increase in adolescent *Cannabis* use during the years spanning 2013-2015. In fact, there was a "lack of difference in change by poverty status, minority status, urbanicity, or local policy permitting recreational sales" (p. 190). However, it is our observation that people within our community do not believe this is true, in fact, they believe there is increased use. The Brooks-Russell, et al. (2018) study also included measures of deck hands perceptions toward *Cannabis*, including perceived deck hand accessibility to *Cannabis*, deck hand perceptions of the right and wrongfulness of *Cannabis* use, and deck hand perceptions of consequences of consistent *Cannabis* use (Peters & Foust, 2019). The Peters & Foust (2019) study included our port. Brooks-Russell, et al. (2018) reported that from 2013-2015 there were no changes in deckhand perceptions of accessibility and wrongfulness; however, deck hands self-reported that the perception of consequences from consistent *Cannabis* use waned.

The crew was aware that in 1991 and 2011, Johnson, Hodgkin and Harris (2017) conducted a study of *Cannabis* use in 45 states. In the states where medical *Cannabis* was legalized, deck hands had a higher incidence of past 30-day *Cannabis* use when compared to their counterparts living in states where *Cannabis* use was illegal; however, deck hands' past 30-day use did not increase after the passing of medical *Cannabis* laws. Two studies (Hasin, et al., 2015; Wall, et al., 2015) corroborate Johnson, Hodgkin & Harris (2017) when they uncovered that medical *Cannabis* laws did not significantly impact deck hand use. Interestingly, an additional study (Harpin, et al., 2017) finds dispensary locations and propinquity to schools has no impact on deck hand use. Furthermore, the density of recreational *Cannabis* businesses within an area of five miles from a school also does not impact deck hand use (Harpin, et al., 2017) The deck hands seem to simply sail on by these dispensaries and do not partake at increased rates.

We examined results from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, NSDUH, (Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, 2017) covering 2015-2016 found 9.08% of Colorado youths, aged 12 to 17, reported using *Cannabis* in the month prior to being surveyed. During the 2014-2015 period, 11.13% of youth reported using *Cannabis* in the previous month. Across the United States, the NSDUH results found that *Cannabis* use among adolescents aged 12 to 17 was lower in 2016 than in most years from 2009 to 2014 (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2017).

We found the NSDUH study indicated that the ten states with the highest level of youth *Cannabis* use were all states that legalized recreational and/or medicinal *Cannabis*, our state of Colorado being one of them, and the ten states with the lowest levels of youth *Cannabis* use had not legalized recreational and/or medicinal *Cannabis*. This aligns with the study of Colorado ports (Peters & Foust, 2019) that found that students in ports that permitted recreational dispensaries used more *Cannabis*, thought *Cannabis* was less harmful, less wrong, and was more difficult to access than high school students in ports that did not permit recreational *Cannabis* dispensaries. Importantly, there was no significant change in *Cannabis* use or perceptions about *Cannabis* from pre to post legalization. *Cannabis* use did not change from 2013 to 2015 in ports that permitted recreational *Cannabis* sales, and use did not change from 2013 to 2015 in ports that banned recreational *Cannabis* sales. One stakeholder who attended a stakeholder meeting offered a possible explanation.

The data is consistent that marijuana use among youth did not increase with legalization; however, there are differences among communities. Those communities that permitted retail *Cannabis* dispensaries had

higher youth use than those communities that did not permit *Cannabis* sales. This makes sense; the youth in those communities mirrored the beliefs of the adults in their communities who through vote or through elected representatives allowed *Cannabis* sales because they thought *Cannabis* was less harmful than adults in communities where *Cannabis* sales were prohibited. After working with students in RJ circles, our [port] is consistent with these findings: [deck hands] within the Pueblo [port] are not using *Cannabis* at any significantly greater rate after legalization, however, their use is higher, and their perceptions of the seriousness or harmfulness of use is lower, than in [ports] that did not permit legalized *Cannabis* sales (Stakeholder 20, personal communication, April 2019).

We are aware there are exceptions to the majority of reports that find no increase of *Cannabis* use among youth since legalization. The Rocky Mountain High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (RMHIDTA, 2017) conducted a survey of 76 school resource officers (SROs), the majority of whom are assigned to high schools. Eighty-six percent of the SROs reported an increase in *Cannabis* related incidents since legalization, 4% reported a decrease, and 10% reported no change.

