

Restorative Practice Parent Booklet

“Building Healthy Relationships”

Letter from Principal

Dear Parents

On behalf of our school community, I welcome you to the Restorative Practice Parent evening.

Restorative Practice has been developed with one specific goal in mind; to support and facilitate the building of healthy relationships. It has been proven beyond doubt that when individuals live in healthy and life giving relationships with significant others, there is abundant personal growth, capacity for character building and a high level achievement in all areas of endeavour.

Restorative Practice was formulated by Real Justice, an international non-profit organisation. This development which began in Wagga Wagga in 1990, was influenced by its Australian director, Terry O'Connell OAM. Since this time Terry has worked with organisations and schools to further refine the processes you and your child/children will experience during the next few months. Basic to the Restorative Practice processes are the Restorative Questions.

All teachers, staff and students will become very familiar with these tools of enquiry. They form the basis for our interaction and engagement, as we support and enable each other to operate confidently within our own realms of responsibility as teachers, students and in your case, parents.

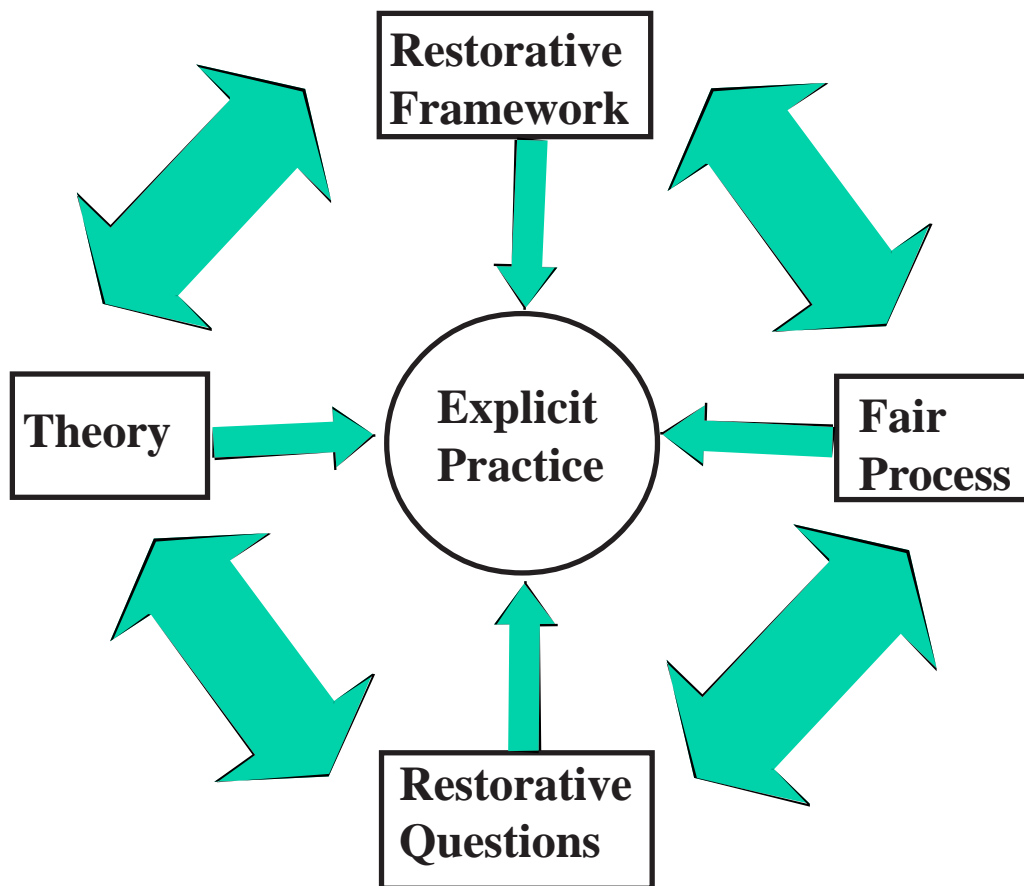
Our hope is that you will join your child/children in becoming familiar with restorative practice and what it has to offer, as we strive to build a stronger and more inclusive school communities.

Kind regards

Principal



Restorative Practice Framework



Linking Practice, Theories & Values

The four key elements of Restorative Practices are linked in such a way as to ensure an ongoing framework for the development of healthy relationships. All elements are integral to each other, in that fair process, explicit practice and the theory are employed to validate the exercise of the restorative and supplementary questions.

One of the driving forces behind Restorative Practices is the fact that people intuitively know what works in their relationships with others. The four elements listed above, when used consistently, will lead to healthier and more fruitful relationships.

Justice and fairness provide the foundation upon which healthy relationships are built. The central theme of fair process is that:

'individuals are most likely to trust and co-operate freely with systems - whether they themselves win or lose by those systems - when fair process is observed.'

