

WSU SSW RESTORATIVE PRACTICE TOOLKIT

CREATED BY: KESS L. BALLENTINE & TERRI STUBBLEFIELD

“Human beings are happier, more cooperative and productive and more likely to make positive changes in their behavior when those in positions of authority do things with them rather than to them or for them.”

~Costello et al., 2019

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INTRODUCTION

WHY RESTORATIVE PRACTICES? A LETTER FROM THE COMMITTEE ON ANTI-RACISM, DIVERSITY, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE APRIL 2024

Dear School of Social Work Colleagues,

As you may know, we have been working to establish an anti-racist culture with the SSW and implementing restorative practices has been a major driver in this effort. Restorative practices are an approach to resolving conflicts that focuses on repairing harm and restoring relationships, rather than punishing individuals for their actions. This approach has been shown to be particularly valuable in addressing issues of racism and discrimination in universities and schools.

First and foremost, restorative practices are based on a commitment to equity and inclusion. By prioritizing the needs and experiences of those who have been harmed, and by creating space for dialogue and understanding, restorative practices help to create a more just and equitable workplace culture. This is essential in combating systemic racism, which often goes unrecognized or unaddressed in traditional disciplinary models.

Additionally, restorative practices are more effective at addressing the root causes of conflict and discrimination. By focusing on understanding the underlying causes of harm, and by involving all parties in finding solutions, restorative practices create a space for learning and growth. This not only helps to prevent future incidents of discrimination, but also contributes to a more positive and productive workplace culture overall.

Finally, restorative practices are essential in building trust and community within the workplace. By creating a culture of empathy and mutual respect, employees are more likely to feel valued and supported, which in turn contributes to higher levels of engagement and job satisfaction. This is particularly important for employees from marginalized backgrounds, who may have experienced discrimination and bias in the workplace in the past.

This toolkit has been developed as an important resource for all faculty and staff to utilize and implement so we can continue to push forward into a more equitable, kind, and inclusive place to work, learn, and grow.

We hope that you find this tool kit empowering and useful in implementing restorative practices here at the School of Social Work as we prioritize equity, promoting understanding and growth and building a community with trust.

In solidarity,

The Committee on Anti-Racism, Diversity and Social Justice

IMPLEMENTATION GOALS

AREA 1: SKILL BUILDING

SSW employees will increase their knowledge of Restorative Practices.

AREA 2: UPTAKE

SSW employees will increase their use of Restorative Practices.

AREA 3: IMPROVED WORKING RELATIONSHIPS

SSW employees will increase the number of employees with whom they report having a positive, reliable, and reciprocal working relationship.

SSW employees will increase the rate at which they are able to address conflict effectively using Restorative Practices.

The SSW will demonstrate an improved working climate by reducing the gap between faculty and staff respondents on the workplace climate survey.

AREA 4: SUSTAIN GAINS

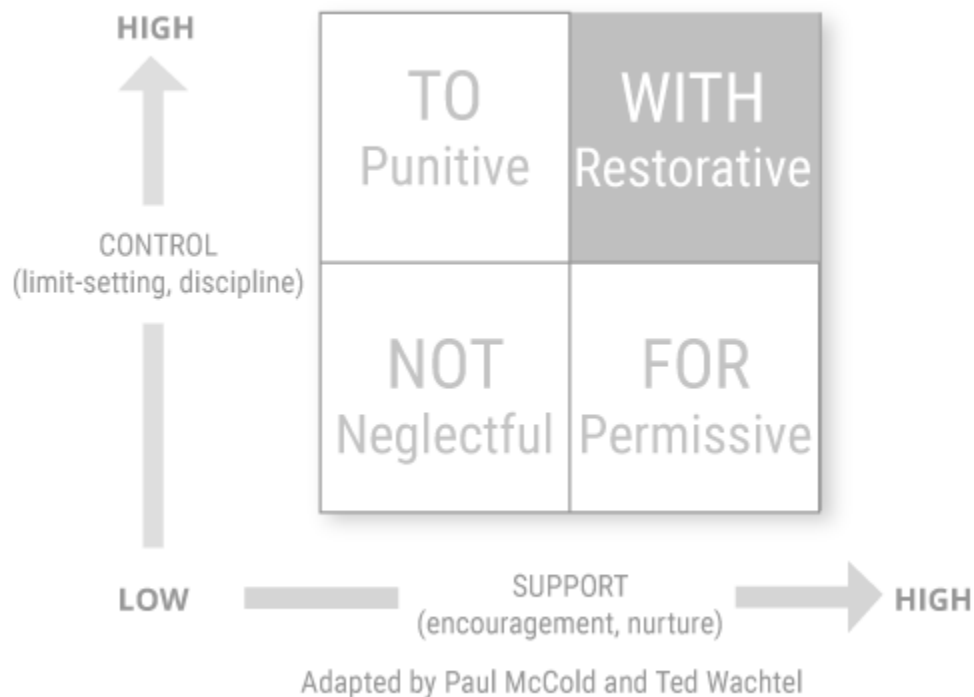
The SSW will sustain gains made in the first year of implementation.

