

# Restorative Practice Handbook

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# RESTORATIVE PRACTICE

## What is Restorative Practice?

Restorative Practice is the framework of practice being embedded in Dudley Children's Services. It is a strength-based approach that embodies a set of values, principles, and a way of thinking and *being* with people. The focus is upon building relationships, maintaining relationships, and repairing relationships when something has gone wrong. Stories are told, who has been affected is explored, and what people need to repair harm and to move on.

A restorative approach provides a way to bring together the people affected, to address harm, and to afford them the opportunity to take responsibility and make things better. A range of techniques can be used, such as Affective Statements and Circles, to support families to find their own solutions to difficulties, and to build resilience and problem-solving skills. A high support, high challenge model is used to create a shared language and a common approach to working with families. It's about doing things *with* people, rather than *to* or *for* them.

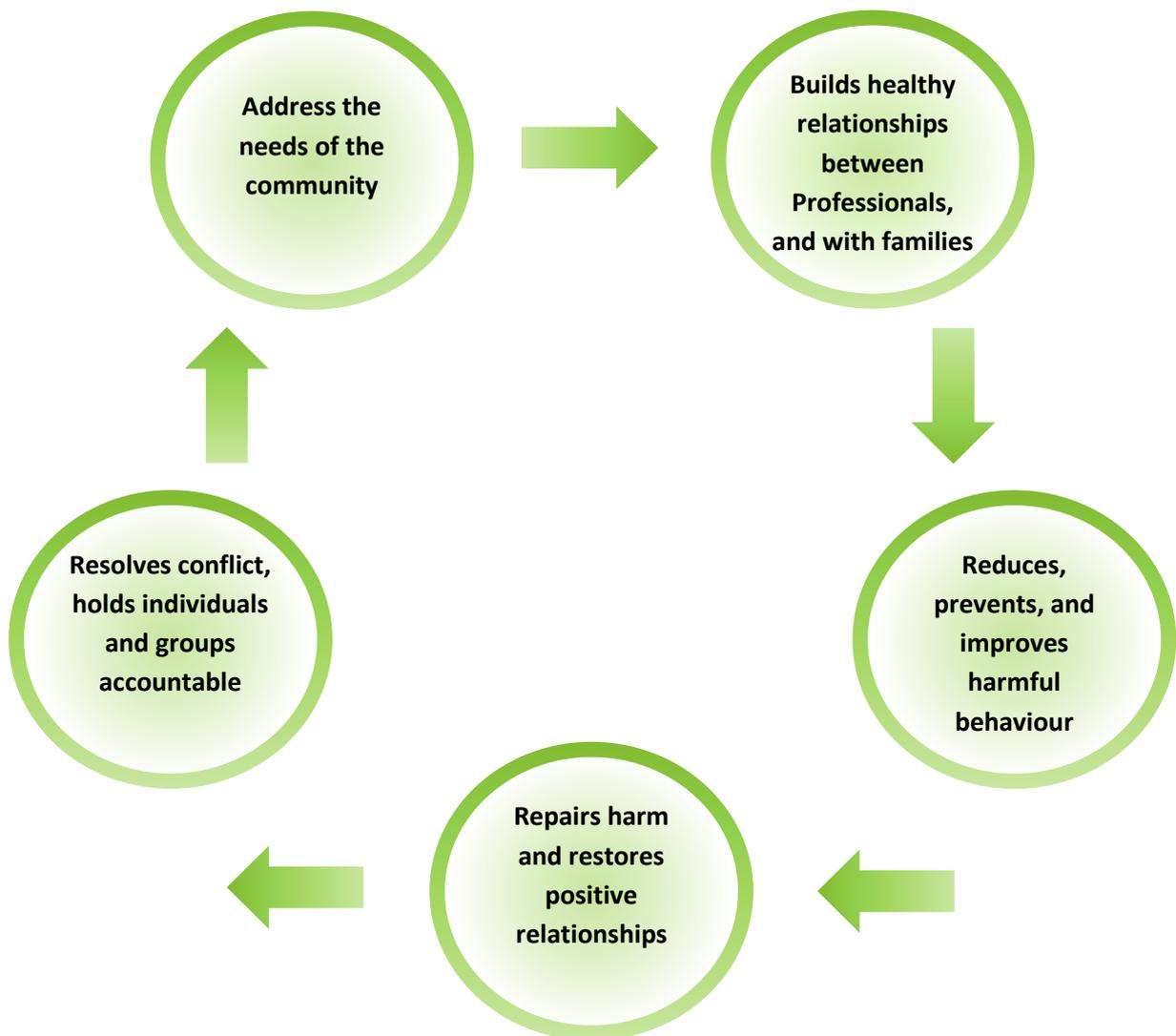
## What are the principles of restorative practice?

