

**RESTORATIVE ESSENTIALS**

Restorative Conversations

**TIME REQUIRED**

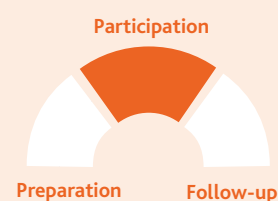
20 minutes minimum

**FORMAT**Groups of three,  
whole-group discussion**RESTORATIVE PRACTICE LEVEL**

Levels 2 and 3

**OBJECTIVES**

- To strengthen Restorative Conversations and ensure that participants in them are equipped to reach an agreement and move forward.
- To develop effective questioning strategies.

**PROCESS PHASE COVERED****COMMENT: MAKING THE PROCESS MEANINGFUL**

When we use scripted approaches to conversations, there is a risk that students become too familiar with the format and questions of the Restorative Conversation. They can then become adept at saying what they need to say and what they think staff want to hear, just to get out of a situation.

When we repeatedly have the same type of conversation with the same student about the same type of issue, it can very quickly become a superficial exercise that does not effect change in an individual.

Staff can address this in the 'reach an agreement' step of the Restorative Conversation and then plan follow-up to support the student to make positive changes to their behaviour.

Reaching an agreement questions can include:

- What do you need to *stay doing*?  
This focuses on the strengths of a student and what you want them to continue doing.
- What do you need to *stop doing*?  
This brings the student's focus onto what they need to stop doing straight away.
- What do you need to *start doing*?  
This question returns the focus to the goals and changes that are necessary for moving forward.
- What support do you need to achieve this?  
This question assures students that they aren't on their own in trying to achieve the goal.
- What support do you need to ensure this doesn't happen again?  
This question places responsibility on the student, supporting them to change their behaviour and do the things they agreed to do.

Follow-up questions could include:

- When will be a good time to check in with you to see how you're going?
- What will happen if our agreed outcomes haven't been reached?

A key consideration is to avoid a confrontational approach – for example, "If this happens again, I'm going to ..."

### ACTIVITY

#### Small groups

In groups of three, consider a situation where you are having a conversation with a student for the second or third time about the same sort of issue. Two people role-play the conversation, using some of the questions above (you may think of others as well). The aim is to strengthen the 'reach an agreement' and 'plan follow-up' steps in the

conversation and create some certainty (rather than severity) for moving forward. The third person acts as the observer. Discuss the conversation as a group, then swap roles and repeat with another conversation.

#### Whole-group discussion

Share your observations and questioning strategies to help build your practice.