KEY COMPONENTS

KEY CONCEPTS¹

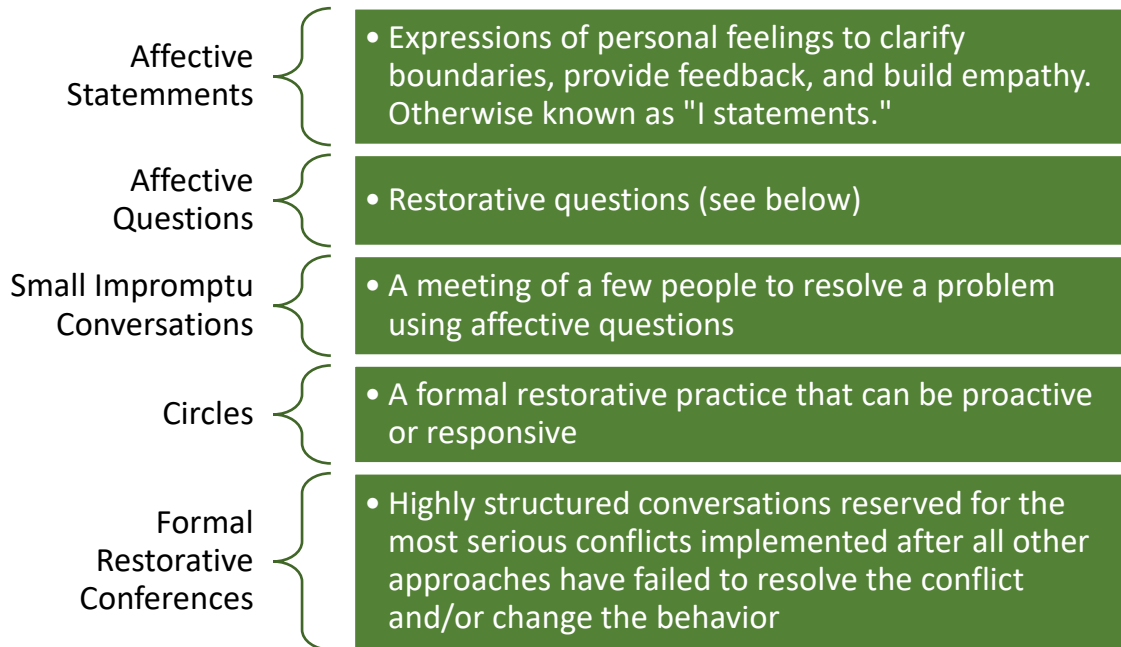
SOCIAL DISCIPLINE WINDOW

“A basic premise of restorative practices is that people are happier and more likely to make positive changes when those in authority do things with them, rather than to them or for them.” (Costello et al., 2019, p. 8)



¹ Adapted from materials created by the International Institute for Restorative Practices

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES CONTINUUM



FAIR PROCESS

Doing things *with* people instead of to or for them is not the same as all decisions being democratic. Rather, decision-making enacts the three components of fair process:

1. Engagement: involve “individuals in decisions that affect them by listening to their views and genuinely taking their opinions into account;”
2. Explanation: explain “the reasoning behind a decision to everyone who has been involved or is affected by it;”
3. Expectation clarity: make “sure that everyone clearly understands a decision and what is expected of them in the future.” (Costello et al., 2019, p. 14)

RESTORATIVE QUESTIONS

To respond to challenging behaviors or harm

- What happened?
- What were you thinking about at that 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?

To help someone affected by harm

- What did you think when you realized what had happened?
- What impact has this had on you and others?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?
- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?

Some do's and don'ts

- Do use these questions to facilitate a conversation between the affected parties
- Do separate behavior from the dignity and worth of involved persons
- Do focus on accountability & self-reflection
- Don't focus on punishment & blaming
- Don't ask "why did you do that?" or ask other "why" questions
- Do stick to the questions listed above
- Do take care with your tone when you facilitate these conversations
- Do let the open-ended nature of the questions do their work rather than creating follow-up questions on the fly

CIRCLES

"In circles, we face each other and speak respectfully, one person at a time, diminishing the feeling of disconnectedness that permeates our modern world and restoring the sense of belonging that constitutes health human community. We may find this ancient form of social discourse helps us address our greatest challenges. " Costello et al., 2019, p. 119

Circles are a structure for holding conversations in a connected way. We have all been in groups where some people share far more than others or that it feels like some people are disconnected from the conversation. Circles intend to adjust for these common communication patterns that can harm relationships over time.

To hold a circle (see notes below about online/hybrid circles)...

Physically stand in a circle. It is important that the circle is really a circle to ensure eye contact across the circle and be sure everyone feels fully included in the circle.

Use an item that must be held in order to talk – the item should be able to be passed or tossed.

Decide whether your circle will be sequential or nonsequential.

- In sequential circles, every person talks in turn. The leader should ask, "Who wants to start and which way will you pass the talking piece" – once that is decided, the starter should be given the talking item and then pass it one by one from there. Each person should respond or select to pass. Once everyone has shared, anyone who passed must share. Sequential circles are good for questions that you want or need to hear everyone's perspectives.

- In nonsequential circles, the talking item is tossed around to indicate whose turn it is to speak. In these circles not everyone needs to speak, but everyone should have the opportunity.

Plan your circle using a pre-made circle plan or by filling out the lesson plan found in [Appendix A](#).

“In contrast to adversarial meetings, circles provide a cooperative forum. People are encouraged and given the opportunity to express their own views, yet circles seek to find common ground between people.” Costello et al., 2019, p. 118

A note on virtual or hybrid circles

When completing virtual or hybrid circles, encourage participants to turn on their cameras, particularly when they are sharing. There may be reasons that people with disabilities or some medical conditions may not be able to do so and this should always be permitted. Overall, we do not encourage you to force anyone to turn on their camera, but rather to invite people to do so and explain why it can be important for circles when you are working to be as connected as possible.

Talking pieces are not possible in fully virtual circles, so you need to determine a different way to ask to speak or determine order in a sequential circle. You might give everyone a number in your group and they go in that order or in ABC order by first name or something like that. You can use the raise hand or chat features to keep track of the order people want to share in when doing nonsequential circles. In hybrid (when you have some people in person and some online), you can use a talking piece for people in the room and then use the same conventions you would use in a fully virtual group for keeping order of the online participants.

WSU-SSW IMPLEMENTATION INNOVATIONS

CHAMPION CIRCLE

To support implementation of restorative practices across our organization, we need to provide tools to help all of us translate this into our work and create spaces and support for restorative circles. The Champion Circle is designed to support these two goals across time.

The Champion Circle is composed of faculty and staff from the SSW who have

- (1) taken the training,
- (2) are enthusiastic about Restorative Practices, and
- (3) want to contribute to restorative practices implementation.

At semester workdays/retreats, Champion Circle members will contribute to planning and evaluation of ongoing implementation efforts at the guidance of Champion Circle leaders. We will also do some activity together to enjoy some fun and relationship building.

