



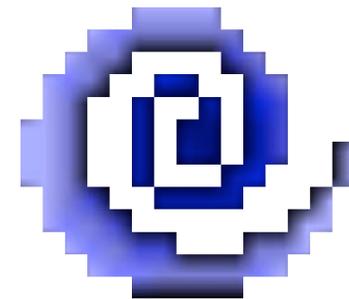
Restorative Practice And Youth Custody

Challenges In Creating A Restorative Culture in A Youth Custody Facility

Presenters: Ron Cameron
Bruce Schenk

Creating Restorative Culture In Youth Custody - Challenges

- ◆ Brookside Youth Centre in Cobourg, Ontario Canada is a secure custody facility housing up to 110 young persons (16- 18) on who are on remand or sentenced
- ◆ It is run by the province under the auspices of the Ministry of Children and Youth Services
- ◆ Brookside Secondary School serving the educational needs of our residents is on grounds



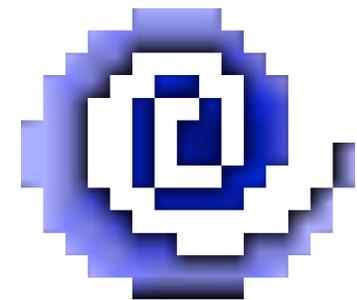
Creating Restorative Culture In Youth Custody - Challenges

The introduction of the Youth Criminal Justice Act in 2003, with some of its underlying values and principles based on restorative justice, created an opportunity to develop practices and procedures to reflect those elements in institutional life, including Conferencing



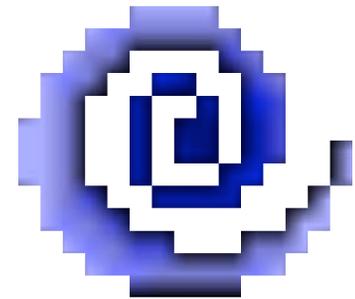
Creating Restorative Culture In Youth Custody - Challenges

- ◆ Restorative Justice Conferencing began at Brookside as a pilot effort in 1999 to proactively address peer on peer violence
- ◆ This project has undergone a number of variations during its evolution over the past seven years
- ◆ In 2003, Administration decided to utilize restorative practices in addressing all institutional peer on peer violence and other issues of conflict



Creating Restorative Culture In Youth Custody - Challenges

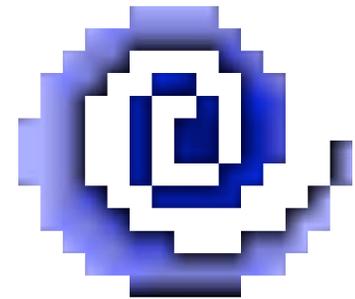
- ◆ In March 2003, Brookside Administration demonstrated its commitment to restorative approaches beginning with the training of 25 staff of diverse disciplines as family group conference facilitators – to date over 75 personnel have been trained as facilitators
- ◆ A Restorative Justice Committee of facilitators created in May 2003 to plan and guide development of restorative practices is still very active today



Creating Restorative Culture In Youth Custody - Challenges

Restorative Practice supports Brookside's policy of zero tolerance for peer on peer violence:

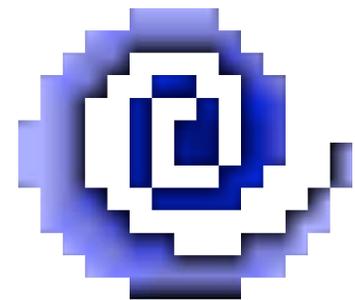
- ◆ Conferencing is a problem-solving approach that attempts to repair harm that has been done
- ◆ The accountability of the youth is key and can be addressed more effectively in the circle process
- ◆ The focus on dialogue is helpful for youth and staff
- ◆ It enables aggressors to face their actions in a supportive setting



Creating Restorative Culture In Youth Custody - Challenges

Conferencing and Restorative Practice at Brookside:

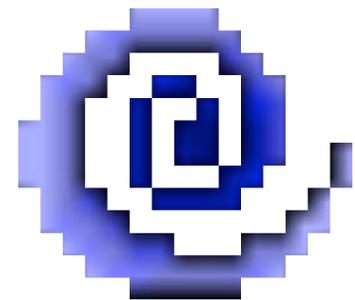
- ◆ Enables participants to move on after an incident
- ◆ Provides effective venue for staff to address wrongdoing
- ◆ Conference agreements can lead to more effective interventions by teachers, clinical & youth worker staff
- ◆ Create a safer institution by addressing underlying causes of peer on peer and other incidents and deals with them more proactively



Creating Restorative Culture In Youth Custody - Challenges

“Current” Conferencing Process:

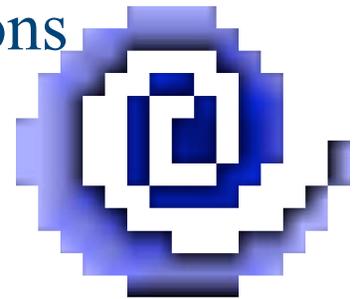
- ◆ When an incident occurs, a Behaviour Report is generated and the Operational Manager (OM), as part of the investigation, interviews the young persons involved introducing them to the conferencing process
- ◆ OM determines an appropriate adjudication and informs the young person of the consequences
- ◆ A Restorative Practice Referral Form is completed and forwarded to the RJ Coordinator (chaplain)



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“Current” Conferencing Process :

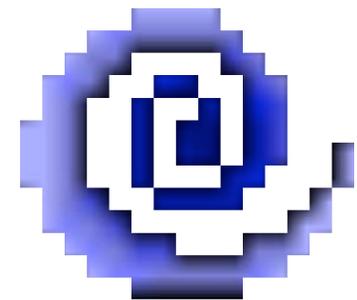
- ◆ The Coordinator reviews the referral as soon as possible and if the case is deemed suitable for conferencing, assigns appropriate facilitator(s)
- ◆ An appropriate facilitator is someone who is trained, experienced enough to handle the incident, and neutral with respect to the individuals involved
- ◆ The facilitator(s) interviews the young persons involved and confirm their willingness and ability to proceed with a conference



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“Current” Conferencing Process :

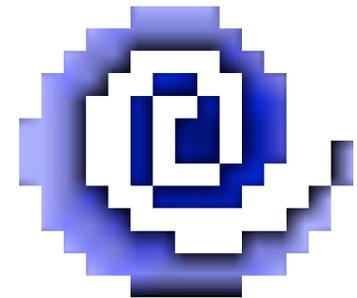
- ◆ Conferences follow a model developed by the *Real Justice* organization described in their training manual Real Justice Training Manual - Coordinating Family Group Conferences
- ◆ All facilitators use a script patterned after the one outlined in the manual
- ◆ The idea is to create a mini community that addresses the incident, hopefully preventing further harm



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“Current” Conferencing Process :

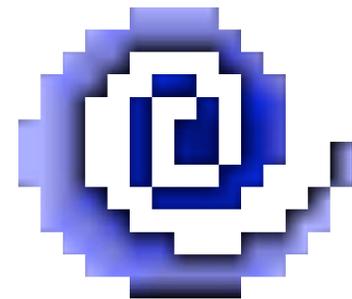
- ◆ A written agreement delineating ways for the offending young person to repair the harm is developed consensually in the conference signed by all present
- ◆ These ‘consequences’ are as creative as possible in order that the young persons learn from their experience and that they are restored to their 'community' in a healthy manner
- ◆ Copies of agreement are distributed centrally by RJ Coordinator



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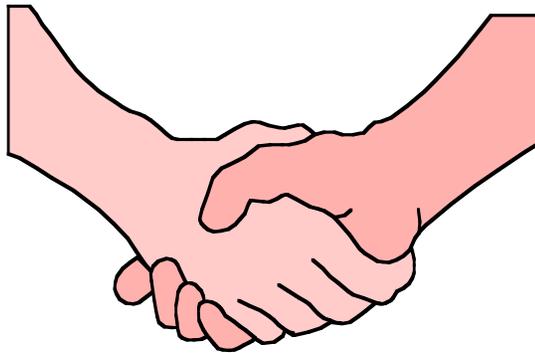
“Previous” Role of Restorative Justice Coordinator:

- ◆ Oversight and coordination of the Restorative Justice Conferencing Program
- ◆ Clearing house for all Restorative Justice referrals and assigning appropriate facilitator(s)
- ◆ Guidance, support and mentorship to all Brookside Conference Facilitators as needed
- ◆ Overall management of conferencing program including collecting stats, distributing forms, reports etc.



