

**RESTORATIVE ESSENTIALS**

Relational approach – growing staff relationships and capability

**TIME REQUIRED**

60 minutes minimum

**FORMAT**

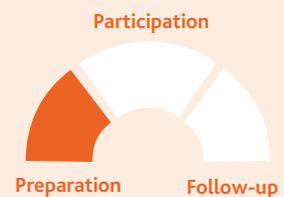
Small groups

**RESTORATIVE PRACTICE LEVEL**

Levels 2 and 3

**OBJECTIVES**

- To explore Roland Barth's article 'Improving relationships within the schoolhouse' and the four types of staff relationships that can exist within schools and workplaces.
- To develop an understanding of the dynamics that exist within both individual faculties/departments and our whole staff community.

**PROCESS PHASE COVERED****COMMENT: UNDERSTANDING AND IMPROVING STAFF RELATIONSHIPS**

During the week before the session, each participant should read the Roland Barth article 'Improving relationships within the schoolhouse' (published in *Educational Leadership*, volume 63, issue 6 and available online at <http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/mar06/vol63/num06/Improving-Relationships-Within-the-Schoolhouse.aspx>).

In the article, Barth identifies and describes four types of relationship: **parallel play, adversarial relationships, congenial relationships, and collegial relationships.**

This activity is similar to a jigsaw activity. The groups will discuss the four types of relationships in the Barth article, and so the number of groups should be a multiple of four. Each group should have 4–6 members from different areas of the school and with a range of experience.

For the third part of the activity, participants should form new groups of the same size. These groups should include at least one representative from each of the previous groups, who can share the results of the first discussions with the new group. This should take 2–3 minutes for each of the four topics.

**ACTIVITY****Individual reflection 1**

Using the worksheet **Analysing staff relationships**, consider your relationships with other school staff and write down the words or phrases that best describe these relationships.

Now considering the staff as a whole, write down the words or phrases that would best describe their relationships with one another. Do the same for the relationships between the staff in your faculty or department.

### Small groups

Each group is assigned one type of relationship described in Barth's article. Reread and discuss the corresponding section of the article, sharing your knowledge and experiences. Develop a brief definition of the relationship, with 2–3 examples of what it might look like in practice.

### New small groups

The representatives from each of the previous groups share the results of their discussion with the new group. When each of the four types of relationship has been covered, critique the article.

- Do you agree or disagree with what Barth is saying?
- What types of relationship have you seen or experienced here at school, or in other schools or workplaces?
- In terms of our school values and expectations, what types of staff relationship would we like to develop?
- How could we do this? What would it look like?
- What are some strategies that we could work on collectively to further develop and enhance such relationships?

### Individual reflection 2

Look at the worksheet again and the words or phrases you wrote in the three columns for your relationships. What do you notice as you look across the three columns? What kinds of relationship are they?

What percentage of your relationships fits into each of Barth's four types? (For example, six parallel relationships out of a total of 30 constitute 20%.)

What do you do to develop and maintain strong staff relationships?

What ideas have you heard from others that you could put into place?

### Optional follow-up activity

As departments or faculties, consider these questions:

- What is working well in your faculty or department in terms of how you relate and interact?
- How can we as a faculty or department further strengthen and enhance staff relationships?
- What are two things we can do as a group to foster these improvements this term or this year?

**Individual reflection 1**

Consider your relationships with other school staff and write down the words or phrases that best describe them. Now considering the staff as a whole, write down the words or phrases that would best describe their relationships with one another. Do the same for the relationships between the staff in your faculty or department.

MY RELATIONSHIPS	OUR WHOLE STAFF	MY FACULTY OR DEPARTMENT

**Individual reflection 2**

Look at the words or phrases you wrote in the three columns above. What do you notice about them? What types of relationship do they describe? What percentage of your relationships fits into each of the four types?

Parallel	%	Parallel	%
Adversarial	%	Adversarial	%
Congenial	%	Congenial	%
Collegial	%	Collegial	%

What do you do to develop and maintain strong staff relationships?

What other ideas have you heard that you could put into place?