At monthly meetings we will have a 30-minute period where we work internally in the Circle to share any thoughts and concerns, any questions that have come to the Circle that we need to work together to resolve,

and any ideas to support implementation. In the remaining 60 minutes, we will have a hybrid opportunity for any faculty and staff to either

- (1) meet privately with a member of the Circle to process an issue and plan a circle, or
- (2) meet privately with a member(s) of the circle to participate in a previously planned circle. These meetings will have strict ground rules to protect confidentiality and overall promote safety and care to the extent possible. The facilitators will have already met with both parties and both parties must consent to participate. Participation is completely voluntary.

LEVELS OF INTERVENTION

FOUNDATIONAL LEVEL: PROACTIVE APPROACHES

The foundational level of restorative practices is building and nurturing relationships. Thus, most – at least 80% - of restorative practices include proactive approaches, where we use affective statements, proactive circles, and fair process to build relationship, open lines of communication, and provide regular opportunities for the teammates to work with each other to achieve goals across hierarchical lines. This toolkit includes an entire chapter on proactive approaches. We are all responsible on our teams and committees to implement these proactive restorative approaches to lay the foundation for a healthy, caring work environment.

LEVEL 1: ADDRESSING HARM AND RESOLVING CONFLICT ONE-ON-ONE OR ON YOUR TEAM

In any workplace, conflict, tension, and even harm occur. In cases where you have built strong relationships that can withstand conflict or when conflict feels less serious, we encourage you to use strategies in the third chapter of this toolkit to address these issues on your team. Additionally, this section provides strategies for expressing your feelings and giving feedback that are effective and can prevent conflict from escalating further.

LEVEL 2: CHAMPION CIRCLE MONTHLY MEETING SUPPORT

In some cases, you may find you need additional support. Maybe you need a restorative circle to repair a more serious harm or you don't feel you can handle yourself with the strategies described in the lower levels of intervention. Maybe you want to have a conversation with someone, but you don't know how to approach it – or you tried and it didn't go well. Maybe you are struggling to prepare and run an effective circle. In these cases, you can submit a request to get support at monthly Champion Circle Meetings. These meetings are a regular resource where members of the SSW community who have been trained in Restorative Practices and are enthusiastic about its implementation in the SSW community work together to continue growing these skills and offering support to colleagues.

LEVEL 3: SPECIAL CONVENING OF THE CHAMPION CIRCLE

This might occur when there is a “bigger” issue that an individual or small group of people do not feel they can resolve through the regular monthly meetings but still feel it can be resolved internally. An example might be when a group of people would like to resolve a shared harm, such as when a whole research team or group of staff members is concerned about a behavior or incident by a more senior person or supervisor.

LEVEL 4: EXTERNAL MEDIATOR NEEDED

We expect there may be a few issues a year – or even every few years – when an issue is too difficult or too risky for the Champion Circle to handle. For example, if there is a disagreement between two members of the executive team or an egregious issue of harm (e.g., physical altercation, overt discrimination, consequences to someone’s job due to perceived bias or a personal grudge). In these cases, we believe an external mediator will be needed.

Important: Restorative Practices are not equivalent to grievances, formal complaints/disciplinary action, or any other processes best provided through direct interaction with your supervisor, human resources, and/or your union steward.

PROACTIVE APPROACHES



Proactive approaches are methods to build relationship and open communication structures that serve to prevent conflict from escalating.

Most restorative practices are proactive! Proactive approaches encompass the routine practices we implement to connect with each other and ensure everyone is heard.

We talk about teams and conceptualize teams to include research teams, committees, units of workers (e.g., business office employees; advisors). When considering how to use restorative

practices in your work, reframing all your committee/group work as teamwork can help set the stage for seeing relationships as the foundation for success.

GUIDELINES FOR PROACTIVE CIRCLES

Proactive circles need the following elements to be effective.

- **Rounding(ish) Shape:** The circle does not need to be perfect. The purpose of the circle is to allow each member to have an equal position within the circle.
- **Facilitator:** A person that guides the discussion process and keeps it on track.
- **Talking Piece:** A physical object passed among circle members that symbolizes the person holding the floor.
- **High-Quality Questions:** Quality questions can help to guide the conversation within the circle.

TYPES OF PROACTIVE CIRCLES

Proactive circles develop relationships and build community. They can be in the form of Talking, Celebration or Staff circles.

- Talking Circles-Check-Ins/Out. Can be used for discussion, problem solving and decision making.
- Celebration Circles-Share and affirm accomplishments, or positive events.
- Staff Circles—Can be used to build collaboration, set vision, make decisions, and provide feedback.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES IN MEETINGS

HOW RESTORATIVE PRACTICES CAN LOOK IN WSU SSW MEETINGS

- Check In/Out Circle: This is an opportunity to take the pulse of everyone. Allows people to tune in to their feelings and practice listening skills (see [Appendix B](#) for examples).
- Affective Question and Response Period-Questions: These questions are asked to give people an opportunity to reflect on how their actions may have impacted someone.
- Listening Circle: This activity allows people to share their thoughts on subjects important to them. You can use the lesson plans in [Appendix A](#) to plan a circle or you can initiate a simple circle by asking a question, deciding whether the circle will be sequential or nonsequential, and using your talking piece.

All these activities build empathy, trust, and listening skills. These activities create a foundation of interacting in a less divisive way. Open, positive communication becomes a habit and promotes a positive team atmosphere.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES IN TEAM CREATION & LEADERSHIP

CREATING NEW TEAMS

New teams are a great opportunity to set expectations for open communication on a foundation of healthy relationships. Many of the tools and suggestions in this workbook can and should be used in all teams (e.g., affective statements, circles, etc.); however, here we offer a few additional suggestions for starting new teams.

