

Building Restorative Faith Communities



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The Workshop:

- Opening
- The Restorative Practice Framework
- Conflict Transformation
- Theological and Multifaith Context
- Current Projects
- How does Restorative Practice apply to your understanding of what faith communities are about?

Time to Step Back - Archbishop Oscar Romero



*It helps now and then to step back
And take the long view.
The kingdom is not only beyond our efforts,
It is even beyond our vision.*

*We accomplish in our lifetime only a tiny fraction
Of the magnificent enterprise that is God's work
Nothing we do is complete,
Which is another way of saying
That the kingdom always lies beyond us.
No statement says all that could be said,
No prayer fully expresses our faith.
No confession brings perfection,
No pastoral visit brings wholeness.
No programs accomplishes the Church's mission.
No set of goals and objectives includes everything.*

This is what we are about.

We plant the seeds that one day will grow.

We water seeds already planted,

Knowing that they hold further development.

We provide yeast that produces effects

Far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything,

And there is a sense of liberation in realising that.

This enables us to do something,

And to do it well.

It may be incomplete, but it is a beginning,

A step along the way,

An opportunity for the Lord's grace to enter

And do the rest.

We may never see the end results,

But that is the difference between

The master builder and the worker.

We are workers, not master builders,

Ministers, not messiahs.

We are prophets of a future not our own.



Crisis and Pastoral Care

- What do members of your church seeking your assistance have in common?
- Why do they seek you out, and what is it they most want from you?

Crisis and Pastoral Care

Mary, who is a member of your church community, seeks your advice and assistance. She is concerned about an issue of conflict among some congregational members.

Crisis and Pastoral Care

What would you like Mary to say about her experience with you?

What do you want Mary to take from this experience?

What impact would you most like to have on Mary and the people involved?



Good Practice

Logical starting point for our discussion needs to be around our practice (Our way of being with one another)

What does good and/or effective practice in church communities look like?

How would you know?

In your groups list those things
(elements, characteristics or attributes)
that make up ‘good practice’ in churches



About Your Practice

What was useful about this exercise?

Practice that is the most effective needs to involve explicit practice.

What does *explicit* mean?

What would *explicit practice* look like?

How *explicit* do you think your practice is?

What are some of the ways of knowing this?



Healthy Relational Styles

You are more likely to be understood when your relational style [or behaviour] is explicit rather than implicit.

What are the advantages of ensuring that everything you do is explicit?

Healthy relationships are built on explicit behaviours which foster: openness, honesty, transparency and fairness.

Building An Explicit Framework For Stronger Relationships

Let us now explore how our restorative practice framework can provide explicit practice [behaviour] capable of building healthier relationships and stronger, more connected families and communities.



Basic Tenets of Restorative Practice

“Harm and Relationships”

Adversarial (Blame) approach:

“what happened, who is to blame, what punishment or sanction is needed?”

Restorative approach:

“what happened, what harm has resulted and what needs to happen to make things right?”

Restorative Practice Checklist

Your practice would need to be *respectful and fair*

It would focus upon *repairing harm and restoring or building relationships.*

It would help develop empathy, responsibility and accountability.

It would promote the likelihood of *positive behavioural change.*

Discussion:

- *What is meant by the key words or phrases.*
- *If you were to adopt this checklist, what are the implications for your personal practice/ life in a church community?*



Fair Process

The Central Idea...

‘...individuals are most likely to trust and co-operate freely with systems - whether they themselves win or lose by those systems - when fair process is observed.’



Fair Process Principles

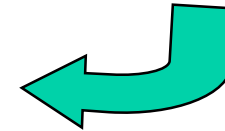
- 1. Engagement** - Opportunity to have a say.
- 2. Explanation**- Understand the reasons for the decision.
- 3. Expectation Clarity** - Shared understanding on what is expected in terms of behaviour and rules.

RELATIONAL DOMAINS

Pressure

TO	WITH Fair Process
NOT	FOR

How can
you practice
consistently
in this
domain?



