

RESTORATIVE ESSENTIALS

Effective communication skills
Restorative Conversations

TIME REQUIRED

10 minutes minimum

FORMAT

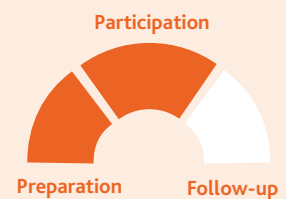
Pairs

RESTORATIVE PRACTICE LEVEL

Levels 1, 2, and 3

OBJECTIVES

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

PROCESS PHASE COVERED**COMMENT: QUESTIONING TECHNIQUES**

Everyone has favoured ways of asking questions. But why should we sometimes avoid using a 'why' question?

"Why?" can be a barrier to opening up a dialogue.

"Why?" can sound like a challenge or an accusation, putting the person on the spot. The respondent may feel they need to justify their behaviour, or they may become suspicious and defensive. They may not be able to answer the question because they may not know why they behaved in the way they did. The answer is more likely to be "I don't know" than a response that could lead to a Restorative Conversation.

In an effective Restorative Conversation, we will probably be able to establish the 'why' without asking directly.

McQueen (2010, page 128) suggests that we should:

View questions as an opportunity to open discussion and encourage thought rather than simply a test or challenge designed to get the correct response.

This activity could also be done with one person acting the role of a staff member and the other that of a student.

ACTIVITY

Working with a partner, choose a topic without telling the other person what it is. It could be something in your work, in your home life, or a public event. The idea is to use questions to find out as much about the other person's topic as possible. The only question you cannot use is one beginning with 'why'!

Start your questions with 'who', 'what', 'when', 'where', or 'how'.

When you have both had a turn at questioning, take 2–3 minutes to discuss how it felt.

For the questioner:

- How hard was it not to use 'why'?
- Were the responses open and informative enough?

For the responder:

- How easy was it to answer the questions?
- Did the questions encourage you to expand on the topic?