- Circles should be regularly used to build relationship over time. We encourage you to use the setting team expectations circle lesson plan in [Appendix C](#)
- Build in regular routines to check in about team processes and how people are feeling about those processes. For example, build in a time once a month for a circle where each teammate is able to share how they are feeling about the team and any things they wish could be improved or changed.
- Set the following expectations as a team:
 - o Determine the chain of command if you have a concern or a decision needs to be made
 - o Define each person's role to promote role clarity. Resolve any overlap in roles.
 - o Determine how will you communicate (e.g., teams, zoom, email, etc.) and consider how to limit the number of tools you use to limit overwhelm while ensuring open lines of communication

- Determine how you will live out the restorative fundamental hypothesis that “human beings are happier, more cooperative and productive and more likely to make positive changes in their behavior when those in positions of authority do things with them rather than to them or for them.”
- [Explain fair process](#) and how it works in this team
- Define boundaries
- Address needs individuals have to be successful contributors

ONBOARDING NEW TEAMMATES

When new teammates join, it can be a good opportunity to revisit team expectations and processes to promote healthy relationships and restorative practices within the team. For one, you can review [the section on meetings](#) to determine if there are any opportunities to incorporate more restorative practices within your meetings. Additionally, if your teammate is also a new staff member of the School of Social Work, be sure that the Champion Circle is aware and has facilitated a welcome circle (see [Appendix D](#)). Once you take these steps, we have a few other suggestions:

- Hold a welcome circle to introduce all teammates and begin building relationships (see suggested welcome circle lesson plan in [Appendix D](#)).
- In your next few meetings, incorporate some more “getting to know you” questions in your opening or closing circles to support relationship building with the new teammate.
- Hold a new “setting team expectations” circle ([see Appendix C](#)) to help the new teammate understand and share about their experiences, needs, and preferences in teams while also giving your whole team an opportunity to revisit team expectations
- Explain [fair process](#) (engagement, explanation, and expectation clarity and how it works in this team

WORKING WITH ESTABLISHED TEAMS

Established teams often have engrained processes and teammates likely have a variety of ways of coping with various challenges inherent to that teams processes. In many teams conflicts have been avoided and teammates have established workarounds for navigating around these old wounds. Even in highly functional teams, it can sometimes be hard to find a time to acknowledge and resolve tensions or revise longstanding practices to improve team relationships and processes.

Note that in established teams that may use few to no restorative practices, trying to implement them will require a lot of self-awareness, honesty, humility, and maybe even courage. Some teammates may be afraid to share their concerns, for fear of punishment, losing face, or simply upsetting a superior.

We suggest finding a transition time to participate in reflection and discussion about restorative practices in established teams, such as beginning a new project or the start of a new academic year. When you feel that your team is ready to implement restorative practices, then try these suggestions to begin or improve implementation of restorative practices in your established teams:

- Use affective statements to share about the strengths you appreciate teammates sharing. Then do a second circle where people can use affective statements to share areas where you hope your teammates can improve.

- If team members identify a conflict, team leaders should use an impromptu conversation to work with teammates to determine a resolution. If this is not possible or a team leader is a member of the conflict, attend the next Champion Circle meeting to have a facilitated restorative circle.
- Review your team processes using the setting team expectations circle plan (see Appendix C).

If you are concerned that a team of which you are a member or leader may struggle to implement restorative practices or that members may be harboring grudges/nursing old wounds, come to the next Champion Circle meeting to get support determining a plan to move forward with implementing restorative practices in your team.



RESTORATIVE PRACTICES IN SUPERVISION

- Work on a project together.
- Discuss ways to improve workflow.
- Discuss previous projects and what worked and did not work and try new processes for upcoming projects.
- Attend a training session together and discuss what you each learned. Attend a separate training and share what you each learned.

RESTORATIVE PRACTICES IN MENTORSHIP

In higher education we all have the opportunity to benefit from and contribute to effective, enriching mentorship that can be truly life-changing. However, many of us have experienced poor mentorship or – even with great mentors – been in a situation where the power dynamic between mentor and mentee prevents conflict resolution. On the other hand, lacking true relationship between mentor and mentee can

undermine mentors' opportunity to provide the genuine feedback a mentee may need. Thus, both mentors and mentees can benefit from incorporating restorative practices in their relationship. Luckily, the frequent transition points in academic life – from summer to fall, fall to winter, winter to summer – make for many opportunities to check in and reset expectations.

Here are some suggestions for incorporating restorative practices into your mentorship:

- Consider one of the key principles of restorative practices: “human beings are happier, more cooperative and productive, and more likely to make positive changes in their behavior when those in positions of authority do things *with* them rather than *to* them or *for* them” – how can you do things *with* your mentee to help them learn the key skills requiring growth? Examples might include:
 - co-lead a committee
 - co-lead a project
 - making a conference poster together
 - writing a conference abstract together
 - co-writing a section of a paper
 - co-teaching a lecture
 - collaborate on a SSW-related project or event

- Use affective statements and questions
- Provide opportunities for students to share their thoughts and feelings about how the mentorship relationship is going and what they may need to reach their goals. Similarly, you as the mentor can share your thoughts.

- Keep an eye out for shame behaviors and use affective questions to draw out the issue so it can be resolved. Shame behaviors might include:

- withdrawal/isolating oneself,
- attacking self (e.g., self put-down, masochism),
- avoidance, and
- attack other (e.g., turning the tables, lashing out verbally).

These behaviors may occur as a response to the stress of imposter syndrome and the high expectations in the academy.

By exploring these when they come up related to schoolwork or research assistantships, students can learn about overcoming shame in the academy.