Support



Restorative Questions I

When challenging behaviour, why would these questions consistently achieve ‘fair process’?
(Engagement, Explanation & Expectation Clarity):

- What happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- What have you thought about since?
- Who has been affected by what you did?
- In what way?
- What do you think you need to do to make things right?



Restorative Questions II

Why would these questions assist, those harmed by other's actions, experience 'fair process?'
(*Engagement, Explanation & Expectation Clarity*):

- What did you think when you realised what had happened?
- What impact has this incident had on you and others?
- What has been the hardest thing for you?
- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?



Parish Restorative Practice Continuum

Bring to Notice

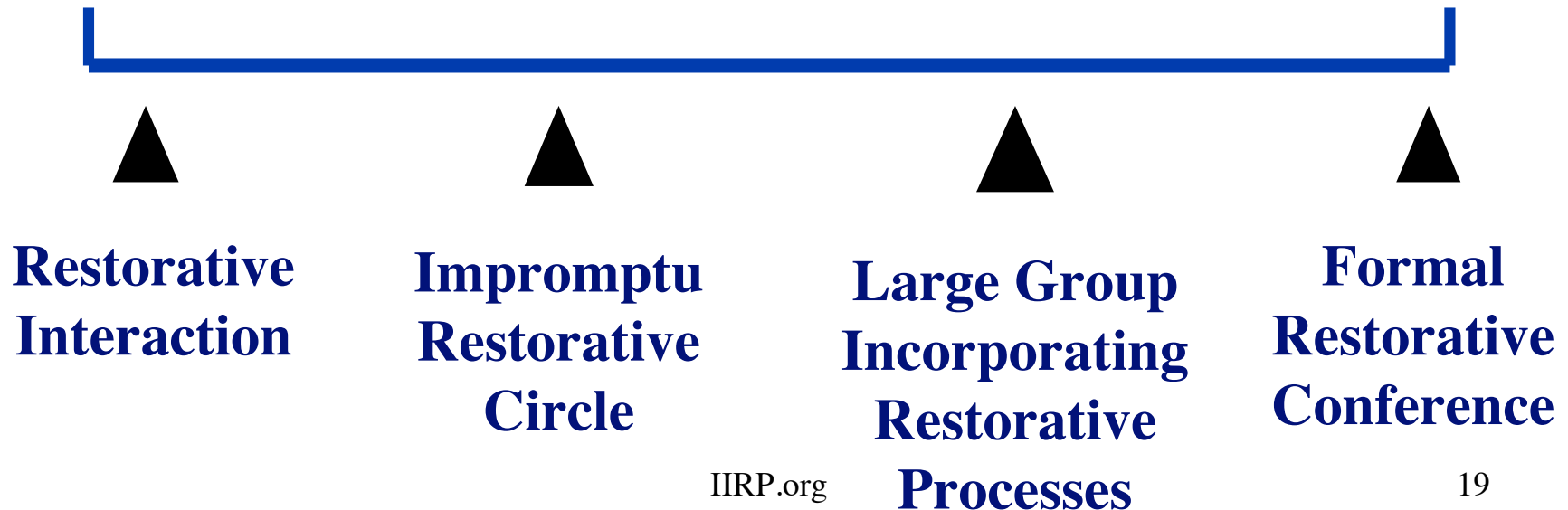
Low level matters

Critical Issues

Serious matters

Informal

Formal



Restorative Practice and Transformation

- Congregational conflict and struggle provide the context for *real transformation*. They need to be seen as an opportunity for healthy change and growth including a deepening and strengthening of relationships

Conflict Transformation

- Just as we want our behaviours to be explicit, so too we want the fundamental patterns and structure of our community to be explicit.
- Conflict Transformation (CT), developed through peacebuilding processes in war-torn areas, is an approach which supports a Restorative way of thinking and being.

