

Welcome to:

**Modelling,
Team Formation
and the
Restorative Practitioner**

Terry O'Connell & Lesley Oliver



CONTEXT

2008

**“Developing a Restorative Team:
Where the Journey must begin”**

- Evolved from a process of rolling out RP across a district of 45 schools
- Context of support, enthusiasm, well funded

Team

Preceding Restorative Practice

Skilled problem solvers

“It’s like riding a bike – it was intuitive

Problem solving

On the prowl for good ideas & strategies

Looking for tools in the toolbox

Grab bag of ideas”





Team

After restorative practice

- **Using RP framework & language to guide our own discussions**
- **No longer wasting time on strategies & programs**
- **Conversations were about “out there”**

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





The turning point was when we stopped talking about them & talked about us

“the critical point was when we chose to put our business on the table & explain how the bike worked”

- What do we 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.

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





**We learned to *be* restorative rather
than use restorative practices as
strategies**

**Experienced Restorative practice at a personal
level**




Restorative Practice Became A Way Of Being

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

Team comments

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

- *It's the first time I've felt supported in the department*
- *There's a feeling of being connected & on the same page*
- *We can put anything on the table to be talked about*
- *It's great being a committed team & being able to share*
- *I don't have to know all the answers*
- *We've been connected at an emotional as well as an intellectual level.*



**What often happens when
something's working this
well?**



2009 New Challenges

■ Major restructure

Districts of 50 schools to regions of 150 schools

Manager of 10 to manager of 24 multi disciplinary team members

Usual problems associated with organisational change

■ New context

Central control strengthened

Compliance rewarded

Leadership team hierarchical

Rhetoric & practice contradictory

No collegiate support

■ Personal struggles

power differentials

no decision making processes to resolve inequities

no opportunity for meaningful dialogue

cooperation = compliance

resilience



PRESSURE and SUPPORT

- Encouraging Lesley to remain in region
- Offer of assistance with new group
- Reminder that Lesley was able to influence the group process regardless of organisational factors



Replication of the 2008 experience

Initial questions I asked of myself

- How do we develop healthy, trusting, team relationships?
- How do I provide opportunities for inclusive, purposeful dialogue that allows for increased understanding, reflection & that enables people to define their journey forward?
- How do we develop a common language & understanding in which we can discuss & explore ideas, value different perspectives, respectfully challenge & learn from each other?
- How do we develop an explicit, shared understanding of our work?
- How do we develop a sense of responsibility & accountability to each other?
- How do we build our own capacity as well as that of others?



Initial engagement of staff purpose

- **Provide an opportunity for the team to have a shared understanding of one another.**
- **Establish explicit expectations.**
- **Create a positive [and different] experience.**



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?**



Terry facilitated a 1 day process

Purpose:

To expose the team to a restorative framework

To develop a common framework & language

**To challenge people to think about their
practice**

To develop collegiate support



Terry & The Team

Workshop Title:

**“How do we work effectively with others?
Relationships, Learning, Capacity Building,
Restorative Practice.”**

What does this title suggest?



Role of team leader

Structure opportunities & processes for dialogue

- **Team meetings**
- **Professional discipline meetings**
- **Individual meetings/Performance Management**
- **Spontaneous/casual interactions**

Team meetings

- **Quality questions that facilitate open & honest dialogue**
- **Allow everyone to contribute & share experiences in their work**
- **“What’s been your most meaningful work over the past 2 weeks & what made it meaningful?”**
- **“What have you enjoyed about your work recently & what made it enjoyable?”**
- **“Describe a recent intervention in a school & what were the processes that helped make it successful?”**



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?



Purposeful meetings

Meetings are Not about:

- Administration
- Information
- Unfocused discussion – gripe sessions



Why did people like team meetings?

- “We feel valued & not judged”
- “You’ve allowed us to walk together by not telling us what to do”
- “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”

What was happening?



Team Days

Focus on:


- **Common beliefs, practice & responsibilities**
- **Processes for collegiate work**
- **Responsibilities in multi disciplinary work**
- **Working towards a shared practice framework
“a shared view of the world”**



Reflection on the journey

What people articulated

- “It gives us time/chance to talk/find out more about each others preferences re: work – helps me understand how I and others work. “
- “I value spending time interacting and discussing with other team members.”
- “Getting together with the team”
- “I plan to walk around the office more and connect more with total team – hopefully make time to do this on a regular basis.”




How does this team's experience influence practice?

- **Different experiences → different thinking → different practice**
- **The personal experience becomes the professional experience**



Restorative Practice becomes a way of being

**Practice within the team influences
practice in schools which in turn
reflects how we work with each other.**



Modelling Restorative Practice through Individual meetings

(Performance management)

- Model questioning
- An opportunity to know, explore & reflect on practice in a restorative way
- Documentation of a framework reflecting the conversation
- Concluding questions:
 - What are your expectations of me?
 - How can I best support you?
- Common Response - “I’ve never been asked that before?”



How do I see my responsibilities as a leader of a restorative team?

- **Commitment**
- **Explicit expectations- practice, process**
- **Model RP at every opportunity – ask questions**
 - **Establish structures & processes → experiences**
 - **Facilitate building capacity of the team**



Know your pitfalls

- Reverting back to default position under stress
- Wanting to drive change rather than facilitate it's evolvement
- Getting caught up in things “out there”
- Focussing on the urgent business
- Reacting & problem solving

Summary

Context + Mechanism = Outcome

Culture/politics
Self – commitment

Creation of the space for different experiences that enable:

Development of different behaviors
Short term
Medium term
Long term

Changed beliefs, attitudes & headsets resulting in different choices.

Realist Evaluation

based on Pawson & Tilley's work
"Realistic Evaluation" (1997)



**Restorative Practice works
regardless of the context**

Thank you

Terry O'Connell & Lesley Oliver