TIME OUT

When were you first conscious of the importance of 'fair process'?

What happened to bring about this awareness?

Think of an occasion when you felt you were treated 'unfairly'. What would have made the experience 'fair'?

Two Approaches to Justice

Adversarial (Blame)

- Focus is in the past
- Preoccupied with blame
- Deterrence linked to punishment

Restorative (Relational)

- Focus in past, present & future
- Emphasis on resulting harm
- Deterrence linked to relationships and personal accountability

‘For punishment and sanctions to be effective (in changing behaviours) they need to be delivered in a context that provides both meaning and relevance.’

From the beginning of human history, there has always been tension in relationships. The two approaches illustrated above seek to re-establish or restore a natural sense of justice. Which approach do you believe has the capacity to ‘make things right’?

There is one school of thought in society that states; ‘the more you punish people for inappropriate behaviour, the less likely they are to do it again.’

Then there is the relational approach that states; ‘the stronger the relationship, the less likely we are to act inappropriately toward one another.’

It is important that fitting punishment, sanctions and consequences are a part of any response to inappropriate behaviour. In the blame culture, the response is given or ‘imposed’, whereas the relational approach ensures that consequences are given in a context that have meaning and relevance for all concerned. This response is far more likely to foster responsibility and to change behaviour.

TIME OUT

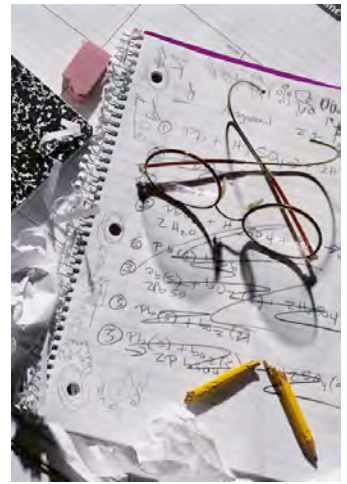
Think of a time when someone has responded to you in a blaming manner when you have made a mistake. Then reflect upon a time when someone has responded in a relational manner. What effect did each response have on you?

Think of a recent occasion when you could have acted in a more relational manner with your child. What could you do differently when a similar occasion occurs?

What do you want your child to learn most from you?



Restorative Questions 1



What happened?

What were you thinking of at the time?

What have you thought about since?

Who has been affected by what you have done?

In what way?

What do you think you need to do to make things right?

These questions are about challenge, story, reflection and reparation and are designed to build a strong basis upon which to foster healthier relationship.

The structure of the questions focus on the past (what happened?), present (reflection on who has been affected and in what way) and future (what needs to be done to make things right?).

The questions therefore emphasis the importance of harm and its impact on relationships..

They are :

- ◆ *open ended*
- ◆ *respectful and not value-laden*
- ◆ *objective meaning it is not about the questioner but rather about leveraging responsibility onto another to tell their story*
- ◆ *thinking questions rather than feeling ones which ironically tend to evoke stronger emotional responses*
- ◆ *have the potential to develop empathy.*

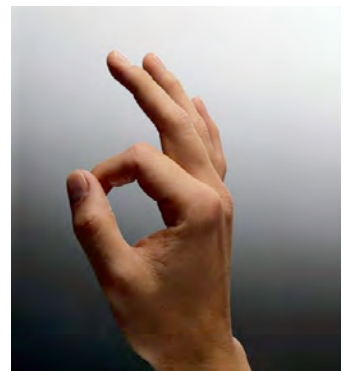
Using these question allows the questioner to be practical and direct.. For example, when you ask the question, 'What happened,' you get the response, "I don't know.' You simply draw on your experience and explore the question in other ways. For example, 'Tell what your part was in the incident?" If you maintain the basis sequence of questions, they will work in most situations. Another consideration is to view the questions as a 'way of engaging' others.

At all times avoid asking the WHY (why did you do that) question.

TIME OUT

When challenging behaviour, why would these questions be helpful?

How could you use these questions in your own relationships, both personally and professionally?



Restorative Questions 11

What did you think when you realised what had happened?

What impact has this incident had on you and others?

What has been the hardest thing for you?

What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

The Supplementary Questions create a space for people who have been harmed by the actions of others by helping them gain a sense of justice (validation and understanding). The questions ask for a factual and non-judgemental response.

The Supplementary questions are sequenced from the past (what happened?); to the effect the action (what has been the impact?); followed by a grounded question that gets to the core of the real emotional and personal impact (what has been the hardest thing?)

This question has the capacity to get to the heart of the matter and offers an avenue to express what has been most difficult. This question will serve you well in situations where someone is experiencing personal difficulties,

e.g. a young person struggling with his/her relationships :

“what is really hard about what is happening for you at this time?”