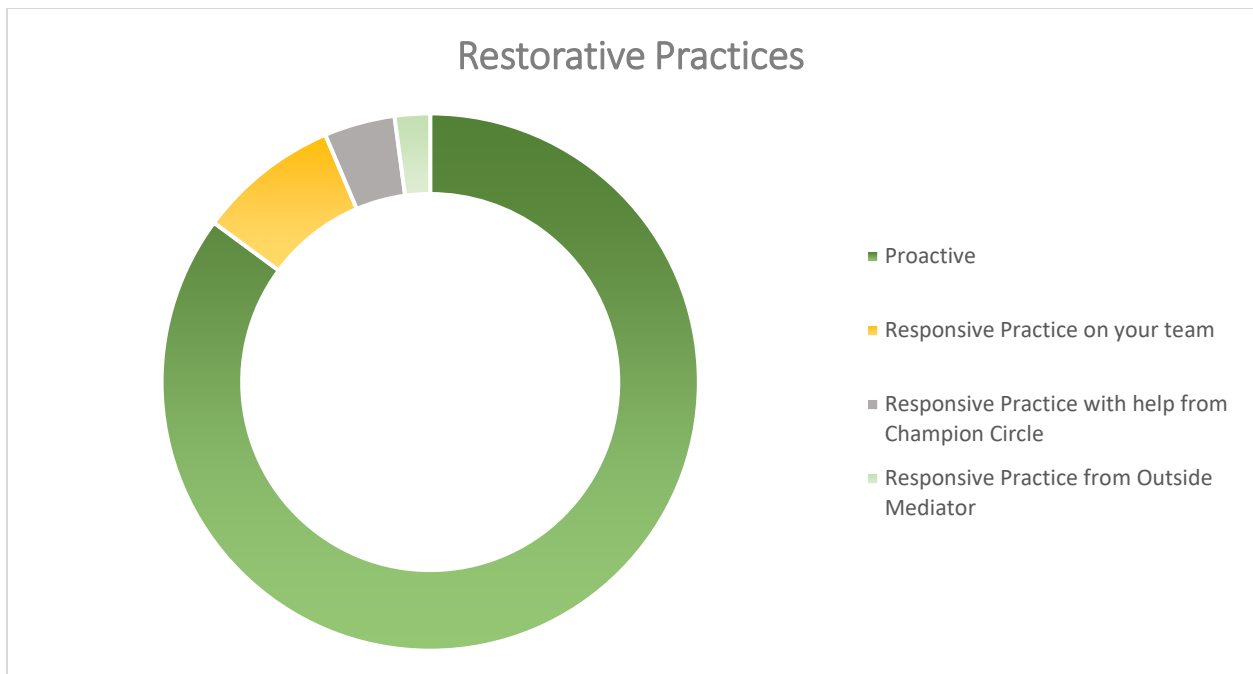
Sometimes feelings are not thought to be part of professional relationships, but restorative practices suggests that “human relationships are best and healthiest when there is free expression of affect – or emotion – minimizing the negative and maximizing the positive, allowing for free expression.” (Costello et al., 2019, p. 16)

RESPONSIVE APPROACHES

REVIEW OF LEVELED INTERVENTIONS

Responsive approaches are necessary when harm or conflict does occur. Eighty percent of the restorative work we do is preventive – we ensure voices are heard and fair process is used to prevent conflict and harm. Responsive approaches rely on this foundation of relationship – having a relationship with our colleagues that can endure conflict and honest conversations about how we experienced interactions, decision-making, and team processes. Notably, responsive approaches are not in the place of formal workplace interventions, such as HR processes or grievances through your union. Rather, responsive restorative approaches are designed to empower each of us to resolve conflict effectively through sharing, listening, and building a culture of accountability.

Here in the SSW we suggest four tiered levels of intervention that lie on the foundation of proactive restorative practices described in the previous section. If a responsive approach is necessary, we encourage you to determine where in this tiered implementation model intervention is necessary as well as subsequently reviewing proactive approaches in your team, unit, or individual workplace relationships.



In this final section, we describe the four levels of intervention for when harm occurs.

LEVEL 1: ADDRESSING HARM AND RESOLVING CONFLICT WITH YOUR TEAMMATES

WHEN

- Address harm independently with your team when...
 - o The harm is truly between only a few people
 - o You feel you know what to say based on the guidance here and in the trainings you've taken on restorative practices (Note: if you are not sure what to say or want to do a dry run/plan out what to say, attend the next Champion Circle Meeting for extra help)
 - o You feel safe and comfortable in the relationship
 - o You are not concerned about consequences for speaking up
 - o You can identify an opportunity to have the conversation
- Examples
 - o Basic misunderstandings
 - o Conflicts in well-established, healthy workplace relationships or teams
 - o Conflicts or concerns in trusting relationships between supervisors and their staff (or other similar hierarchical differences – mentors and mentees)

HOW

We encourage you to use two restorative approaches in these types of conflicts: affective statements and small impromptu conversations guided by affective questions.

AFFECTIVE STATEMENTS

Affective statements are a way to express your feelings in a specific way. These are very effective approaches to giving feedback and are similar to “I statements” – though they are more focused on expressing a feeling and encouraging empathy than they are about asking for a specific behavior change as I statements sometimes do.

Affective statements can be used to communicate both positive and negative effects on the relationship.

Examples to express positive feelings that encourage continuing a behavior:

- I am so glad that you continued to work on this paper even though you had to respond to some difficult feedback.
- I am impressed with our team process today. We work best when everyone is heard.

Examples to express negative feelings that motivate a change in behavior:

- I am upset to hear you speaking to me like that.
- When so many of you are scrolling on your computers during class, I feel that disrespected and ignored.

Affective statements are much more effective in motivating change than statements that fail to acknowledge people's feelings (thereby failing to fully acknowledge the impact of the behavior on the relationship) and

those that do not specifically describe the behavior that prompts the feeling (making it quite difficult for the other person/people to know what to change or continue).

Diagram of an affective statement

Centers yourself – using “I”	Specific feeling	Specific thing that you think is causing that feeling
I	feel frustrated	when we spend meeting time rehashing old decisions.
I	feel left out	when we don’t do a meeting circle to hear everyone’s feedback.
(The I can also be implied): It makes me	angry	when decisions are made without transparency.

Here are some examples that are not affective statements.

Not an Affective Statement	Why it fails to be an affective statement	Reworded to be an affective statement
I need you to have your video on for this meeting.	It does not express a feeling	I feel disconnected from you when I cannot see your face.
I’m not putting my video on for this meeting.	It does not express a feeling.	I will feel more comfortable and engaged during this meeting with my video off.
Now you get it.	It does not express a feeling It does not tell the person specifically what you are communicating about.	It is exciting that you overcame the challenges you were facing with this project.