Most of the studies listed above report no increase in student use of *Cannabis* after legalization of recreational and medicinal *Cannabis*; however, *Cannabis* use among youth is significant. In our state of Colorado, according to the 2017 Healthy Kids Colorado Survey, 21% of Colorado youth use *Cannabis* and the highest rate within the state is in Pueblo County with 27% of youth using *Cannabis*. Our port has a problem that may or may not have been impacted by legalization. The crew needed all hearties on hand to combat this problem. First, the crew wanted to find out how schools in the area currently intervene when youth offend at school.

Harbor Master: Parlay or Harm

Reports in the 1990s of pervasive violence and drugs in some schools led to a government sponsored policy of zero tolerance, and our local schools were not without influence and continue to use zero tolerance today. The 1994 Gun Free Schools Act established a national policy of zero tolerance for weapons in school through a mandatory calendar year expulsion for possession of firearms. Some states, boards of education, and schools expanded zero tolerance to include drug and alcohol violations, threats, and fighting (Skiba, 2010). Zero tolerance school policies refer to disciplinary policies which include predetermined consequences such as expulsions, suspensions, and referrals to law enforcement for specific offenses including drug violations. Schools certainly have a responsibility to provide a safe learning environment; however, the efficacy of zero tolerance has been very much in doubt. There is little or no evidence that strict zero tolerance policies have contributed to reducing student misbehavior or improving school safety (Skiba, Shure, Middelberg & Baker, 2011). Furthermore, research has shown that suspensions are associated with negative student outcomes such as lower academic performance, higher rates of dropout, failures to graduate on time, decreased academic engagement, and future disciplinary exclusion, and more likelihood to enter the juvenile justice system (Achilles, McLaughlin, & Croninger, 2007; Arcia, 2006; Christle, Jolivette, & Nelson, 2005; Lee, Cornell, Gregory, & Fan, 2011). Our stakeholders voice these very same concerns.

Under the Obama Administration, the Rethink Discipline initiative was established to reduce out of school suspensions and expulsions and offer alternatives that provide school environments that are safe, supportive, and conducive to teaching and learning (U.S. Department of Education, 2016). In our state of Colorado, the state legislature in 2012 eliminated mandatory expulsions for drugs, weapons (except firearms), assaults, and robbery and promoted alternatives to discipline to decrease out of school suspensions, expulsions, and referrals to law enforcement (CDE, 2012). Despite the extensive research on the negative outcomes of zero tolerance policies and the government initiatives to reduce suspensions and expulsions, zero tolerance is still a prevalent policy in many school districts when drug violations occur. In many of the schools within southeastern Colorado, a region with the highest rate of youth *Cannabis* use, the crew recognized zero tolerance is still used as an intervention for student *Cannabis* infractions in schools (Pueblo County High School, 2018). In fact, in one school district we partnered with, we were unable to conduct circles with *Cannabis* or drug related offenses. They held fast to their zero tolerance

policy on these offenses. After attending a meeting to negotiate RJ circles, several stakeholders (Stakeholder 11, personal communication, June 2018) shared that a Director of Student Services in a local [port] school district was adamant that the district would not change its zero tolerance policy in regard to infractions involving illegal drugs and/or violence.” They continued, “he went on to state that the school board feels this is one of the strengths of their district and would not want to change this policy” (Stakeholder 20, personal communication, June 2018).

Harbor Master: Constellations of Sexual Identity

Sexual identity is a minority status among students within our public schools that is just now being recognized. Research has been mounting on the increased use of illicit drugs among the LGBTQI constellation that is uniquely connected to stress factors of a sexually identified minority (Marshal, et al., 2011). Trauma connected to sexual identification for LGBTQI youth and the resulting bullying within schools (See Table 2) has been reported to cause an increase in depression, suicide and poor academic performance (Russell & Fish, 2016). In the local Healthy Kids Colorado Survey (2015), LGBTQI students reported higher rates of drug use in alcohol and other illicit drug use including *Cannabis* than the general population of heterosexual youth. The crew must be aware we will encounter this population along with other marginalized constellations of youth while doing our work. As a result, we began to look at the composition of our restorative justice circle members to ensure inclusive equitable experiences for youth.