The Lenses of Conflict Transformation

Specifically, CT provides:

1. A view of the presenting issue
2. A window onto the larger underlying dynamics of the community
3. A view of conflict

A View of the Presenting Issue

For example, the presenting issue may be a dispute between two groups within a congregation, about worship styles — contemporary or traditional?

A Window Onto the Larger Underlying Community Dynamics

The conflict about worship styles provides a crucial window on to or a snapshot of underlying community dynamics, specifically:

- membership (who's "in", who's "out"?)
- power (who's in charge?)
- gender

A View of Conflict

- Conflict Transformation holds that conflict is a normal and essential part of human relationship. Without conflict, there is no change or growth.
- Our goal in embracing a restorative way of thinking and being is not to eliminate or “manage” conflict but rather to use conflicts as opportunities for growth for all involved.

A Way of Thinking and Being

- Restorative Practice is a way of thinking and being, while Conflict Transformation is an essential energy that drives it.
- With Restorative Practice, we seek deeper relationships in community, where our behaviours are explicit and where we make explicit choices about how we will structure our community, including membership, power and gender dynamics.

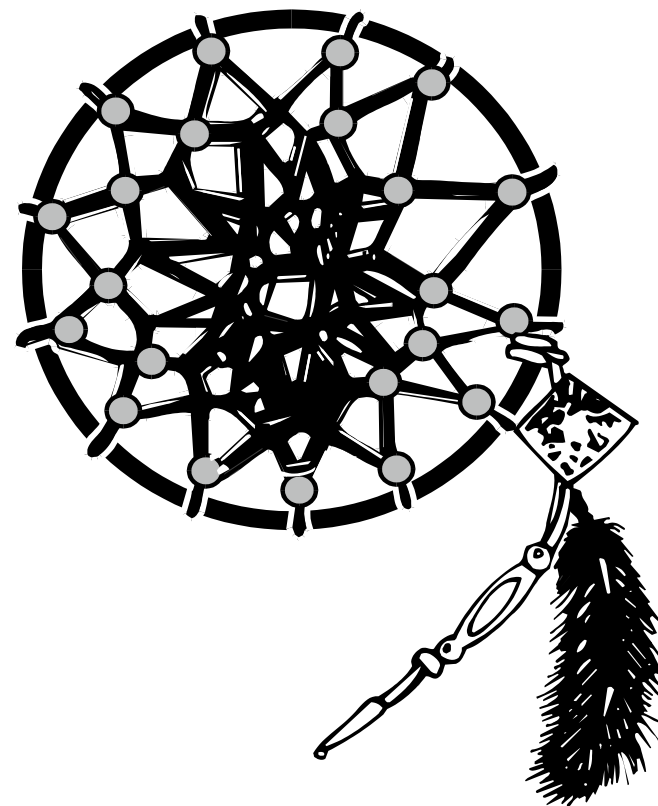
Theological/Multifaith Context: The Roots Of Restorative Practice

Restorative Justice resonates with the beliefs and practices of many faith communities, including Christian, where values such as reconciliation, healing, forgiveness and fostering peace are esteemed



The Roots of Restorative Practice

The roots of restorative practice can be traced back to Aboriginal Peoples of North America , the Maori of New Zealand, and peoples of Japan and Africa



The Roots of Restorative Practice

Restorative Justice Is Grounded In The Belief:

- That each and every person has God-given worth
- That no one is disposable
- That human conflict and harm can be most effectively addressed by attending to the healing of all those persons affected



Restorative Practice and Scripture

- The concept of “Shalom” from the Old Testament (a way of peace and justice – a way of being) is closely akin to restorative justice – (“not simply peace but right relationships” and “justice is always and thoroughly relational”)
- God is just and seeks justice for all as seen in Psalms 11:7, 33:4; Isaiah 61:8; Jeremiah 9:24
- The faithful are called to the restoration of community and the establishment of justice (Isaiah 42:1-7)

