

Healthy relationships with students helps treat the symptom of absenteeism

In a recent article on student homelessness, anti-poverty advocates indicate that absenteeism is a symptom of something else that's going on. "What we'd like to see more of in schools is a more trauma-informed approach," said Annie Pennucci of Building Changes, a nonprofit group for homeless students in Washington State. "Being late or absent, falling asleep in school, all can be symptoms of homelessness, not just poor behavior." (see full article below)

Persistent absenteeism may be an indication of student homelessness. It becomes complex since there are many other risk factors as well. "Homelessness is not just not having housing. ... It goes above and beyond poverty," said Barbara Duffield, the executive director of SchoolHouse Connection, which co-wrote the report with three other groups, the America's Promise Alliance, Civic Enterprises, and the Institute for Children, Poverty, and Homelessness. "There's so much that goes into homelessness, in terms of trauma ... these students have multiple risk factors."

While school staff cannot do much about the root causes of absenteeism, or even indicators like homelessness, relationships with students can make a big difference. "It's the relationships, just having that extra layer of support for those kids," Snell says. The homeless advocates "are not providing direct instruction, but they might be talking to the teacher about the fact that this child doesn't have access to the internet at home or doesn't have a way to print anything when they're not at school. So let's give him the time at school that he needs to do whatever it is he needs to do."

Keeping Kids in School is all about making connections with students using restorative practices. "The essence of restorative practices is disarmingly simple: that human beings are happier, more productive and more likely to make positive changes in their behaviour when those in positions of authority do things **with** them, rather than **to** them or **for** them." (Adapted from Ted Wachtel 2014) Taking the time to make a trusting connection **with** a student can change the direction of a life.

[Read full article](#)

If you'd like to make a connection, please contact me.

Stan Baker OCT(Ontario Certified Teacher), BA, BEd, MEd

Restorative Resolutions

stan@restorative.ca

Linked In Stan Baker

Check out some great restorative resources at [www.restorative.ca](http://www.restorative.ca)

Stan helps schools address persistent absenteeism by the Keeping Kids in School service.

Keeping Kids in School Service Unit Milestones

- Onboarding and performance measures - a. Onboarding - set up with Reference Team (key staff in school or school board to accompany, assist and communicate with Restorative Resolutions) b. Performance measures - How much service was delivered? How well did we deliver it? How much change/effect did we produce? What quality of change/effect did we produce?
- Modules online - approx. 10 minutes each a. Staff relational skills enhanced when using TWO by TEN (TWO minutes times TEN days to build connections with students)b. Module 1 - Asking great questions to build connectionsc. c. Module 2 - Listening to build connections d. Module 3 - Early bridges to build connections e. Module 4 - Fair process to build connections
- Coaching - sessions of one hour group videoconferences
- Review and evaluation