SMALL IMPROMPTU CONVERSATIONS GUIDED BY AFFECTIVE STATEMENTS

This is a good approach for quickly intervening in an ongoing issue, such as a conversation that you see going sideways during a meeting or you notice feelings coming up that are not being verbally expressed. To do this use an affective question to interrupt and help motivate empathy.

Steps to Guide a Conversation Using Affective Statements

Identify what you are observing without judgement	“I notice...” “I hear...”	I notice that people seem frustrated right now.
Share your feeling with empathy – an affective statement	“I [feeling]”	I am worried that the decision I just shared is not fully understood or supported.
Share the need...	“I need...” “I value...”	I value our whole team feeling comfortable with decisions.
Express your plan or request (what you want, not what you don’t want)	“In the future...” “Would you be willing to...”	Would you be willing to explain what is making you feel frustrated?

SMALL IMPROMPTU CONVERSATIONS GUIDED BY RESTORATIVE QUESTIONS

If an incident already occurred or there is a specific conflict between two or more of your teammates/coworkers, someone else, such as a boss, supervisor, or team leader, can hold a more structured conversation using restorative questions. It is important to use these exact questions in this exact order. See Appendix F for the specific script to use to hold this conversation. The questions you will use are listed below.

Restorative Questions

Restorative Questions to Respond to Challenging Behaviors	Restorative Questions to Help Those Harmed By Others’ Actions
What happened?	What did you think when you realized what had happened?
What were you thinking at the time?	What impact has the incident had on you and others?
What have you thought about since?	What has been the hardest thing for you?
Who has been affected by what you have done? In what way?	What do you think needs to happen to make things right?
What do you think you need to do to make things right?	



WHEN

- The Champion Circle is comprised of people who have had formal training in restorative practices, are enthusiastic about this intervention's ability to transform our workplace culture and are here to support the SSW community in full implementation of the model.
- The Champion Circle will have a monthly meeting and you can fill in an online form to sign up to meet with one or more members to facilitate a restorative circle for you and your fellow colleagues.

WHAT WAYS CAN THE CHAMPION CIRCLE HELP YOU?

Review your Proactive approaches: If you feel like a lot of conflict or tension is continuing to occur on your team, you can review your proactive approaches with a Champion Circle member to discuss what strategies you are using, what strategies you might try, and double check that you are implementing proactive approaches with fidelity to give you the best chance of success.

Help you prepare for an impromptu conversation or proactive circle: Maybe you want to respond to a conflict, but you want to double check your approach, you can share your plan and get some feedback at a Champion Circle Meeting. In another example, you might be trying to design a proactive circle for a meeting. We can help you write your lesson plan.

Facilitated Restorative Circle: If you have a conflict that you don't feel comfortable facilitating, power dynamics are such that there might be consequences you want to avoid related to holding the circle, and/or your previous attempts to intervene have failed to resolve the conflict, you can request that a Champion Circle member facilitate a restorative circle with relevant parties.

When a Champion has a conflict of interest/needs to be in the circle: We all make mistakes, which means that Champion Circle members will in some cases be a part of the conflict you are trying to resolve and, therefore, are not appropriate to facilitate a circle or provide feedback – in fact they may need to participate in the restorative circle! In this case, you can indicate on the form who you need to involve in the restorative circle and any potential conflict of interests. The forms are reviewed by the co-chairs, so if one of them is involved, you can indicate on the form that it should be reviewed by the other co-chair.

HOW

If you decide that you would like to have support in one of the ways listed above at the next Champion Circle Meeting, you can submit the signup [e-form](#). A Champion Circle co-chair will review your form within 1 week and be in touch with you to get you officially signed up and ask any follow-up questions. We will share the form with HR for review if we are concerned that the issue being raised is under the purview of HR.*

If your form indicates that you would like us to facilitate a circle to help resolve a conflict, we will reach out to you and other individuals who are involved in the conflict. All parties must consent to participate in order for the circle to be held. All participants in the circle (excluding facilitators) will have the opportunity to share their experience in the conflict and structured questions will be used to move toward a resolution.

*Some concerns or conflicts are not appropriate to discuss in a restorative circle at the SSW. Personnel issues, disciplinary issues, and/or grievances are not appropriate. Instead these issues should be discussed with your supervisor, HR, and/or your union.

LEVEL 3 INTERVENTIONS: SPECIAL CONVENING OF THE CHAMPION CIRCLE

WHEN

- A conflict comes up that is serious in nature or in scope – to the point that waiting to resolve it until the next monthly meeting may affect a teammates ability to work due to conflict-related strain, stall essential work, and/or risk a team breakdown.

AND

- The next Champion Circle is more than 10 calendar days away.

HOW

If your team experiences an urgent and serious conflict the next Champion Circle meeting is more than 10 calendar days away, submit the usual [e-form](#) AND email either or both of the Champion Circle co-chairs.

We will share the form with HR for review if we are concerned that the issue being raised is under the purview of HR.*

If your form indicates that you would like us to facilitate a circle to help resolve a conflict, we will reach out to you and other individuals who are involved in the conflict. All parties must consent to participate in order for the circle to be held. All participants in the circle (excluding facilitators) will have the opportunity to share their experience in the conflict and structured questions will be used to move toward a resolution.

*Some concerns or conflicts are not appropriate to discuss in a restorative circle at the SSW. Personnel issues, disciplinary issues, and/or grievances are not appropriate. Instead these issues should be discussed with your supervisor, HR, and/or your union.