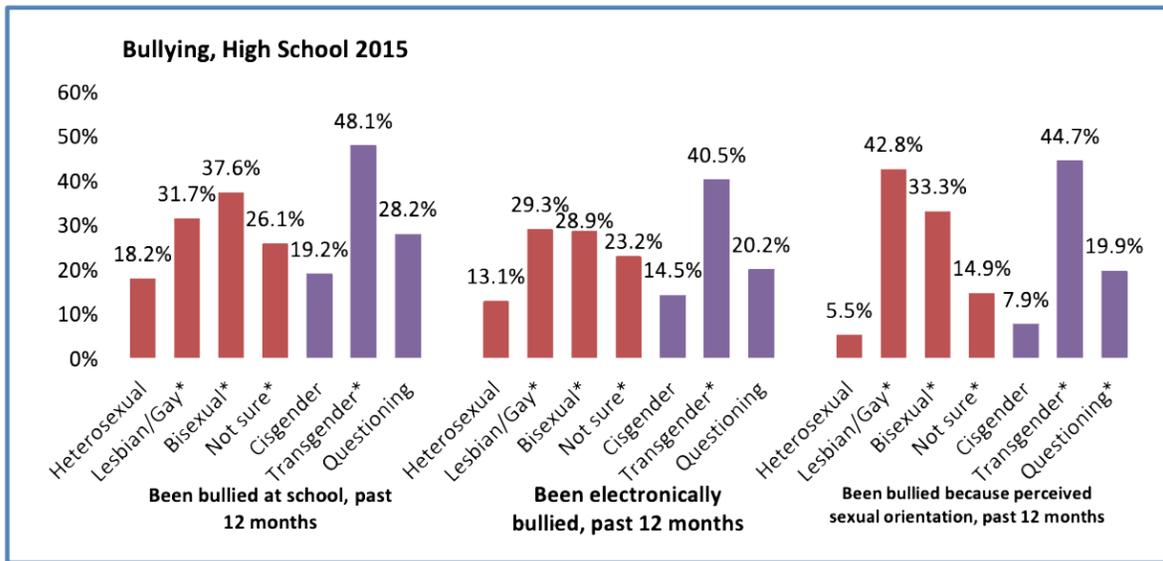


Figure 2: *Bullying, High School Data from the Healthy Kids Colorado Survey of 2015 (Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, 2018).*

What can schools do to support these students and create environments that not only demonstrate acceptance, but literally provide an identified place of protection from bullying, thereby decreasing the need for illicit drug use to cope? One answer is to provide support and acceptance to student club organizations like Gay-Straight Alliance. This aligns students in circles of resiliency to outside forces and strengthens as well as expands their emotional and physical support within the school community.

When I was a teacher mentor for a high school Gay-Straight Alliance club, the number one issue on the minds of my student club members was safety. Whether at home, the community at large or within our high school, these high school students expressed fear of what could or did happen to them because they identified as LGBTQ. They shared continually that “we” the club were their safe haven; the place of safety where they could be themselves and talk about their sexual and gender identity. Students need an identified place to recover and restore from the bullying they receive, sometimes even from their teachers (Stakeholder 25, personal communication, January 27, 2019).

Parley, Don't Harm Me

Our ICR research involved a small unpublished survey that was conducted to learn how southeastern Colorado administrators respond to Cannabis offenses. Most schools reported a punitive response, including suspension and/or expulsion, mandated by a district zero tolerance policy. In observance, however, our crew noted inconsistencies in the implementation of those policies as the punishment was often at the hands of officials whom may or may not punish certain students, that is, it is often who you are and who you know that cut you slack. We find this practice could be perceived as classist and/or racist, and often is. Conversely, these same high achieving students in some districts lost scholarships and college acceptances as they were expelled.

