



**SOME IDEAS TO CONSIDER IN ORDER TO PROMOTE  
DEVELOPMENTAL RESTORATIVE RESPONSES  
WITHIN OR BETWEEN SCHOOLS, YOUTH WORK  
PROJECTS AND YOUTHREACH CENTRES**

Co. Donegal VEC  
Restorative Practice Project

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January 2012

## THE RESTORATIVE SCHOOL/YOUTHREACH CENTRE/YOUTH WORK PROJECT - A DYNAMIC MODEL

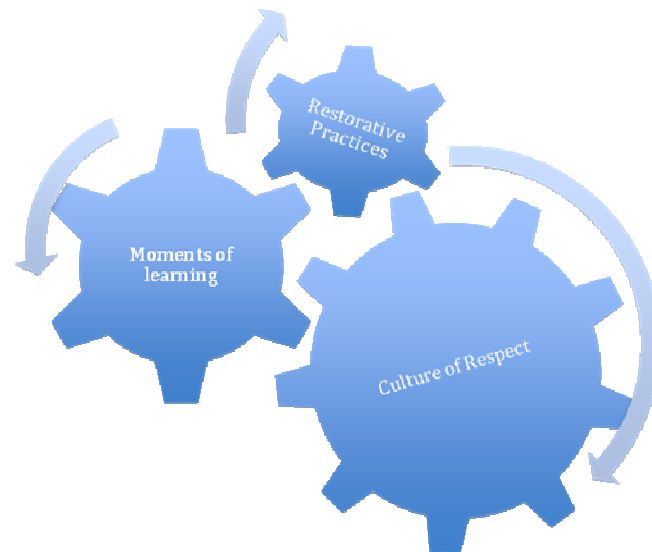


Fig 1: A University of Ulster Restorative Approaches Conceptual Model, Co Donegal VEC. The interlocking cogs of Restorative Practice evidenced from practitioner experience in the Co. Donegal VEC Restorative Practices Schools, Youth Work and Youthreach Programmes, 2011.

**The different interlocking cogs reflected for us the different possibilities practitioners see to contribute restoratively by:**

- 1. Promoting Respectful Cultures. We call these a “Culture of Respect”.**
- 2. Promoting more reflective learning cultures between staff, between pupils and staff and between pupils as well as with parents ideally. We call these “Learning Moments”.**
- 3. Promoting specific structures, under the transcendence of the law, that deal with incidents of significant harm in a restorative manner and that impact on the school, club or programme. We called these specifically and structurally, “Restorative Practices”.**

## **Co Donegal VEC Restorative Practices Research Spring 2012**

A number of teaching staff from different schools, Youthreach centres and youth work organisations attended the restorative practices training day in November 2011. They looked at the model outlined above and considered how they could individually and collectively promote activities supportive of restorative practices.

Co. Donegal VEC are now inviting responses from different schools, youth programmes and Youthreach Centres to secure some financial support to underpin a range of new Restorative practice initiatives.

This text outlines some ways in which project proposals could take the Restorative Practices theme forward. Different groups might come together to look at ways in which they could respond to this invitation.

Groups of staff from the different schools, youth work programmes and Youthreach Centres are invited to gather, within their organisations and, possibly, in some inter agency partnerships, to consider the opportunities open to them to promote restorative practices further in 2012. Some detailed opportunities and constraints are itemised in the Appendices and were listed in the interim research report given to Co. Donegal VEC in December 2011<sup>1</sup>.

The headline actions people could take under each area are gathered as follows:

### **LIMITS AND CONSTRAINTS TO PROMOTING RESTORATIVE PRACTICES**

The top themes identified as limits or constraints in developing this work were:

- Time
- An absence of an unequivocal Senior Management Support and Drive
- A sense of isolation in developing this practice
- A lack of an organisational culture where people were given positive feedback and affirmation or able to challenge demeaning staff cultures.

It would be possible to develop proposals that attended to some of the specific constraints staff identify in their school, youth work organisation or Youthreach centre.

