

RESTORATIVE ESSENTIALS

Restorative Conversations

TIME REQUIRED

20 minutes minimum

FORMAT

Small groups, whole-group discussion

RESTORATIVE PRACTICE LEVEL

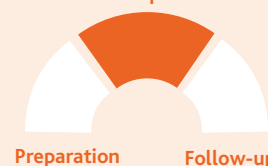
Levels 1, 2, and 3

OBJECTIVES

- To explore the place of apologies in repairing harm.
- To explore what 'sorry' might look like in action.

PROCESS PHASE COVERED

Participation



Preparation

Follow-up

COMMENT: THE PLACE OF APOLOGISING

For many people the word 'sorry' is almost impossible to utter, yet for others it rolls off the tongue so readily that you wonder whether there is any feeling or thought behind it at all.

Supporting students to make appropriate, meaningful apologies and exploring with them what it truly means to be sorry (backed up by actions) are vitally important.

There is a danger that students see the restorative process as one where they merely say the right things and apologise – and that's all that's needed. Then the apology can become a dispensation to reoffend or harm further, because all that's then needed is to apologise again ... and so the cycle continues. Some students have very limited understandings of what it means to show they are sorry and of the different ways they could do this.

Ways of giving and receiving apologies need to be modelled and taught to young people. When well developed, this ability is an important life skill. There are powerful learning opportunities here – exploring the place of apologies with students well before incidents occur can be very beneficial.

ACTIVITY**Small groups**

Consider some situations in which you have apologised and some in which you received an apology.

- How did you feel when the apology was meaningful? How did you feel when it was hollow?
- What are some of the difficulties and barriers in giving and receiving apologies?
- What makes an apology most effective for you?

- Are there some effective ways of receiving an apology?
- What are 10 meaningful ways in which we can show we are sorry by our actions?

Whole-group discussion

Share the strategies and observations, writing them up on a whiteboard or similar. Build a list of ways of gracefully receiving apologies and of saying sorry without using words.

Discuss how you could incorporate some of these into a Restorative Conversation.