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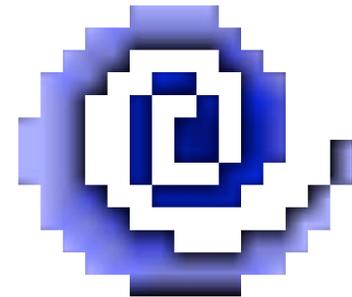
Scenarios To Share



Creating Restorative Culture In Youth Custody - Challenges

Where Our Evolution Is Taking Us:

- ◆ Continue to develop Brookside as a more restorative environment by embracing the “Restorative Practice Framework” as a guide
- ◆ Recognize and name current practices that are restorative in nature (i.e. resolving conflict and issues informally)
- ◆ Introduce other restorative practices to ensure a variety of effective approaches



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Restorative Practice Continuum

Informal

Formal

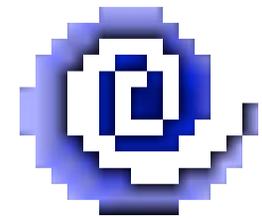
AFFECTIVE
STATEMENT

RESTORATIVE
CONVERSATION

SMALL
IMPROMPTU
CONFERENCE

LARGE
GROUP

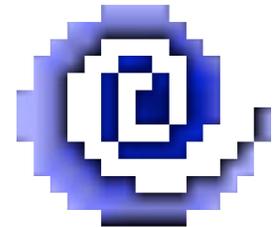
FORMAL
CONFERENCE



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What we are doing:

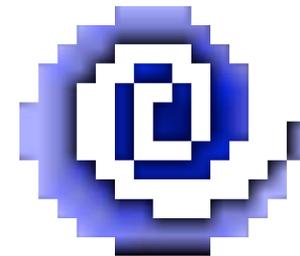
- ◆ Orienting all staff on a Unit By Unit Basis to the Restorative Practice Framework through an In-service
- ◆ Restorative Practice Committee plans and facilitates the development under the auspices of the Superintendent
- ◆ Restorative Practice Coordinator is working with each unit Manager and Social Worker to gradually move to a unit based approach (School is treated as a unit)
- ◆ Providing refresher sessions for trained facilitators



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New Role of Restorative Practice Coordinator:

- ◆ Overall management of restorative processes including quality control and best practice development
- ◆ Work supportively with Unit Manager & Social Worker
- ◆ Ongoing training and mentorship
- ◆ Provide conference facilitation as needed in more difficult situations
- ◆ Collect statistics and forms etc.



Creating Restorative Culture In Youth Custody - Challenges

What we are attempting is cultural change which is very challenging:

- ◆ Brookside is a facility with a sixty year history in youth corrections which both supports and resists a move to a restorative culture
- ◆ The process will be long term and we recognize many experts believe real cultural change can take 7-15 years

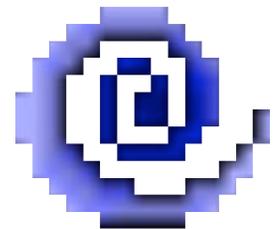


Creating Restorative Culture In Youth Custody - Challenges

Necessary Components In Cultural Change

Vision:

- ◆ A process that leads to understanding and experience of restorative practice and ultimately some vision of what might be
- ◆ Leaders and staff with a strong view of what restorative practice could look like in the facility
- ◆ Understanding of what is needed to create a restorative milieu including use of language

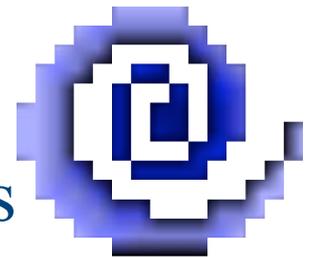


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Necessary Components In Cultural Change

Leadership:

- ◆ Superintendent and senior administration that actively support and advocate for restorative practice
- ◆ A proactive and visionary principal and school community within the facility
- ◆ Champions and a resident “expert” to drive and facilitate the development process