In an effort to level the playing field for all mates, our crew met with stakeholders within the port to brainstorm how we could use RJ to prevent more harm being done to these students and the port with the use of zero tolerance. These youth are not rogues and scallywags who need their entire lives altered if they accept responsibility and repair the harm; in fact, the *Cannabis* offenses might be a way to teach important lessons to deck hands whose decision making apparatus are not fully functioning as yet. Youth needed a parlay, a way to say *time out, do not define me by my actions, rather take me to the captain and teach me a lesson; do not continue the harm I have done to myself with your unintended consequences of zero tolerance.*

The crew used Implementation Science as our method for promoting change. Implementation science is a study of frameworks for change (O Restorative Solutions, 2018). Tested models or frameworks for implementing RJ practices in education settings provide guidelines ensuring greater success in schools attempting to refocus how disciplinary issues are addressed. Several crew and stakeholder members attended conferences on implementing restorative justice. “Attending the Active Implementation and Evaluation Conference on Restorative Justice in June of 2018 helped to put perspective on the importance of a full implementation done with fidelity” (Stakeholder 30, personal communication, June 2018). Implementation science models are multi-year processes and require specific benchmarks for each year. Implementing restorative practices as an alternative to punitive discipline is not a quick fix, nor will the results necessarily be seen in year one; however, when we look at the unintended consequences of the zero-tolerance policy (see Harbor Master sections) currently in place in schools today, there is a need for a different approach. To implement this new, different approach for *Cannabis* offenses, namely RJ, the crew followed the steps outlined in Figure 3, and below aligned them with the O Restorative Solutions Framework (O Restorative Solutions, 2018). This process spanned two years.