Restorative Practice and Scripture

- Matthew 18: 15-16 reflects a restorative process, depending what lens we use
- How did Jesus deal with the woman caught in adultery? (John 8:1-11)
- In 2 Corinthians 5: 18 Paul strongly reminds Christians that ours is a ministry of reconciliation : “All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation”

Restorative Practice and School Practice

- Restorative Practice as an approach to put Catholic virtues and beliefs into daily practice in school communities
- A practical expression of the three major virtues of Faith, Hope and Love
- A powerful way to make a positive difference for good in society



Catholic Graduate Expectations and Restorative Practice

- A Discerning Believer Formed in the Catholic Faith Community Who:
 - Develops attitudes and values founded on Catholic social teaching
- An Effective Communicator Who:
 - Listens actively and critically in the light of gospel values
- A Reflective, Creative and Holistic Thinker Who:
 - Recognizes the power of Grace and the place of hope and gospel values in facing challenges and decision making



Catholic Graduate Expectations and Restorative Practice

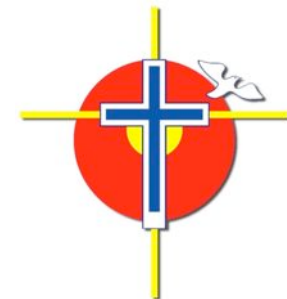
- A Self-Directed, Responsible, Lifelong Learner Who:
 - Demonstrates a confident and positive sense of self and respect for the dignity and welfare of others
- A Caring Family Member Who:
 - Relates and ministers to family members and others in a loving, compassionate and respectful manner
- A Responsible Citizen Who:
 - Accepts accountability for one's own actions, seeking and granting forgiveness



Restorative Practice and Catholic School Communities

“If we are accepted with our limitations as well as our abilities, community gradually becomes a place of liberation. Discovering that we are accepted and loved by others, we are better able to accept and love ourselves. So community is the place where we can be ourselves without fear or constraint.”

Jean Vanier, Community and Growth



Projects

- The Hosting Project
- Faith CARE
(Communities Affirming Restorative Experiences)

The Hosting Project

- With the Hosting Project, faith communities act as “hosts” of the restorative circle processes that occur in a local community.
- Faith communities provide space, refreshments and trained volunteers to act as the “arms and legs” of the facilitator and provide support.
- Hosting connects with deep themes of “sanctuary” that are part of each major religion

The Hosting Project

- Efforts are underway in Orillia, the Durham Region and Kitchener/Waterloo. (The concept was successfully piloted in Cobourg and Renfrew, Ontario.)
- Faith communities recruited include Christian (numerous denominations), Muslim and Sikh.
- The first “hosted” conference will likely take place in Kitchener/Waterloo in early 2009.
- The project is co-sponsored by Salem, IIRP Canada and Ontario Multifaith Services and Supports

Faith CARE

The goal of Faith CARE is to assist congregations to become restorative communities.

There are two points of entry:

- Churches which make a decision to become a restorative congregation
- Churches which are experiencing significant conflict and wish to transform it restoratively

Faith CARE

- In August, 2007, 13 restorative justice practitioners and denominational leaders met for a retreat to explore the use of restorative practices in faith community settings.
- We were led by David Brubaker of Eastern Mennonite University, who uses Conflict Transformation with churches in the U.S.
- 6 church denominations were represented
- A Steering Group was then formed to operationalize a service for congregations.

Faith CARE

When responding to church conflicts, key elements of practice include:

- Working towards the church developing a restorative culture
- While developing restorative circle processes, also using a conflict transformation lens, so that structural or systemic issues are worked explicitly on the table from the outset
- Responding in pairs (one male, one female)
- One pair member belongs to the denomination in question, the other does not

Faith CARE

- Since August, 2007, we have worked in four churches from 3 denominations, and have had inquiries from several others.
- The service will be launched early in 2009.

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*How does Restorative Practice
apply to your understanding of
what faith communities are
about?*

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