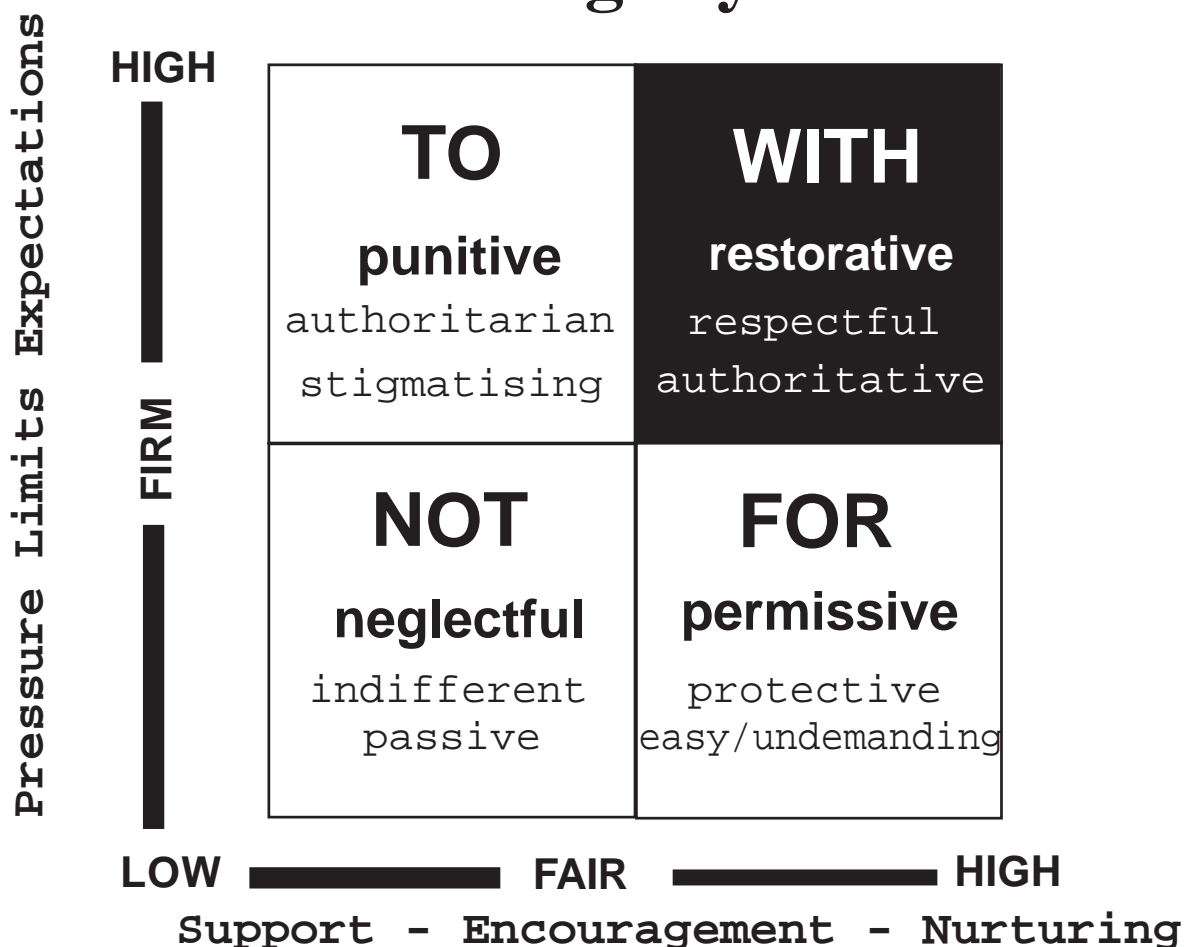
TIME OUT

How could these questions assist you to engage those hurt by the actions of another?

Which of the above questions is likely to have the greatest impact?

How could you use these questions in your own personal and professional lives?

Parenting Styles



Adapted from *Social Discipline Window* - Paul McCold & Ted Wachtel - 2000

It is important to get the balance right between being firm and fair.

When we are high on rules and low on respect or support, we operate in an authoritarian way. Blaming others then becomes a normal way of parenting.

When we are low on firmness yet high on fairness, we become permissive, meaning we do not set clear and reasonable boundaries/expectations. Making excuses becomes our usual response.

When we are neither fair nor firm, in other words have no interest, we will be neglectful as parents. However, when we set high expectations and offer appropriate support, we become inclusive and freely cooperate with others. Relationships are built or strengthened when we are able to parent consistently in this domain.