- **Values** - The values underpinning restorative practice are respect, responsibility, and relationships. These values are integral to delivering effective social work practice. It's not *what* you do, it's *how* you do it.
- **Relationships** – It's all about relationships. Building relationships, maintaining relationships, and repairing relationships when something has gone wrong.
- **High Support, High Challenge** – Doing *with* people rather than *to* or *for* them. The 'with' mind-set is reflective, patient, solution-focused, challenging, and supportive.
- **Circles** – Bringing people together in a way where everybody is respected, has a chance to talk without interruption, and an opportunity to be heard. This is about sharing power, trust, and inclusivity.
- **Relational Language** – Using language that is inclusive, emotionally intelligent, and focused on the issue rather than the person. Questions are engaging and

solution-focused. *What happened? Who has been affected by this? What needs to happen now?*

- **Affective Statements** – Making statements that separate the behaviour from the person. This is about expressing your feelings and the impact, and stating what you feel *needs* to happen to move on, rather than what you *want* to happen. Clear requests are made, not demands.

### Restorative practices can...



# Timeline

*Express it, feel it, move on...*



**Story Telling**

**Impact**

**Solution Focus**



**What happened next?**

**How were you feeling?**

**At that point, what  
were you thinking /  
feeling?**

**What has brought us  
here today?**

**Tell us the issues that  
have brought us here  
today?**

**What were your  
thoughts at the time?**



**What were you  
thinking?**

**Tell us more  
about....**

**What do you think  
about it now?**

**What was happening before?**

**And then?**

**When that happened,  
what happened next?**

**What was in your  
head?**

**What else?**





**Who has  
been affected  
by this?**

**Anyone else?**

**How have you been  
affected?**

**Tell us more about...**

**Who else has been  
affected?**

**How have they been  
affected?**

**How have others  
been affected?**

**Anything else to  
add?**

**How do you feel  
now?**

**What has been the  
hardest thing for  
you?**

**Was anyone else  
involved?**

**Has anyone else been  
affected by this?**





**What else needs to happen?**

**Tell us more about...**

**What do you think about what has been suggested?**

**How does that leave you feeling?**

**Anything else to add?**

**Are you okay with that?**

**Do you all agree with that?**

**When will it be done?**

**When will it be done?**

**What would that look like?**

**If you can't do that, what can you do?**

**What will help you to move on from this?**

**What do you need to move on from this?**

**What do you look like when it's done?**



# My Timeline



# Affective Statements

## Principles

Separate the person from the behaviour.

Express your feelings and the reason for them.

State what you feel *needs* to happen to move on, rather than what you *want* to happen.

State the request clearly.

### Behaviour

“When I see...” , “When you...”

### Impact

“I feel...” , “It leaves me feeling...”

### Need

“What I need is...” , “My need is for...”

### Request

“Would you be prepared to...” , “Would you consider...”

# Restorative Questions

**What happened?**

**What were you thinking about at the time?**

**Who has been affected by this?**

**What have your thoughts been since?**

**What do you think needs to happen next?**

**In what way have you been affected?**

# CIRCLES

Circles can be inclusive, and can help to build trust and equality within a group. They allow for reflection to generate ideas and solutions to problems. They can also help develop positive relationships and good problem-solving skills.

## Who can circles work with and how?

### With families:

- General discussions.
- Discussions about a core issue / problem.
- Child Protection Case Conferences.
- Core Group Meetings.
- Child in Need Meetings.
- Family Group Conferences.
- Early Help Meetings.
- Team Around the Family Meetings.

### With professionals:

- Team Meetings.
- Problem-solving / case work.
- Reflective practice meetings.

- Staff issues.
- Discussing performance data.
- Allocations.

### How Can Circles Be Set Up?

- It is recommended that participants sit on chairs for the circle. This helps to keep the shape, allowing everyone to be able to see each other easily.
- Establish the 'group norms' at the first session. The first group activity should be around identifying how the group are to work together, what they expect from each other, and how they should relate to each other when working this way. This builds ownership, responsibility, and allows them to challenge each other and you.

### Types of Circles

- **Sequential** – *Specific question, done in order, participation expected.*
- **Non Sequential** – *Can be loosely structured, can have no order, participation voluntary.*
- **Problem Solving / Fishbowl** – *Sequential or non-sequential, empty chair, feedback.*
- **Restorative** – *Clear focus/issue, clear structure, clearly defined language.*
- **Family Group Conferences** – *Clear structure, private family time, entire family unit at one meeting, celebration.*
- **And others...**

# Problem Solving Circles

Create a small circle of chairs (**four chairs, including an empty chair**). This will be the **inner circle**. Then create a larger circle of chairs (**six or seven chairs**). This will be your **outer circle**. The person presenting the problem should sit in the inner circle. One person from the outer circle should be tasked to time each stage.

## Stage 1 – The Problem Stage

The practitioner presents the problem, without any interruption from the group.