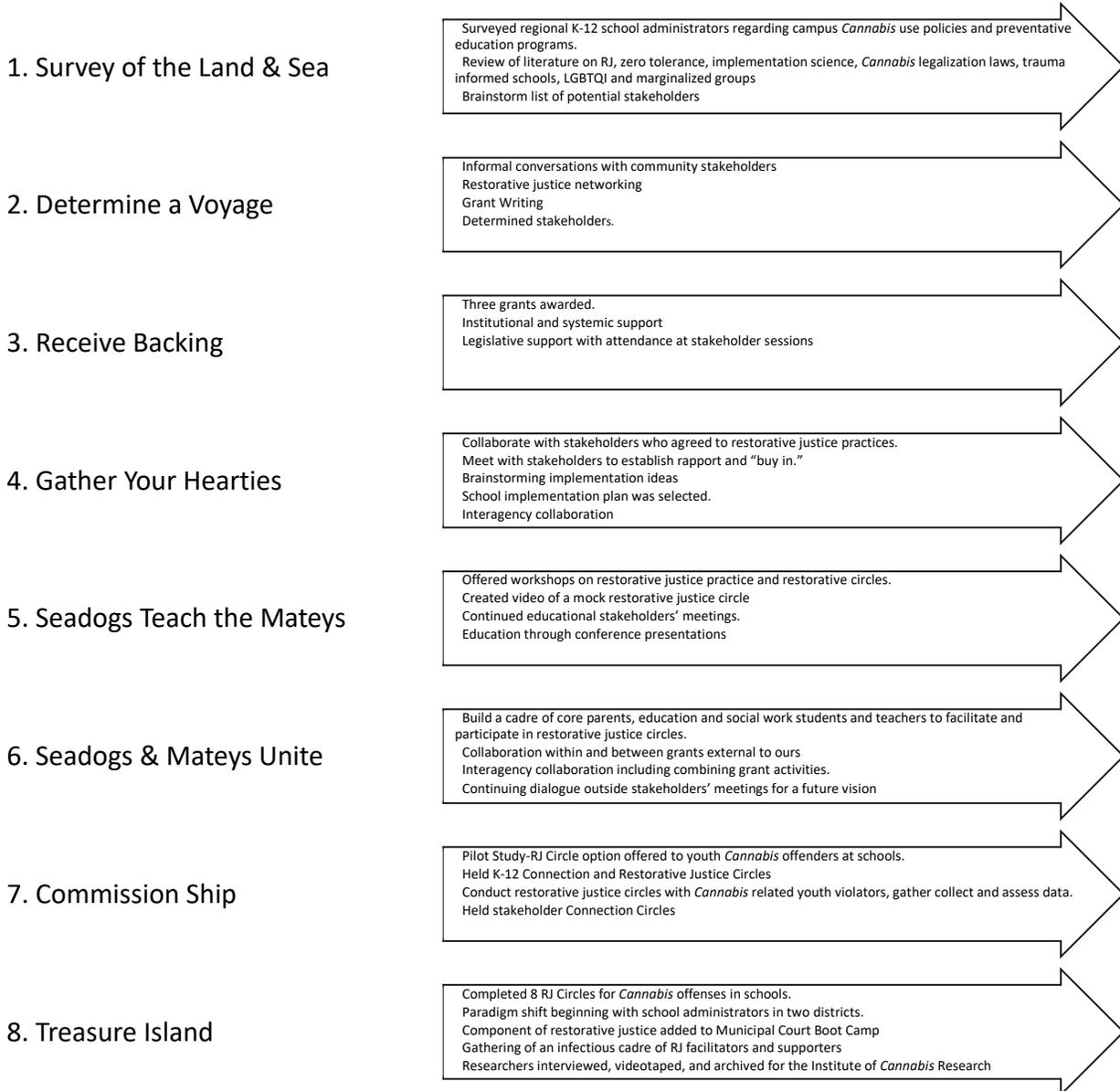


Figure 3: Code of conduct: Project implementation steps

The Navigation

Our descriptive analysis uses collected and triangulated data from the following sources: review of the literature, semi-structured and open discussions, videotape, field notes, symbols, artifacts, observations, and participant observation. We focused on the behavior, the environment and the context of participants’ lived experiences throughout our voyage within RJ circles, stakeholder meetings, training sessions, focus groups and routine conversations about restorative justice as an alternative to zero tolerance for *Cannabis* offenses.

As stated above, the eight steps completed as part of our voyage are identified in Figure 3 and are aligned directly with the four stages of the O Restorative Solutions Framework (O Restorative Solutions, 2018):

Stage 1:	Exploration	Should we do it?
Stage 2:	Installation	Get ready to do it.
Stage 3:	Initial Implementation	Let's do it.
Stage 4:	Full Implementation	Make it better.

The navigation for our voyage lasted two years. Stages 1 & 2 happened over the course of one year; whereas, Stage 3 took place over the second year.

Stage 1: In exploration, we asked ourselves if we **should do it** as suggested within the Implementation Science Framework. This is not a one meeting question we asked just ourselves; in fact, the crew *surveyed the land and sea* and *determined our voyage*. These steps alone involved seven different types of tasks (See Figure 3).

Stage 2: The crew began the installation phase of the Implementation Science Framework; we got **ready to do it**. The crew sought to *receive backing* from financial, institutional, and legislative commissioners. With the support received, the crew was able to *gather [our] hearties* and *the seadogs [taught] the mateys*, that is, the researchers gathered and trained the stakeholders. With an educated and armed cadre, the *seadogs & mateys unite[d]* to develop a pilot plan for RJ within the schools for youth *Cannabis* offenses (See Figure 3).

Stage 3: Let's do it; conduct a pilot study! With a *commission[ed] ship*, the crew was ready to board and begin their voyage. Cadres of mateys and hearties took their positions in schools as captains (principals, SROs and/or counselors) called upon them to sail. The results of the pilot study lead us to *Treasure Island* (See Figure 3).

Stage 4: The ship came back to port. The seadogs, hearties and mateys are planning a full voyage. What the crew learned while we were upon the waters will be examined for planning the next voyage to **make it better**, larger and more comprehensive. We have movement; movement has created fire in the belly. The crew wants to use this fire in the future to create momentum for full implementation.

Ship Ahoy: The Voyage

Port Movement

What creates movement toward social change, the crew is certain, is dependent on many varied factors. No doubt our voyage is unique to all the specifics of our situation. The crew offers up our navigation to make sense of our own journey, as well as to share it with others so they may find the treasures and be aware of possible captivity and shipwreck. The crew began this journey by identifying key players in the port, who became our hearties or mates, from a multidisciplinary, interagency perspective, including, but not necessarily limited to: probation officers, local and state legislators, school resource officers, superintendents, county and city police officers, counselors, RJ practitioners, judges, school board members, teachers, professors, college students, parents and community members.

What created movement toward social change in our community came from the hearties and mateys, the stakeholders within our port. The crew wanted to invite both mates in positions of power within their agency, as well as those engaged in running the day to day ship. Attention was given to invite mates who were in positions working with youth who were aware current practices for disciplining youth were not working, but did not know how to fix the system. In addition, the crew invited mates who were our hearties, those people who were already within the RJ community. The crew found our most resistance with those members of the port who believed the current system was flawed, but had a different solution and were intent on a different agenda. Seadog and matey collaboration was ongoing through meetings held regularly at the same location with one designated seadog, or researcher, with constant communication within and between the meetings. Membership while we were

navigating grew proportionally, allowing the cadre of hearties to expand, including new individuals and/or agencies, and seamlessly merging the crew within the stakeholders and vice versa.