TIME OUT

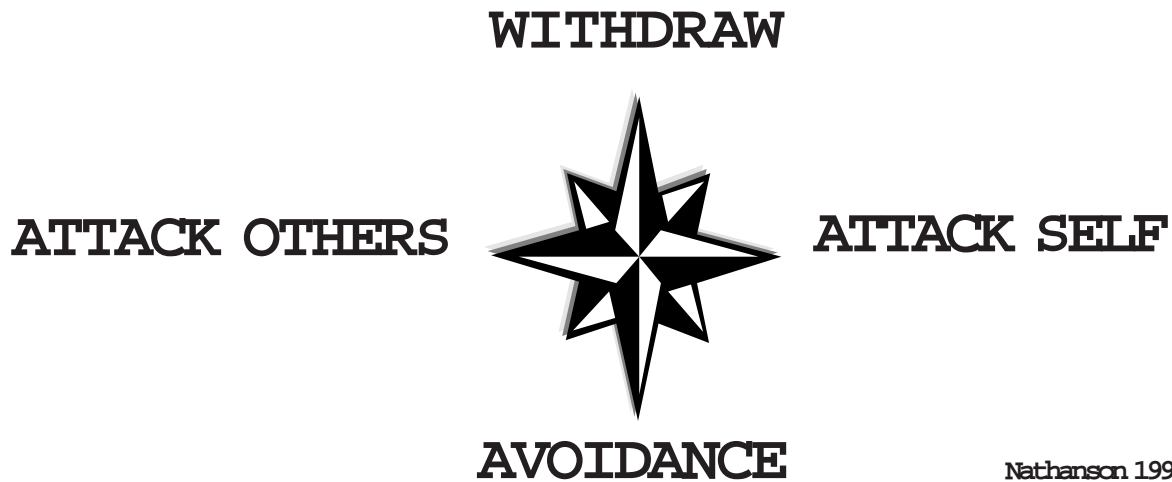
What has influenced your parenting style?

How would you describe this style?

Do you think you need to make changes so you are able to operate more consistently in the WITH domain?

Discuss why it is possible to be respectful, but still doing things 'TO' or 'FOR' others.

Compass Of Shame



Nathanson 1992

The Compass of Shame was developed by Professor Donald Nathanson to describe the various negative ways people respond to shame. This is a very useful tool to use in understanding human behaviour. Think about a person who escalates from mild anger to rage in no time at all. Be assured that their struggle has a lot to do with shame. Anything that interrupts our good feelings involves shame. Understanding the Compass of Shame will not only help you deal more effectively with people who exhibit problematic behaviour, but will also help you to identify your own shame triggers. Reflect on those experiences in your life which involved shame, and perhaps still do. Then look at this experience through the lens of the Compass of Shame. No doubt you can locate your behaviour in one or more of the polar responses. This may help you to understand that your behaviour (response) is normal given the circumstances. Many often view shame as their responsibility when they have may have experienced varying degrees of victimisation themselves. Understanding how we deal with shame is critical to how we relate to others. The Restorative and Supplementary Questions provide a very useful way of engaging those experiencing shame.

The polar responses to shame include:

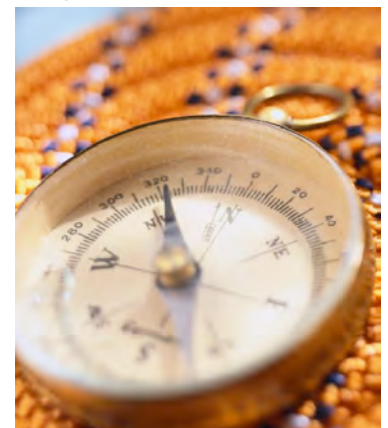
- **WITHDRAWAL:** *isolating oneself, running and hiding.*
- **AVOIDANCE:** *denial, drugs and alcohol, workaholism.*
- **ATTACK OTHERS:** *lashing out verbally or physically, blaming others.*
- **ATTACK SELF:** *self put-down, masochism.*

TIME OUT

What are your shame triggers?

How can you use the *Compass of Shame* to better understand behaviour?

How could you draw on the *Compass of Shame* to improve your own personal and professional relationships?



Parent Reflection

What are the things you do well as a parent?

As a parent, what and who influences your parenting style?

What areas need some thought?

How might others in your family also become a part of this reflection?

What do you most value about being a part of this school community?

What do you want most for your child when he/she leaves this school?



Family Talk

You might like to talk with your family and others about the Parent Workshop - give some thought to the following questions:

What was the evening about?

What did you find useful?

What you learnt from the night?

How do you think you can make your home and relationships more restorative?

Real Justice offers a range of products and services which include presentations for:

- Schools
- Community groups
- Institutions
- Corporate

We provide Restorative Practice training for parents, teachers, students, managers, supervisors and community workers/leaders. We tailor training to assist with workplace conflicts and tensions.

For further information please visit our website – www.realjustice.org

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