



Welcome to:

- **Strengthening practice & team building through restorative dialogue**

A journey of inspiration, exploration, challenge & learning.

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Beginning the journey - 2005

- **Leader of a small multidisciplinary team.**
- **9 skilled practitioners, problem solvers, high credibility.**



A restorative experience

- **Evolved from a process of rolling out RP across a district of 50 sites/schools**



The Challenge

- **What did our current practice look like?**

*“On the prowl for good ideas, programs & strategies
We were looking for tools for our toolbox”*

- **What void were we wanting restorative practice to fill?**



Team

After restorative practice

- **No longer wasting time on strategies & programs**
- **Reflective dialogue – Socratic questioning**
- **Using RP framework & language to guide our own discussions**

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- **Struggled to articulate our practices & develop confidence in RP work in schools**



The Challenge

- What do we *really* believe?
- What *are* our roles & responsibilities?
- How do we describe *our* practice?

SOUTH WEST METRO STUDENT INCLUSION & WELL BEING TEAM - FRAMEWORK FOR OUR WORK

—DRAFT—

VALUES OF RESPECT,
INTEGRITY, FUN,
OPTIMISM &
COOPERATION

A CULTURE OF
INQUIRY & CAPACITY
BUILDING

RELATIONSHIPS

- * Relationships are the foundation / cornerstone underpinning our practice.
- * By getting the relationship right we can achieve the productive outcomes. Our work involves balancing relationships, schedules & goals.
- * We seek to establish trusting relationships through dialogue that is explorative, non blaming, strengths based and gives people hope.
- * Purposeful dialogue allows for increased understanding, reflection, trust and for people to define their own journey forward.
- * Respectful challenge promotes integrity and authentic dialogue.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- * The responsibility for students engagement and learning ultimately rests with the student / teachers / school.
- * The SWIT team are responsible for increasing the capacity of teachers / schools in order to support the engagement of students and their learning.
- * The SWIT team has a responsibility to work interdependently with the school community and other agencies.
- * The SWIT team are expected to be explicit about the nature of support they provide and are responsible for establishing clear operational boundaries and expectations.
- * The SWIT team has a responsibility to work and manage the tension between reactive and proactive responses to schools.
- * The SWIT team members are responsible to respectfully challenge others on ethical issues relating to student well-being.
- * The service coordinator is responsible for:
 - developing common agreements regarding case goals
 - ensuring processes are transparent
 - facilitating dialogue
 - ensuring outcomes are documented

PRACTICES

- * We believe our practices are explicit so that we can engage with schools and work interdependently in an open, commonly understood manner.
- * The following are the key elements on which we base and model our practice:
 1. Treating people fairly and respectfully - using the Social Discipline Window as a means of outlining interactional styles.
 2. Socratic questioning / enquiry in order to actively engage people.
 3. A thorough assessment process takes into account peoples perceptions and include; collection of specific evidence, data gathering and observations in conjunction with peoples perceptions.
 4. Fair process that provides opportunity for engagement, explanation and expectation clarity.
 5. Restorative Questioning with a focus on repairing harm and strengthening relationships.
 6. Social Control Theory and reintegrative shame.



The Turning Point


**We had our own practice
toolbox for our work**

We owned it.



Experienced restorative practice at a personal level

**Our team process influenced our
day-to-day practice in schools
and how we interacted with one
another.**



**Took us from sharing our view of
the world with each other to
having a shared view of the world**



What have you learnt most from being part of this group? 2008

- *It's the first time I've felt **supported** in the department*
- *We've been connected at an **emotional** as well as an intellectual level.*
- *We have confidence from having an **explicit framework***



2009 Restructure

2008

- **Districts of 50 schools**
- **Team small, committed & cohesive (9)**
- **Supportive leadership**
- **Resource rich**
- **Focus on student well being**


2010

- **Regions of 150 schools**
- **Team larger, diffuse, multidisciplinary (24)**
- **Hierarchical leadership**
- **Resource poor**
- **Focus on student achievement**



Where am I going?