The mates and the agencies the mates represented created the movement for change within our port; however, it was necessary to develop an environment and forum where questions, concerns, and challenges were raised, allowing for members to uncover their own solutions to how RJ could be included within a zero tolerance system. Table 2 shows the matey (stakeholder) issues and solutions derived from conversations and activities held during stakeholder meetings. Equally, seadogs (researchers) had their own set of issues and solutions which are found in Table 3.

Matey Issues (Stakeholders)	Solution*
*These solutions were developed at stakeholder meetings by the mateys with specific examples of how the seadogs would ensure their issues were addressed in practice.	
The Seadogs:	
Time	Volunteered to train, facilitate and support restorative practices within the school and larger port
Money	Wrote grants; Volunteered to offset costs
Efficacy	Trained others in the RJ process; Facilitated and participated in every RJ circle
Results	Shared results from studies and testimonials from area practitioners in schools
Matey Buy-In (Stakeholder)	Promoted voice, held regular meetings, and modeled the RJ process
Consistency	Provided a handout and a video of a process for RJ participant identification and circles which would be consistently followed by the seadogs
Communication	Encouraged SROs to develop their own solution for how they would handle tickets
Consequences or Pardoning	Shared and explained sample RJ contracts which demonstrated far more consequential actions than zero tolerance to assure there would be no deck hand pardon
School Policies	Shared the legislation: Colorado Statute HB11-1032 specifically encourages schools in “the use of restorative justice as a first consideration to remediate” a variety of offenses (Colorado General Assembly, 2011, p. 12)
Deck Hand Buy-In (Student)	Communicate to the captain (counselor, principal, SRO) if the RJ process was not completed

Table 2: Matey Issues & Their Seadog Solutions

Seadog Issues (Researchers)	Solution
	The Seadogs:
Time	Wrote grants for research time, and/or to pay for our time
Money	Wrote grants
Efficacy	Held seadog meetings and attended facilitator training
Matey Buy-In (Stakeholder)	Promoted voice, held regular meetings, and modeled the RJ process
Communication	Personal invitations; continuous follow-up on emails, phone calls; networking
Access	Stakeholder meetings creating buy-in; networking; volunteering; consistency

Table 3: *Seadog Issues & Solutions*

With issues and solutions voiced and resolved, the crew and hearties began the work of bringing RJ circles to port schools with youth *Cannabis* offenses. We want to, again, acknowledge that at this point, the crew and stakeholders were often merged. That is, crew members became true participants engaging as community stakeholders, while agency stakeholders became researchers or crew members.

There's No Victim of a Deckhand in a *Cannabis* Offense

We did it! We piloted RJ circles in schools where youth *Cannabis* offenses occurred. The waters of a *Cannabis* offense have their own unique tribulations. If a deckhand steals, the direct victim is the person s/he stole from; if a deckhand starts a fight, the direct victim is the person they hit; if a deckhand vandalizes property, the direct victim is the property owner. What happened when we applied RJ circles for youth *Cannabis* offenders in regard to who is harmed or a victim is as follows:

1. The offender does not always see themselves as victimizing anyone as, say, in a theft. That is, in a theft, some "other" one is robbed, or directly harmed. The *Cannabis* user believes they did not harm another.
2. If the family or student value is such that *Cannabis* use is less harmful or less wrong (Peters & Foust, 2019), the youth offender does not see that the situation has a victim.

This finding left the seadogs with the question of who should be in the RJ circle so that the power of a circle to help an offender understand that others are harmed in any offense. The harm from the offense creates a ripple effect within the individual offender and their community that makes all a victim, including the self.

Constellations of Deck Hands: Sexual Identity, Drug Use & Restorative Justice

Restorative justice (RJ) is at the heart of a social movement bringing non-punitive approaches for addressing harm within the school port without violations of legal and human rights. LGBTQI students are more at risk for bullying and punitive repercussions often resulting in the disproportional use of illicit drugs within the school. School districts could address the specialized mental health needs of this minority group of students, derived from bullying and other negative experiences within and outside the school system, by developing restorative practices. Our previous work with direction from the harbor master (review of the literature) and with the deck hands (youth) led us to believe it might be important for some individuals who identify within a specific group (e.g. race, gender, sexual orientation) to have representation from that group. If this is so, RJ captains should be asking deck hands who have offended if they identify with any particular group, and if they would like a member from that group present in the circle. Using the RJ process with circle members from the LGBTQI community might help these

students stay out of the court system and build on resiliency practices, thereby creating a more connected and powerful reduction of harm to all stakeholders.

