

RESTORATIVE ESSENTIALS

Effective communication skills
Restorative Conversations

TIME REQUIRED

20 minutes minimum

FORMAT

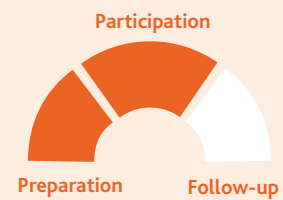
Pairs or small groups,
whole-group discussion

RESTORATIVE PRACTICE LEVEL

Levels 1, 2, and 3

OBJECTIVES

- To improve teachers' questioning strategies when addressing inappropriate behaviour.
- To share these strategies among staff and co-construct some best-practice understandings about questioning strategies for adults and staff within the school community.

PROCESS PHASE COVERED**COMMENT: ASKING VERSUS TELLING – ENGAGING THE STUDENT**

When challenging issues arise, it can be tempting to tell students what they need to do and how they need to go about it. At other times it seems easier to ignore an issue in the hope that it might blow over, resolve itself, or just go away. A more relational approach is to engage the student in the issue and support them to come up with their own solutions.

This approach emphasises the importance of students being actively involved in providing feedback about what they learnt, how they learnt it, and their experience of the teaching and learning. It provides a foundation for developing empathetic connection with others.

The Social Discipline Window (see the diagram on the worksheet **Converting telling into asking**) explores the axes of support and structure. In this framework, a position of high structure and low support often leads to power struggles, confrontation, and a telling mode. High support but low levels of structure can be excusing, undemanding, and permissive and lead to an answering mode. Low structure and low support result in a neglectful or ignoring mode. High structure and high support allow for collaborative, respectful problem solving and an asking mode – a feature of restorative practice.

With its emphasis on the collaborative development and evaluation of effective questions, the activity in this module reflects the asking mode.

ACTIVITY

The worksheet **Converting telling into asking** contains seven 'telling' statements relating to issues that could arise in a school.

Pairs or small groups

Reframe these statements into effective questions that address the issues without being confrontational. See if you can provide more than one question for each statement.

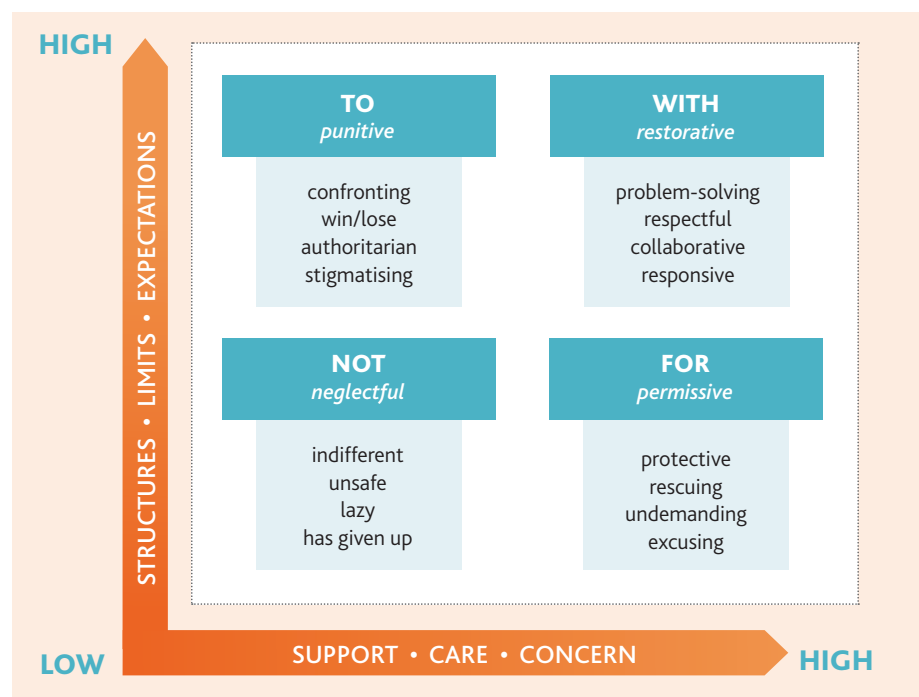
Whole-group discussion

Discuss the questions from the first part of the activity and decide which are the most effective. What makes these questions so effective?

There are no right or wrong answers for this activity. But some questions will be more effective than others.

TELLING	ASKING
Don't swing on your chair, Tom. I've already told you about that this morning.	
You are making far too much noise in the corridor. There's a class trying to work in the next room.	
Don't leave your rubbish there. Show some more pride in your school.	
Don't fight in the line; it's really annoying for the other people who are waiting.	
That is disgusting language, and I'm not standing for it here at school.	
Sally, if you keep disrupting the class I'm going to send you to Ms Richards.	
You've ripped Jack's shirt. You go and apologise to him.	

THE SOCIAL DISCIPLINE WINDOW



Adapted from Wachtel and McCold, 2003 (adapted from Glaser, 1964)