

**RESTORATIVE ESSENTIALS**

Effective communication skills  
Restorative Conversations

**TIME REQUIRED**

10 minutes minimum

**FORMAT**

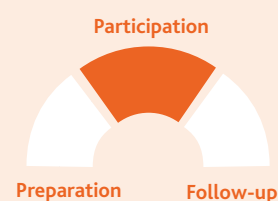
Groups of three

**RESTORATIVE PRACTICE LEVEL**

Levels 1, 2, and 3

**OBJECTIVES**

- To explore and discuss pace and prompt strategies for enhancing Restorative Conversations.
- To give feedback on one another's practice.

**PROCESS PHASE COVERED****COMMENT: THE VALUE OF SLOWING DOWN**

An important technique within effective restorative practice is slowing interactions down. Time constraints may push a teacher to hurry students in an attempt to sort things out as quickly and efficiently as possible. Slowing down and allowing students time to respond in full provides space for more genuine and honest responses.

This is a useful strategy for getting a student to engage in a conversation. If their initial response is minimal, leaving a silence can be highly effective. The student will often wait for the teacher to fill the gap, and sometimes the teacher obliges. This can mean that the opportunity for a more genuine response is lost.

There is research (for example, Rowe, 1974, and Swift and Gooding, 1983) that suggests it can take some students as long as 5–7 seconds to hear a question, make sense of it, and generate a response. This can feel like a long time for the teacher, who may not allow enough time for the student to respond.

**ACTIVITY**

In groups of three, role-play a 5-minute Restorative Conversation after a familiar low-level incident, using the five steps for restorative dialogue. One person takes the role of the student and another is the staff member. The third person observes the conversation, noting its pace and how long each participant was prepared to wait for answers to their questions. The observer should also note

when the staff member uses minimal encouragers, prompts, or summaries to draw more response from the student.

At the end of the conversation, the observer asks the participants what they thought the pace was like and how it supported the conversation. Then all three spend a few minutes discussing the pace and prompting.