LEVEL 4 INTERVENTIONS: EXTERNAL MEDIATOR NEEDED

WHEN

In very rare cases, we expect that an external mediator may be needed. It is incredibly expensive to hire an external mediator, so we hope to limit this to only the necessary scenarios. These situations may also require other interventions, such as an HR intervention, a disciplinary action, etc. However, if the person involved continues to work at the SSW a restorative intervention to repair relationships will also be encouraged. We imagine a few situations that may require this level of intervention:

- physical or serious verbal altercation
- overt or a pattern of discrimination
- a person believes they are experiencing job-related consequences due to bias or a personal grudge

- high-level administrators require support and Champion Circle members are not comfortable mediating the conversation or it is not appropriate due to confidential information being involved (e.g., personnel information)

HOW

If such an issue occurs, likely administration and/or HR will be in some way involved. After those processes are initiated, administrators and/or the SSW HR representative or the affected individual(s) can reach out to the Champion Circle co-chairs to determine the process.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: COMPREHENSIVE CIRCLE PLAN

Circle Topic:	
Pre-Planning	
Circle Type:	<input type="checkbox"/> Proactive <input type="checkbox"/> Responsive
Circle Purpose: What is the purpose or goal of your circle?	<input type="checkbox"/> Learning content <input type="checkbox"/> Problem solving <input type="checkbox"/> Addressing harm <input type="checkbox"/> Community building <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
Plan for Circle Challenges: Are the questions low or high risk? Any potential challenges? How will you handle those?	List any high-risk topics: feelings, worries, actions Possible responses by circle participants: Response/support plan:
Agenda	
Circle Opening: How will you explain the purpose?	
Review Circle norms or guidelines.	<p>We are going to follow a few guidelines in this circle which are written on the board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak from the heart; (introduce talking piece, online folks I will call on or they can raise their hands) • Listen from the heart; • Trust yourself (no need to rehearse); • Without feeling rushed, just say enough <p>Overall, we encourage you to be open while also acknowledging the limitations of this space. This is still a work/school environment with power imbalances and other dynamics involved. So, as you are sharing, consider the space, the dynamics, and what you feel comfortable sharing during this time in this setting.</p>
Trauma-specific guidelines (if needed)	<p>This may be a triggering conversation for some. For some of us we may be able to tolerate that emotional activation. For others, it may be too much. If any of us begin to feel activated...</p> <p>Ground yourself such as by taking your attention to your feet on the floor, the feeling of your chair or the earth supporting you.</p> <p>Breathe Break Use a fidget</p>

	Emotions are natural and necessary. If you would like to leave, you can, but feeling angry, sad, etc is okay. We will let folks deal with their emotions while also acknowledging that we are here together as a source of support.	
Grounding Activity (if needed)	We will start by being grounded and present in this space by doing a grounding activity together. You can do this activity sitting or standing. Script: https://www.mindfullivingcounselingservices.com/blog/2019/9/3/guided-meditation-for-anxiety-five-sense-grounding	
Discussion rounds (you do not need to have one for each box. Use what you need)		
Question	Type	
Check in Question:	<input type="checkbox"/> Sequential <input type="checkbox"/> Non-sequential	
Round 1:	<input type="checkbox"/> Sequential <input type="checkbox"/> Non-sequential	
Round 2:	<input type="checkbox"/> Sequential <input type="checkbox"/> Non-sequential	
Round 3:	<input type="checkbox"/> Sequential <input type="checkbox"/> Non-sequential	
Round 4:	<input type="checkbox"/> Sequential <input type="checkbox"/> Non-sequential	
Add additional rounds as necessary. You can also insert activities and then return to the circle format. See examples in the Toolkit Appendix.		
Check-out question:	<input type="checkbox"/> Sequential <input type="checkbox"/> Non-sequential	
Closing: How will you close the circle and acknowledge participants for their work and participation? (e.g., poem, quote, song, deep breaths)		

APPENDIX B: PROACTIVE CIRCLE QUESTIONS TO TRY

Adapted from p. 128-129 from Costello, B., Wachtel, J., & Wachtel, T. (2019). Restorative Circles in Schools: A Practical Guide for Educators (2nd Ed.) International Institute for Restorative Practices: Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

Note: “Remember to start with low-risk questions until students get used to the format. [Leaders] should always answer the questions too.” Across time, as relationships build, you can increase the challenge of questions. Though some proactive circles look like icebreakers, the goal is to build relationship over time, with deepening closeness by increasing the challenge and complexity of questions.

Circles can focus on a few areas:

1. Building community: Getting acquainted, sharing values, celebrating
 - Say something nice about the person to your right.
 - What makes you sad (happy)?
 - What is your favorite food?
 - What is your favorite color?
 - What is your favorite TV show?
 - If I could be any animal, I would be...
 - If I were a kitchen appliance, I would be...
 - What makes a good friend?
 - What makes a good teammate
 - Tell the story of your name or nickname.
 - Share about a favorite day off.
 - Share something fun you did last weekend.
 - What is your favorite thing to do?
 - What do you do well?
 - Name someone here who helped you this week.
 - I like [season] because...
 - What is your favorite room in your home?
 - Name someone here who worked hard today?
 - What is something you know how to do that you didn't know how to do last year?
 - What do you like about [this class; this team; etc.]?

2. Learning Content: sharing knowledge, storytelling, cooperative learning
 - What is one key takeaway from class/reading/class activity?
 - How will we work together as a group?
 - What are good ways to give feedback?
 - What factors contribute to X social problem?
 - When have you seen examples of [class topic] in practice?
 - What is something you learned today that surprised you?
 - When you were studying this, what was something that you think all social workers should know?
 - What is a key implication of your project/research/new knowledge?

APPENDIX C: SETTING TEAM EXPECTATIONS CIRCLE PLAN

Circle Topic:	Setting team expectations
Pre-Planning	
Circle Type:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Proactive <input type="checkbox"/> Responsive
Circle Purpose: What is the purpose or goal of your circle?	<input type="checkbox"/> Learning content <input type="checkbox"/> Problem solving <input type="checkbox"/> Addressing harm <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community building <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
Plan for Circle Challenges: Are the questions low or high risk? Any potential challenges? How will you handle those?	<p>List any high-risk topics → In this case this may be known disagreements, grudges, or unresolved issues. Plan to handle these if they come up</p> <p>Possible responses by circle participants:</p> <p>Response/support plan:</p>
Agenda	
Circle Opening: How will you explain the purpose?	The goal for today's circle is to set clear expectations for how we work as a team.
Review Circle norms or guidelines.	<p>We are going to follow a few guidelines in this circle which are written on the board</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak from the heart; (introduce talking piece, online folks I will call on or they can raise their hands) • Listen from the heart; • Trust yourself (no need to rehearse); • Without feeling rushed, just say enough <p>Overall, we encourage you to be open while also acknowledging the limitations of this space. This is still a work/school environment with power imbalances and other dynamics involved. So, as you are sharing, consider the space, the dynamics, and what you feel comfortable sharing during this time in this setting.</p>
Discussion rounds (you do not need to have one for each box. Use what you need)	
Question	Type
Check in Question: What is a strength you contribute to our team?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sequential <input type="checkbox"/> Non-sequential
Round 1: What are the conditions under which you work best?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sequential <input type="checkbox"/> Non-sequential
Round 2: In the past, what factors have supported effective teamwork on teams you've been a part of? What factors have undermined/prevented effective teamwork?	<input type="checkbox"/> Sequential <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-sequential