**A New Context a New
Opportunity!!**



How can we replicate the experience?

- **How can we take what we've learned & develop it in a coherent way?**
- **What could the team leader influence?**
- **What were the critical elements?**



What Outcomes were we looking for?

- **Collegiate, supportive team**
- **Explicit practice toolbox**

Through shared understanding & common language



Initial Engagement of the team

- **Different & positive experience**
- **Exposure to restorative framework – explicit expectations**
- **Opportunities for dialogue & shared understanding of each other**




Initial meeting

- **What do people want to know & do at a first team meeting?**



Achieved by asking questions

- **What's the reorganization been like for you?**
- **What are your hopes for this term?**
- **What are your expectations of each other?**
- **What contributions do you bring to the team?**
- **What questions do you have?**



Exposure of the team to a restorative framework.

**To develop a common framework &
language for dialogue**

Terry facilitated a 1 day process



Opportunities for dialogue

How do I provide opportunities for inclusive, purposeful dialogue that allows for increased understanding, reflection & rigorous discussion, that enables people to define their practice and their journey forward?



How do I establish forums for meaningful dialogue?

This is a group that does not have time for meetings

Connections at a number of levels



Purposeful Team Meetings

Meetings are Not about:

- **Administration**
- **Information**
- **Unfocused discussion – gripe sessions**



Team Meetings - Shared Practice & understanding of different professional disciplines

- **“What’s the world like from your discipline’s perspective? What would you like others to know & what are the challenges?”**
- **What would you like to know from this discipline group?**
- **What did you learn or experience in listening to the group?**



Why did people like team meetings?

- **“It gives us time to reflect & develop an understanding of each other”**
- **“I’m learning things about others & their work that I never knew before”**

“You’ve allowed us to walk together by not telling us what to do”

What was happening?





Team Days

How does the team leader facilitate the development of a sound practice framework?



Team Days

Explicit practice

Providing opportunities for rigorous dialogue through:

- **Socratic questioning**
- **Structured processes**



Team Days

- What do we mean by Socratic questioning?
- What questions are more likely to lead to an opening up and meaningful engagement rather than defensiveness and a closing down?



The art of Socratic questioning

- **Using a Socratic approach helps us arrive at a point where we understand our own practice & the value of explicit practice.**
- eg....

Articulating & sharing with others an example

1. What are the benefits of case work?

What would you include in a list of criteria for effective casework?

- **2. Use this criteria to draw a mud map of a case that you are presently involved with. For example, if your criteria involved things such as engagement, explanation & clarification of expectations, elaborate on how you actually went about this.**
- **3. Discuss your case with others. What processes did you use, what difficulties did you encounter & how did you overcome them?**



4. What have you learnt about your own & each others practice?

5. What is the value of Explicit Practice?

6. Why is it important that you explain your practice rationale to those you are assisting? How would you go about this?



Navigating our own practice challenges

- **Parent complaints**
- **School leadership issues**
- **Managerial workload - administrivia**
- **Urgent business – yours not mine**
- **Support**



Know our pitfalls

- **Fallback position**
- **Emotions kick in**



The value of mentorship

- **Authentic relationship**
- **Support & challenge**
- **Significance of mentoring as a collaborative process**



The true value of mentorship

**Subject self to process I
put staff through**



The Importance of Explicit Practice

- Know your toolbox & what's in it
- Own the toolbox & tools
- Know how to use the tools in a deliberate way

**Experienced the need at a
personal level**


Shared the experience



What matters most to practitioners?

- Collegiate support (more important than leader support)
- Opportunities in understanding & articulating our own practice
- Confidence in having an explicit practice – toolbox & tools (framework & techniques)





Nothing shapes our lives so much as the questions we ask, refuse to ask, or never think of asking.

Thank you

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