Building Restorative Organizations:

The Challenges and Rewards of Working Together Restoratively

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Overview

A. Key Concepts

B. Organizational Conflict

C. Moving Toward Restorative Practices within Organizations

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A. Key Concepts

- Organizations as Living Systems
- Life Cycles
- Some Organizational Models
- The Organizational Tree
- Restorative Practices
- Challenges to Implementing Restorative Practices within Organizations
- "Infancy, Adolescence & Restorative Justice"
- Sullivan & Tifft's Challenge

Organizations as Living Systems

- Organizations are dynamic and interconnected.

- Aspects of the organization influence each other. Additionally, they influence (and are influenced by) the environment.

- Relationships within the organization are central.

Life Cycles

- Organizations have life cycles. They:
  - Develop in response to specific situations or for particular purposes.
  - Grow and mature.
  - Go through periods of change and crisis.
    - This is stressful, but it is also normal.
    - This is an opportunity to renew and transform the organization.
  - Usually come to an end at some point.

Some Organizational Models

- Networks
- Coalitions
- Informal organizations such as community groups
- Incorporated, non-profit organizations
- Foundations
- Charitable organizations
- **We need new types of organizations and new forms of governance.**

The Organizational Tree
(Brubaker & Hoover Zimmerman, 2009)

- Leaves and Branches: Culture

- Trunk: Leadership

- Roots: Structure

- The Environment

Structure – the Roots

- The organization's structure includes:
  - Physical resources and infrastructure
  - Human Resources
    - Staff, volunteers, board members
    - Knowledge, skills, experience
  - Funding

- Insights from Brubaker & Hoover Zimmerman:
  - There are also informal structures and patterns of interaction. Ignore these at your peril!
  - The design of physical space can encourage communication and address conflict.

Leadership – the Trunk

- Leaders are the link between the organization's structure and culture.

- Leadership (and opportunities to show leadership) exists at all levels of the organization, and in all situations.

- One of the key roles of leaders is to model restorative values and practices.

Culture – the Leaves and Branches

- Culture includes values, expectations, beliefs, and behaviors.

- The organization's culture is shaped by the people within it, its historic experiences, and the external factors affecting it.

- Changing an organization's culture is difficult and often painful.

The Environment

- Organizations are strongly affected by their environment. They also have some capacity to influence the environment.

- It is important to think strategically about how changes affect the organization and how it can respond or adapt.

- What kinds of environmental factors affect organizations in the restorative field?

Organizations Need to Consider

- Governance
- Decision-making
- Resolving conflict
- Strategic thinking
- Resource allocation
- Human resources
- How to get work done
- And many other things…

Restorative Practices:
A Value-based Approach

- Values
  - Inclusiveness   - Respect   - Transformation
  - Empowerment   - Healing   - Reparation
  - Accountability

- Processes
  - Dialogue
  - Consensus-based Decision Making
  - Circles

- Behaviours and Actions
  - How organizations make decisions, hold meetings, and deal with conflict
  - What would "restorative practices" mean for work organization, performance evaluation & resource allocation?

Challenges to Implementing Restorative Practices within Organizations

- Lack of familiarity with restorative practices
- Hierarchal structures
- The organization's size and complexity
- Workload pressures
- Time required to ensure that voices are heard and achieve consensus
- Disconnect between restorative approaches, funding requirements and legal requirements

Mark Carey: "Infancy, Adolescence, & Restorative Justice"

○ Infancy is a time of exploration and trying new things.

○ Adolescence is a period of experimentation and rebellion against authority.

○ Adulthood is a time of settling down to address issues in a mature and thoughtful way.

○ Agencies that attempt to incorporate restorative approaches must use different strategies at each stage.

Sullivan & Tifft: Challenging Us and the Prevailing Political Economy

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"A social ethic prevails in our political economy which says that the achievement of human well-being is dependent on the constant exercise of power over others, on the accumulation and investiture of private wealth, and on the creation and maintenance of numerous hierarchal relationships that define and reinforce the relative worth of some over others."