Round 3: What are your weaknesses? What do you plan to do in this team to work on improving your weaknesses? Do you need any resources or supports to improve?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sequential <input type="checkbox"/> Non-sequential
Round 4: What are your workplace boundaries? For example, times of the day you don't work/have other obligations, communication boundaries such as personal cell phones, etc.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sequential <input type="checkbox"/> Non-sequential
Round 5: How will we as teammates solicit feedback from each other? What expectations can we set to provide constructive feedback to each other?	<input type="checkbox"/> Sequential <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-sequential
Round 6: How will we raise concerns or resolve tensions in our team? How will we build in opportunities to share any concerns or tensions?	<input type="checkbox"/> Sequential <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-sequential
Add additional rounds as necessary. You can also insert activities and then return to the circle format. See examples in the Toolkit Appendix.	
Check-out question: What was something you found helpful about this process?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sequential <input type="checkbox"/> Non-sequential
Closing: How will you close the circle and acknowledge participants for their work and participation? (e.g., poem, quote, song, deep breaths)	

APPENDIX D: WELCOMING A NEW TEAMMATE CIRCLE PLAN

Circle Topic:	Welcome Circle
Pre-Planning	
Circle Type:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Proactive <input type="checkbox"/> Responsive
Circle Purpose: What is the purpose or goal of your circle?	<input type="checkbox"/> Learning content <input type="checkbox"/> Problem solving <input type="checkbox"/> Addressing harm <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Community building <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
Agenda	
Circle Opening: How will you explain the purpose?	Today we want to welcome _____ to the [team, unit, SSW].
Review Circle norms or guidelines.	<p>We are going to follow a few guidelines in this circle which are written on the board</p> <p>Speak from the heart; (introduce talking piece, online folks I will call on or they can raise their hands)</p> <p>listen from the heart;</p> <p>trust yourself (no need to rehearse);</p> <p>without feeling rushed, just say enough</p> <p>Overall, we encourage you to be open while also acknowledging the limitations of this space. This is still a work/school environment with power imbalances and other dynamics involved. So, as you are sharing, consider the space, the dynamics, and what you feel comfortable sharing during this time in this setting.</p>
Discussion rounds (you do not need to have one for each box. Use what you need)	
Question	Type
Check in Question: What is your name and one thing you like to do with your free time?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sequential <input type="checkbox"/> Non-sequential
Round 1: What is your role, your location (e.g. 1 st floor), and your typical days on campus?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sequential <input type="checkbox"/> Non-sequential
Round 2: What are some things on or around campus [name] should know about? Like restaurants, coffee shops, gyms, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Sequential <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-sequential
Round 3: What are some campus or school events you look forward to each year?	<input type="checkbox"/> Sequential <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-sequential
Round 4: What are some of the norms about [SSW, your team, WSU] [Name] should know? These could include traditions, dress code, email conventions, etc.	<input type="checkbox"/> Sequential <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Non-sequential
Add additional rounds as necessary. You can also insert activities and then return to the circle format. See examples in the Toolkit Appendix.	

Check-out question: What is one thing you like or look forward to about your job at the SSW?	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sequential <input type="checkbox"/> Non-sequential
Closing: How will you close the circle and acknowledge participants for their work and participation? (e.g., poem, quote, song, deep breaths)	

Suggested Follow-up Checklist for Welcoming a New Employee

- Show them...
 - the faculty/staff lounge and tell them the entry code
 - Community room
 - Copier rooms
- Introduce them to Juanitta
- Introduce them to Scott
- Introduce them to coworkers who were unable to attend the welcoming circle
- Ask them if they need anything
- Make sure they know how to get to sharepoint and the SSW calendar
- Make sure they know where to go get their ID



General Conflict: Facilitator's Script

This is a guide for incidents where there is no clear victim or offender.

Step 1. Welcome and Introduction

"Hello. As you know, my name is and I have been asked to facilitate this meeting. (Introduce participants, if necessary.) I have spoken to all of you about the incident/s, and it is clear that what has happened has affected/hurt/harmed everyone involved. This is an opportunity to talk about what has happened and how each of you has been affected/hurt. To help us all work together again, we need to discuss ways of stopping any further hurt/harm so we can improve relationships."

Say to everyone: "Do you understand?"

Step 2. Start with the person who has been most affected

- "I would like to start by asking (person's name) to talk about how he/she became involved and what happened?"
- "At the time, what were you thinking about?"
- "What have you thought since?"
- "How has this affected/hurt you and others?"
- "What has been the hardest thing for you?"

Step 3. Ask all participants in turn the above questions

Step 4. Say to all participants

“Now that we have heard how all of you have been affected/hurt in some way by what has happened, is there anything anyone would like to say at this point?”

Step 5. Invitation to all participants

- “What suggestions do you have that will stop any further hurt/harm?”
- “What will help all of us work together again, without further conflict?”

Step 6. Ask each participant

- “What would you like to see come out of today’s meeting?”

Step 7. Invitation to all participants (record undertaking/s if required)

- “What will each of you now do to help improve your relationships with one another?”

Step 8. Final Invitation to participants

- “What have you found useful from today’s meeting?”

Step 9. Closing the Meeting

“Thank you for being involved. It has allowed us to share and understand what happened and, importantly, provided the opportunity to find positive ways of building better relationships with one another.”

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