### **PROMOTING THE CULTURE OF RESPECT**

Respectful cultures are welcoming and inclusive, robust relational spaces where respect is experienced. Such spaces are safe, differences of view can be shared and healing experienced because the relationships are not themselves at risk. In such spaces people grow ease, confidence and trust. Such spaces are central to people growing as fulfilled human beings, open to learning and able to learn with others.

The top themes identified as developments that would support a respectful culture in schools/Youthreach centres/youth work organisations were:

- Actions supportive of relationship based-relational approaches to restorative practices;

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<sup>1</sup> Developing a Whole System Approach to Embedding Restorative Practices in Schools, Youthwork Agencies and Youthreach Centres in County Donegal, Restorative Practices Programme, University of Ulster, 2011.

- Actions linked to more open and joint working with students in ways that enhanced an understanding of the value of restorative practices in relationships between pupils/young people, pupils/young people and staff, and staff and staff;
- Actions supportive of a whole system approach to restorative practices.

#### **LEARNING MOMENTS - PROMOTING A REFLECTIVE SCHOOL ATMOSPHERE**

These are relationships and structures that promote more reflective learning cultures between staff, between pupils/young people and staff and between pupils and students/young people as well as with parents ideally. We called these “Moments of Learning”.

The main developments that would support more reflective learning cultures in schools/centres/youth organisations were:

- Promoting and securing relationships and structures that mandate reflective learning conversations between all;
- Promoting respectful listening to diverse experiences and views;
- “Supporting staff and students engage reflectively in new ways together that restore possibilities to restore understanding and address conflicts between them”
- Supporting staff reflect together on an approach to understanding the need for rules and a discipline code.
- “Engaging parents in thinking through their responsibilities”

#### **RESTORATIVE PRACTICES are specific meetings and structures, under the transcendence of the law, that deal with incidents of significant harm in a restorative manner.**

The main developments that would support more reflective learning cultures in schools were grouped the responses under three broad headings:

- Sustained Staff Development-Skill and Confidence Development in Working Restoratively
- Building Student and Young People’s Participation, Understanding and Confidence in Restorative Practices
- Promoting and Motivating young people through Mentoring and Pastoral Support Approaches.

## APPENDICES TO CONSULT FOR POTENTIAL RESTORATIVE PRACTICE INITIATIVE THEMES

### SOME LIMITS AND CONSTRAINTS IN PROMOTING RESTORATIVE APPROACHES IN SCHOOLS, YOUTH AGENCIES AND YOUTHREACH CENTRES

#### TIME

TIME
TIME TO FOLLOW UP WITH STUDENTS
NOT ABLE TO GIVE INITIAL START UP TIME TO PROMOTE RP
MAKING THE TIME TO INTEGRATE THE PRACTICE RATHER THAN SEE IT AS SEPARATE
INDIVIDUALS ARE HARD TO GIVE TIME TO
HAVING THE ENERGY TO WORK RESTORATIVELY EVERY DAY?
PERSONAL ISSUES GET LIMITED TIME IN A WORKING DAY AT SCHOOL

#### AN ABSENCE OF UNEQUIVOCAL SENIOR MANAGEMENT SUPPORT AND DRIVE

ABSENCE OF FULL SMT SUPPORT
STAFF NOT MOTIVATED TO EXPLORE RP
CONSISTENT POLICIES AND PROCEDURES NOT IN PLACE
SOME STAFF ARE RESISTORS OF CHANGE
BEING JUDGED NEGATIVELY BY COLLEAGUES
DIFFERENT TEACHER STYLES WORK AGAINST A COMMON APPROACH TO RP-NEED STAFF CONSISTENCY
SOME OPPOSE ALL CHANGE
WE NEED MORE POSITIVE AFFIRMING OF RP BY ALL STAFF AND SENIOR STAFF WILLING TO PROMOTE IT
A BLAME CULTURE EXISTS-FEAR
EACH PERSON HAS TO ADKNOWLEDGE THEIR OWN RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR ACTIONS