- Sullivan & Tifft (2001: 122).

Structural Violence

- Sullivan & Tifft argue that the two kinds of violence – interpersonal and structural - are related.

- We tend to be more conscious of interpersonal violence, but structural violence can have more profound consequences.

- Structural violence in workplaces affects people's wellbeing, fosters resentment, and can lead to interpersonal violence (p. 147).

- They call for a transformation in how we view relationships and act in all aspects of our lives.

B. Organizational Conflict

- Factors Related to Organizational Conflict
- Conflict Resolution
- Don't Bury Conflict Under the Rug
- The Restorative Practices Continuum

Factors Related to Organizational Conflict

- Change in the organization's environment
- Size
- The degree to which power is centralized and people have input
- Poorly defined roles
- Access to resources
- Differences between formal and informal structures and leadership within the organization
- Differences between the organization's mission/values and processes/behaviours

Conflict Resolution

- Is there a generational difference in viewing conflict?
  - Conflict as dangerous and something to be avoided
  - Conflict as part of daily life

- What opportunities arise from understanding conflict within a restorative framework?
  - Nils Christie argued that conflict is an opportunity to clarify norms and support victims.

  - Conflict is also an opportunity to benefit from the wisdom, experience and perspectives of each participant, and to renew organizations.

Don't Bury Conflict Under the Rug

"There is something my parents and teachers never told me about conflict.

_____

To increase safety, move towards it…

….Peace, it turns out, is not the absence of conflict but the state of deep inner knowing that your most sacred longings have been fully heard and acknowledged. And that can only be accomplished by moving into – and through – the fire."

- Elaine Shpungin. (September 27, 2010).

The Restorative Practices Continuum

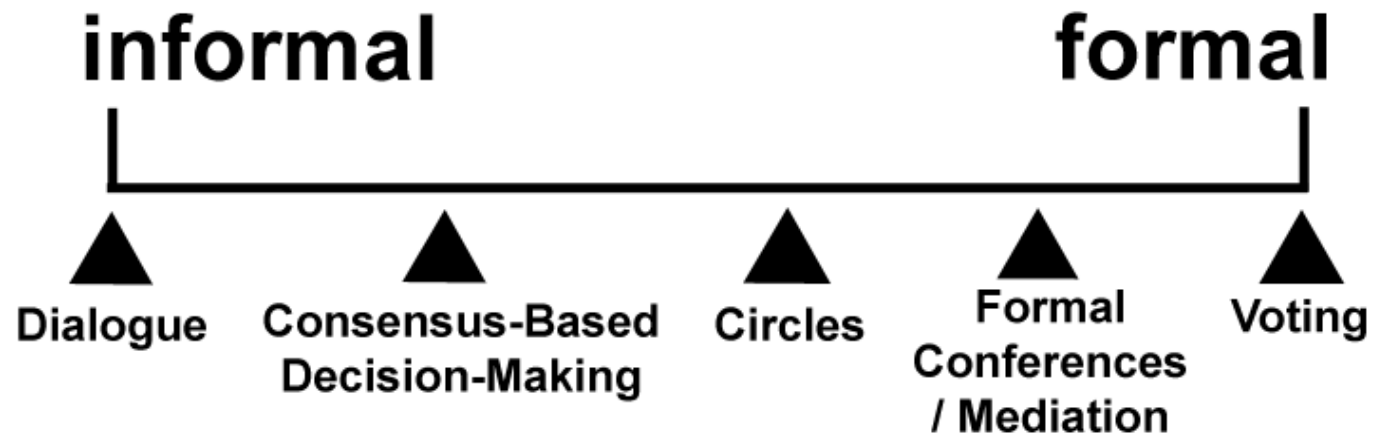Source: International Institute for Restorative Practices