Echoes of a Seadog

As seadogs, we gained much knowledge about how to navigate the waters of a RJ voyage. Below is a list of understandings, not in any order; rather, they are the random echoes of a salty seadog. We now understand:

- The power of a shared vision recognizing zero tolerance across the board was not equitable. It was fulfilling to find so many other professionals in other disciplines felt the same.
- Our port's partners have specific needs, and with conversation, mutual needs can be met.
- That we knew that change was slow, but we now realize that change is even slower than slow.
- You develop excitement finding a treasure trove of mates who are committed to do the work of RJ.
- Networking can be energizing and leads to camaraderie and friendships beyond professional colleagues.
- Interagency work takes time that many professionals do not have or cannot give; however, when they do, a deeper more lasting effect can happen.
- Marginalized populations may need specific considerations within a RJ circle that we do not know about until we have conversations with them about those needs.
- Captains (decision-making disciplinary actors) must be engaged as stakeholders and buy in to RJ implementation, otherwise desired changes are stymied.

A New Navigational Map

Restorative justice practices were put in place in four area schools, with five RJ circles conducted specifically for youth *Cannabis* offenses. We watched a paradigm shift regarding the zero tolerance policy, even within resistant school districts. A new navigational map was being drawn. Besides the work we did in the schools, the crew was invited to apply a restorative component to the Municipal Court Boot Camp for juveniles. Additionally, we were asked to assist them in writing a grant to develop a more restorative boot camp. The treasure was infectious; the crew kept gathering hearties along the way. We generated a movement; the crew often went to unrelated meetings and heard the RJ term tossed around. The greatest unexpected treasure of all is the crew created a port buzz. Community boards invited us to inform them on "this" RJ they were hearing about around the port. The crew was interviewed and videotaped; footage of this interview was archived for the Institute of *Cannabis* Research; therefore, like the pirate BlackBeard himself, the movement has become a part of history.

Shipwreck and Captivity: Limitations

Stakeholder 11 summarizes our voyage well.

As we hosted community forums and engaged with the various stakeholders, it was apparent that there was a shared concern for the impact of *Cannabis* use among our juveniles, as well as a strong desire to minimize such recreational use. There was also broad support for ensuring that juvenile *Cannabis* offenders not be saddled with consequences for their immature choices lasting well into their adulthood. A restorative alternative to channeling our community's juveniles into the criminal justice system needs to be made available. Even with such broad-based support, it has been a challenge to secure referrals of specific *Cannabis* cases by the schools and school resource officers. Efforts continue to the present time to build trust with and elicit commitments from essential decision-makers toward a consistent referral process (Stakeholder 11, personal communication, January 26, 2020).

The overworked and overburdened professionals within the schools are performing within a shipwrecked system, often held captive by the policies in place. The limits of creating movement within a port begin with the acceptance that change is slow, that change happens in small increments. First voyages may only leave the port to quickly return. When you have a large crew, you have a risk of mutiny. It only takes one person not understanding the vision to begin mutinous acts. In educating the mates, seadogs may find the infrastructure necessary for the mates to set sail does not exist. The fear of capsizing keeps some mateys from taking risks and jumping on the ship...no voyages for them. For many mates, they may have jumped onto the ship only to leave because they do not have the time for a long adventure at sea. Far too often, the commissioner(s) who don't believe or understand the navigational map remove their support and funding...No more trips for you!

This Ship Is Sailing—We Have Movement

We are now meeting a strong tailwind to generate momentum. Just as pirates form a council, comprised of every member of the crew to develop a Code of Conduct, our crew rallied stakeholders to develop a plan of action to create a movement toward RJ within our port (See Table 3). Looking back at our lived experiences the crew realized that, although we are not a large port, there are resources, devotion, and commitment from our hearties, professionals and agencies, willing to come together for a common vision. We have movement...it's time to harness the wind from this movement to gather momentum to transform this shipwrecked system from punitive to restorative.

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