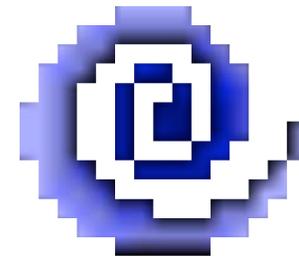


Creating Restorative Culture In Youth Custody - Challenges

Necessary Components In Cultural Change

Capacity Building:

- ◆ Necessary to build practices and related training on a clear and explicit restorative framework
- ◆ Needs to be ongoing staff development process in restorative thinking and practice/skills both in-house and at conferences etc.
- ◆ Opportunity to use your skills



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Necessary Components In Cultural Change

Legislative and Policy Support:

- ◆ Youth Criminal Justice Act started in April, 2003
- ◆ Family Child and Services Act (Ontario)
- ◆ Now part of Children and Youth Services Ministry
- ◆ New emphases in Education, especially concerning safe schools and bullying
- ◆ Development of internal policies and procedures



Creating Restorative Culture In Youth Custody - Challenges

Necessary Components In Cultural Change

Building On the Culture and History:

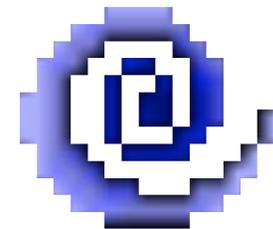
- ◆ A long standing experience of relational custody
- ◆ A history of innovation within the school that augments the development of restorative practice
- ◆ Openness to evolutionary processes that carry the restorative culture forward



Creating Restorative Culture In Youth Custody - Challenges

The place of restorative practice in the reintegration of Young Persons after custody:

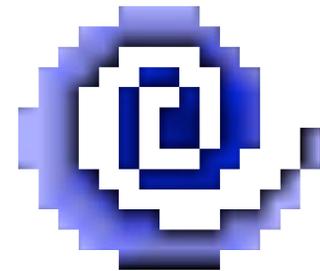
- ◆ Use of conferencing and other restorative practices as part of reintegration plan
- ◆ Workplace destination academic programs at Brookside as connected to community reintegration – big challenges regarding all players being on same page with both key areas



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Some Other Challenges:

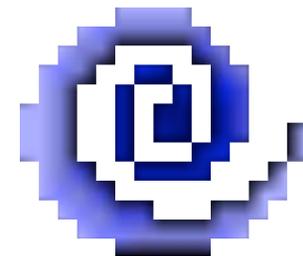
- ◆ Power and control issues in a correctional facility
- ◆ Accountability of staff to maintain good effective process & staying true to restorative principles
- ◆ Accountability of youth through follow-up to conference agreements as well as informal practices
- ◆ Building ongoing staff buy-in
- ◆ Others?



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Some Other Opportunities:

- ◆ Availability of a restorative practice framework that is grounded in best practice and empirical data provides roadmap and resources
- ◆ Ability to draw on and nurture existing practices that are restorative in nature
- ◆ Strong staff relationships are enhanced as they participate in restorative practices

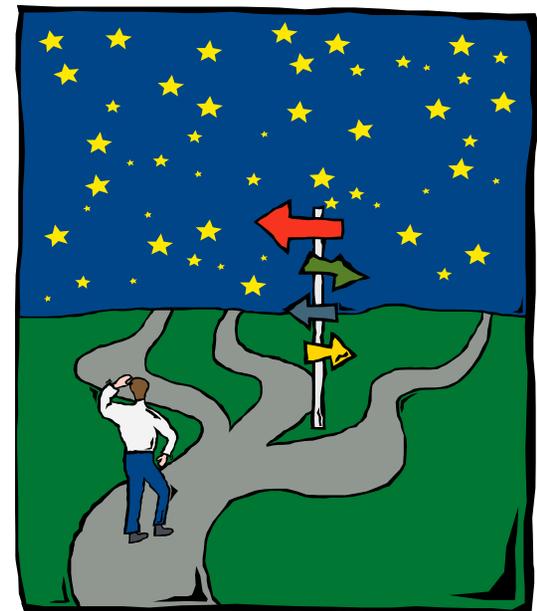


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Other Challenges and Opportunities in changing youth custody to a restorative milieu:

Your Thoughts, Perspectives, Questions and Comments

Time for Discussion



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Thank you for your interest in our evolving Restorative Approach in a our secure youth setting!!

***Brookside Youth Centre
Cobourg, Ontario Canada***