C. Moving Toward Restorative Practices within Organizations

- Continuum of Restorative Practices within Organizations
- Laying the Groundwork for Meetings & Events
- Helpful Hints
- Stages for Using Circles
- Some Things to Consider about Organizational Change

Continuum of Restorative Practices within Organizations

Continuum of Restorative Practices within Organizations

- Dialogue
  - Should be the "normal course of business" at all levels within the organization

- Consensus-based Decision-making
  - Should be the "normal course of business"
  - May be time consuming and difficult to achieve

- Circles
  - Use whenever appropriate, for a range of situations

- Formal Conferences/Mediation
  - Use when necessary to respond to specific events and issues
  - Build mediation and dispute resolution into policies

- Voting
  - May be required for legal purposes, particularly for non-profits
  - May be necessary in emergencies or if consensus cannot be reached

Laying the Groundwork for Meetings & Events

- Clearly articulate the purpose of the meeting or event.

- Who should be involved?

- What views and issues are likely to arise?

- To what extent could you (or other people or groups) address those views or issues?

- Are there positive relationships that could form a foundation for building trust and resolving issues?

Helpful Hints

○ Be as inclusive as possible

○ Build relationships

○ The benefits and challenges of technology

- Physical layout

- Chairing and time management

- Balance between reflecting, talking and doing
  - Develop a flexible agenda
  - Use questions rather than headings
  - Develop a plan that includes specifics
  - Select someone who will ensure that the commitments have been honored.

Stages for Using Circles
(based on Ball, Caldwell & Pranis, 2010)

- Stage 1: Deciding on the Suitability of a Talking Circle

- Stage 2: Preparation

- Stage 3: Convening the Circle
  - Start on a positive note

- Stage 4: Follow-Up
  - Close the circle - have a round table where people can debrief about how the process went
  - Ideas for taking minutes
  - Continue inviting feedback
  - Keep people informed

Some Things to Consider about Organizational Change

- "Restorative justice is a way of thinking, a way of behaving, and a way of measuring" (Umbreit & Carey, 1995: 48)

- Prepare carefully for change
  - Senior leaders and managers need to understand restorative practices and be committed to the change process.
  - Consider why the change is necessary and how it will impact the organization and the people in it.
  - Ensure that there is adequate time and opportunity for input.
  - Encourage and support participation.

D. The Potential for Transformation

- A "Restorative Revolution"?

- "Restorative Justice as a Transformative Process"

- The Rewards of Implementing Restorative Practices in Organizations

- Discussion

A "Restorative Revolution"?

"Call me crazy - but I think we are ready for a Revolution....

…I am talking about a transformational, society-wide, lens-shifting, all-affecting revolution on the scale of the 1960's civil rights and women's rights movements, a revolution in how we think about who we are and how we live, work, and love together.

Not a solution to everything. Not panacea, utopia, peace and love for all. But a fundamental shift in the collective understanding of what might be possible."

- Elaine Shpungin. (February 15, 2011.)

"Restorative Justice as a Transformative Process"

"…the opportunity to create restorative processes does not exist in the future or in select circumstances, but everywhere and anytime we engage in social relationships…Possibilities for transforming social arrangements exist on all levels, from the personal up through the most global."

- Sullivan & Tifft (2001: 179).

The Rewards of Implementing Restorative Practices in Organizations

○ Congruence between restorative ideals and behaviour

○ More positive working relationships

○ Increased innovation and partnerships

○ Improved decision making

○ Better ways to address conflict

○ Increased ownership and accountability

Do we want our organization to look like this…

Or like this?

Discussion

- How do these ideas resonate with your experience with boards of directors, non-profit corporations and other organizations?

- What would implementing restorative practices mean for your organization in terms of how the work is done and evaluating and rewarding employees?

- How can we influence the environmental factors surrounding restorative programs?

- What kinds of new governance and organizational models can we envision?

E. References and Helpful Resources

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