

Restorative Justice Parent Booklet

“Building Healthy Relationships”



Restorative Justice is a process that puts repairing harm done to relationships and people over and above assigning blame and dispensing punishment. It shifts the emphasis from managing behaviour to focussing on building, nurturing and repairing relationships.

Restorative approaches:

1. Build mutually respectful relationships
2. Raise morale and self esteem
3. Increase emotional literacy

Two Approaches to Justice

From the beginning of human history, there has always been tension in relationships. The two approaches illustrated below seek to re-establish or restore a natural sense of justice.

Which approach do you believe has the capacity to 'make things right'?

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

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.'

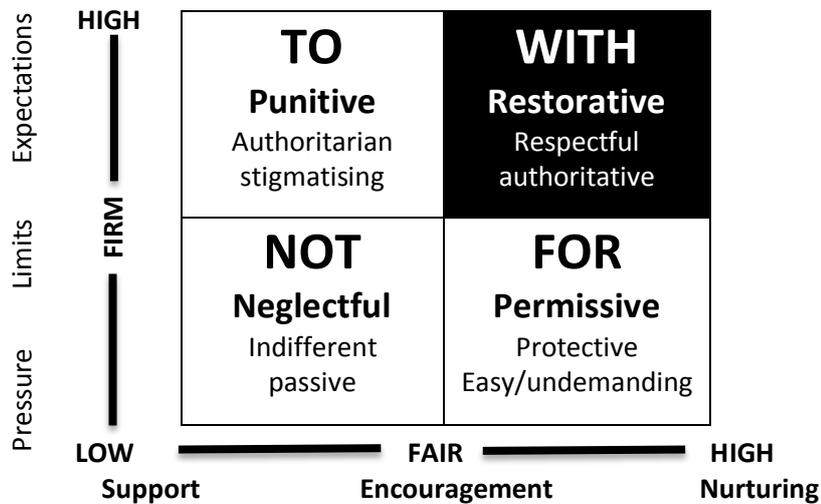
Then there is the relational approach that states; 'the stronger the relationship, the less likely we are to act inappropriately toward one another.'

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.

The Five RJ questions

1. **What happened?**
2. **What were you thinking about at the time? And since?**
3. **Who has been affected by what you did?**
4. **What do you think needs to happen to make things right?**
5. **How is this going to happen?**

Parenting Styles



Parenting Styles - 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.

Separate the behaviour from the child so you are not labelling the child as lazy, mean, careless, stupid etc; you are labelling their behaviour or attitude as disappointing, disrespectful, unkind, unacceptable etc. And say how their behaviour made you feel.

Try using these Statements:

I am sorry that I misunderstood the situation

I felt really proud of you when I heard

I feel really pleased and encouraged that you made the right choice.

I respected your honesty and thank you.

I was very disappointed when you did that to.....

I am upset and angry by what has just happened.

I feel that (describe action) was very disrespectful.

Questions

What happened? – followed by:

What were you thinking about when you did that?

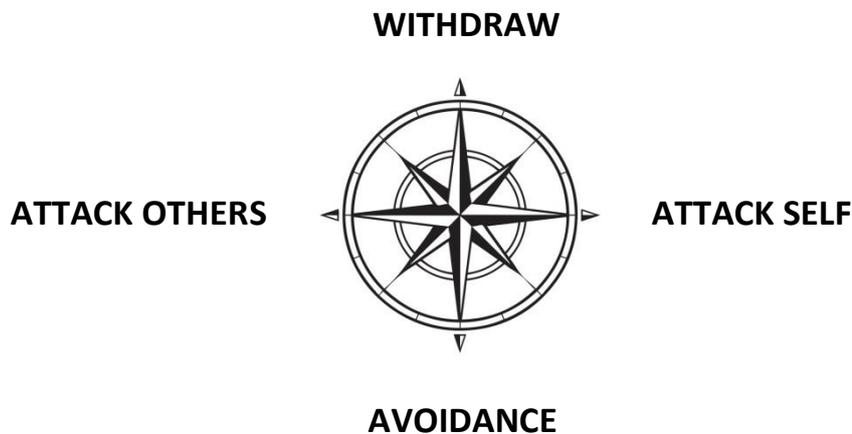
How did your actions affect

How do you think felt about what you did?

How do you feel about what you did/said?

How do you feel about what you did/said and the affect it had on me?

Compass Of Shame



The Compass of Shame was developed by Professor Donald Nathanson to describe the various negative ways people respond to 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.

Parent Reflection

1. What are the things you do well as a parent?
2. As a parent, what and who influences your parenting style?
3. What areas need some thought?
4. How might others in your family also become a part of this reflection?
5. What do you most value about being a part of this school community?
6. What do you want most for your child when he/she leaves this school?

We do not learn from
experience... we learn
from reflecting on
experience.

- John Dewey