#### ISOLATION

ISOLATION OF WORKING ALONE-LACK OF STAFF INTEREST IN RP AS A NORM
LACK OF SUPPORT FROM OTHER STAFF-RESENTMENT
RP IS NOT THE NORM
ABSENCE OF MENTORING

#### CULTURES WHERE POSITIVE FEEDBACK AND AFFIRMATION WAS ABSENT

POSITIVE FEEDBACK WITH STUDENTS IS NOT ROUTINE
CODES OF SCHOOL DISCIPLINE AFFIRM SUMMARY JUSTICE NOT RESTORATIVE APPROACHES
NO POSITIVE AFFIRMING OF RP BY ALL STAFF AND WILLING TO PROMOTE IT
STAFF WERE UNWILLING TO CHALLENGE PEERS REFERENCE ATTITUDES TO THIS RESTORATIVE WORK
A BLAME CULTURE EXISTS-FEAR

#### PROMOTING RESPECTFUL CULTURES AND RELATIONSHIPS

##### Actions supportive of relationship based-relational approaches to restorative practices;

POSITIVE AFFIRMATION OF STUDENTS DONE AS MORE OF A DAY TO DAY ROUTINE-NOTES, SPEECH ACKNOWLEDGEMENT, ENJOYING CLASS TIME
LISTEN AND HEAR WHAT IS BEING SAID-BE RESPECTFUL
ACKNOWLEDGE EACH PERSON EVERY DAY BY NAME
GREETING PEOPLE IN THE CORRIDORS
SMILE MORE IN THE WORKPLACE-SAY THANKS MORE
PROMOTE SCHOOL COMMUNITY SENSE

**Actions linked to more open and joint working with students in ways that enhanced an understanding of the value of restorative practices in relationships between pupils, pupils and staff, and staff and staff**

ENCOURAGE STAFF TO STAND BACK RATHER THAN QUICKLY REACT TO SITUATIONS
USE RESTORATIVE QUESTIONING MORE
ALL WORKING TOGETHER-RESPECT IS A TWO WAY PROCESS-FAIR
TALK MORE ABOUT THE THEME IN A CREATIVE MANNER WITH STUDENTS AS WELL AS STAFF
SEEKING OUT ATTAINMENT AND POSITIVE BEHAVIOUR CONTRIBUTIONS FROM ALL STUDENTS
UNDERSTANDING BACKGROUND OF YOUNG PEOPLE WHO PRESENT CHALLENGING BEHAVIOURS
OFFER OPPORTUNITIES TO PUPILS AS A PRIORITY AND TAKE THE RISK
USING RESTORATIVE INTERVENTIONS-BEHAVIOUR IS THE PROBLEM
ON GOING TRAINING AND SUPPORT NEEDED
CLARIFY WHAT STUDENTS ARE SAYING-SHOW I UNDERSTAND THE GRAVITY OF THEIR SITUATION
PROMOTE GREATER INVOLVEMENT WITH THEME IN EXTRA CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES WITH STAFF
DISTRIBUTE RP PROMPT CARDS TO ALL STAFF
CIRCLE TIME
PROMOTE AN OPENNESS TO DIVERSITY
TREAT ALL AS I WOULD WANT MY OWN CHILD TREATED
BEING TRANSPARENT ABOUT RP APPROACHES

**Actions supportive of a whole system approach to restorative practices.**

WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACHES LED BY SENIOR MANAGEMENT-POLICY PRIORITY
SENIOR STAFF MEET CLASS TEACHERS REGULARLY WITH THEIR GROUPS TO EXAMINE THE THEME OF RESPECTFUL RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN US
STATE RP AS A BASE OF NEW CONTRACT APPOINTMENTS
DEVELOPING NEW CODE OF BEHAVIOUR
PLACE RESTORATIVE APPROACHES IN SCHOOL PROSPECTUS, TEACHER AND PUPIL DIARIES
BELIEF IN RP AND LEAD BY EXAMPLE IN STAFF ROOM
LIAISE WITH COLLEAGUES ABOUT SMALL ACTIONS THAT SUPPORT RP APPROACHES
ARTICULATE THE ARGUMENTS IN FAVOUR OF THIS APPROACH FOR A SAFER, MORE EFFECTIVE SCHOOL
DEVELOP SCHOOL / AGENCY CLUSTER OF STAFF PROMOTING RP
ESTABLISH THAT THE RESTORATIVE APPROACH IS THE WAY WE ARE GOING TO PROMOTE
ESTABLISH A NO SHOUTING SCHOOL CULTURE
ESTABLISH AN RP BUDGET HEAD-STAFF RELEASE
SUPPORTING NEW STAFF GET INVOLVED IN RP

**PROMOTING MOMENTS OF LEARNING**

**“Promoting and securing relationships and structures that mandate reflective learning”.**

TIME ESTABLISHED TO ENCOURAGE REFLECTIVE LEARNING
STAFF ASKED -HOW DID I MAKE THOSE AROUND ME FEEL TODAY?
STAFF MEETING AGENDAS-STAFF TRAINING
STRUCTURED TRAINING FOR THE WHOLE MANAGEMENT TEAM
PROMOTE INFORMAL CONVERSATIONAL CULTURES-NEW RELATIONSHIPS IN AGENCY
REASSURE TEACHERS DEVELOPING THIS PRACTICE THAT A SENIOR MANAGER IS SUPPORTING THEM
PASTORAL CARE GROUP
SECURING HIGH LEVELS OF RESPECT AND RESPONSIBILITY
RECORDING EXISTING PRACTICE
BEING ABLE TO ADMIT AND LEARN FROM MY/OUR MISTAKES

**“Promoting respectful listening to diverse experiences and views”.**

POSITIVE WORDS OF AFFIRMATION AND RECOGNITION-PROMOTING ESTEEM, MENTORING
GIVING SPACE FOR PERSON TO REFLECT ON BEHAVIOUR-OTHER SIDES TO BE ACKNOWLEDGED- HOW DID I MAKE THOSE AROUND ME FEEL TODAY?
BE IN THE MOMENT PATIENCE-LISTEN

**“Supporting staff and students engage reflectively in new ways together that restore possibilities to restore understanding and address conflicts between them”**

STUDENT COUNCIL AS BASE FOR RP UNDERSTANDING
MEDIATION TRAINING
ENABLING EACH PERSON TO BE AN AGENT OF CHANGE
PRACTICE CIRCLE DEVELOPMENT
PROMOTING THE LANGUAGE OF POSSIBILITY

**“Promoting Restorative Practices as part of staff reflecting together on an approach to understanding the need for rules and a discipline code”**

USE RP IN HANDLING CLASS BULLYING AND IN ANTI BULLYING CAMPAIGNS
RESTORATIVE PRACTICES AS PART OF DISCIPLINE SPECTRUM
WHERE ARE THE LIMITS OF RP AND TRADITIONAL PUNISHMENT APPROACHES?

**“Engaging parents in thinking through their responsibilities”**

PARENTS ASSOCIATION INTRODUCED TO THEME	2
PARENTAL AFFIRMATION OF CONDUCT	1

**There were a number of specific items identified by individuals that are important to note.**

TO TEACH WELL AND NOT BE ANGRY WHEN STUDENTS DO NOT APPRECIATE MY EFFORTS
BEING IN-BETWEEN LEADERS AND RESISTORS
DEVELOP YOUTHWORK PRACTICE CENTRED ON RESTORATIVE PRACTICES
CLEARLY IDENTIFY SOME ISSUES THAT ARE NOT RESTORATIVE
USE UU MODEL AS FRAMEWORK WITH COLLEAGUES

## **RESTORATIVE PRACTICES**

YEAR HEAD, MANAGEMENT AND CLASS TEACHER STRUCTURES
BUILDING RESILIENCE IN PUPILS/YOUNG PEOPLE AND WITH STAFF
DEVELOP A CORE GROUP OF STAFF
INITIATE WORK WITH ONE YEAR GROUP AS A BASE TO DEVELOP FROM
RP TRAINING FOR VOLUNTEERS IN YOUTH AGENCIES
SUPPORT STAFF DEALING INFORMALLY WITH CONFLICTS- MINI CONFERENCING MINOR INCIDENTS
RESTORATIVE LANGUAGE PROMOTED
USING RESTORATIVE QUESTIONING STYLES DAILY
PASTORAL CARE ENGAGE WITH THE THEME
MORE PRACTICE IN TEAMS NEEDED
CONFLICT RESOLUTION SKILLS PROMOTED
NEW AWARENESS THROUGHOUT SCHOOL WITH POSTERS AND MESSAGES
DEVELOP STRUCTURED RESTORATIVE PRACTICES FOR STAFF CONFIDENCE TO GROW
INTRODUCE THE RESTORATIVE CULTURE FROM DAY 1

## **OTHER SUGGESTIONS TO CONSIDER**

### **MAKING RESTORATIVE CHANGES**

#### **THE LANGUAGE OF RELATIONSHIPS, GROUPS AND COMMUNITIES THAT Demean OR EXPEL PEOPLE**

*The places you work in and the relationships you create are important, potentially, for the personal development of both students and staff. Schools that do not exclude pupils; schools that try not to exclude pupils who have committed some harm; youth projects and informal education programmes that offer second chances to young*

people are all important places where new choices can be exercised and new ways chosen, especially if the old ways young people and staff have tended to use have been conflictual. Such spaces need to pay attention to at least two aspects:

**ATTENDING TO LANGUAGE:** The language that dominates engagements and meetings between all in that space and how it is continually looked at in terms of fostering personal development or not;

**ATTENDING TO RITUALS:** The character of the community you build in the school/centre is central to whether students/young people and staff feel at ease and support one another.

### ATTENDING TO THE NATURE OF THE LANGUAGE OF THE SCHOOL

1. A staff group could openly explore together whether there are any words or terms in common use by pupils, staff, managers and parents that undermine the building of a respectful culture?
2. They could then discuss how these words are heard and people’s responses to them?
3. They could then examine what prevents them being challenged?

If there are such words or phrases, they could identify them and then develop a plan of action through which they, as a group, work together to address and change this culture.

#### State the Nature of the Language you are Choosing to Address

#### What is your Action Plan?

**Narrative: write up what you have done and list what evidence you can bring to measure its impact.**

#### EXAMPLES:

THE ‘BROAD BRUSH WRITE OFF’:	THE ‘DEFICIENCY LABEL’	THE ‘CHARACTER ATTACK’.
She / he is a liar	She / he is a slow learner	She / he comes from that area, nothing good ever came out of there.
She / he is a troublemaker	She / he has a record	She / he is incapable of responding to any interest you would take in him/ her
She / he is racist	She / he has been assessed	She / he is completely opposed to obeying any rules.
She / he is bigoted	She / he is ADHD	She / he is beyond repair
She / he is ‘perpetual trouble’	She / he is mentally unbalanced, the social worker says	She / he will only understand force and might
She / he never makes an effort	She / he has a dysfunctional family background	She / he comes from bad stock.
She / he is habitually late	She / he is incapable of ever catching up, I am told the school psychologist says	
She / he always interrupts		
She / he is not at all interested in learning		
She / he is promiscuous		

### BUILDING COMMUNITY-ATTENDING TO RITUALS

The character of the community people build in a school, youth centre or Youthreach centre is central to whether the young people and staff feel at ease and support one another.

The rituals of welcome, naming, meeting, celebrating-saying sorry, acknowledging, taking responsibility, making new agreements are all important but are often not attended to enough.

As a group explore how the different rituals for class groups, year groups, whole school, staff and parents, members, students could be used to support a more restorative culture.

Regularly look at the progress, if any, that you are making on this task.