**(4 minutes max)**

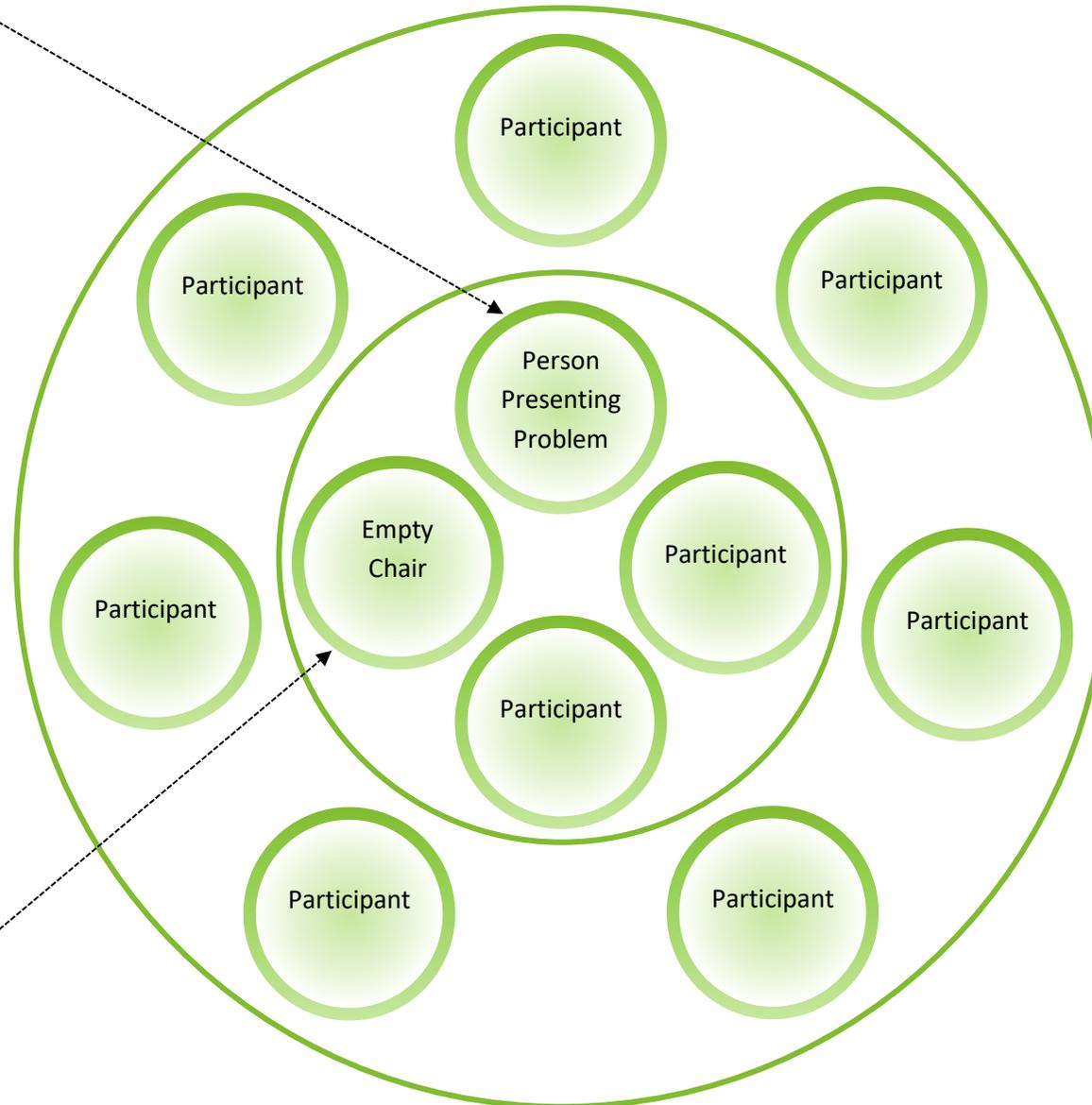
## Stage 2 – Clarification Questions Stage

The inner circle ask clarification questions i.e. *when does this happen, how often does it happen, who is involved...etc.*

If anybody in the outer circle wishes to ask a question, they should sit in the empty chair. After they have asked the question, they should then return to their seat so that others in the outer circle can use the empty seat for questions.

*At this stage, no solutions should be offered, and the practitioner should not be asked whether they have tried a solution before.*

**(4 minutes max)**



## Stage 3 – Solutions Stage

Those in the inner circle offer solutions. If anybody from the outer circles wishes to offer a solution, they should sit in the empty chair.

The practitioner with the problem should record a list of the solutions offered by their colleagues. They should not talk during this stage, they should only listen.

**(4 minutes max)**

## Stage 4 – Selection Stage

The practitioner with the problem will reflect and select the two or three suggestions they plan to action and use in the future.

These should be shared with the group.

**(3 minutes max)**

# Restorative Meetings

This crib sheet supports the facilitation of meetings, such as Team around the Family (TAF) Meetings, Child in Need Meetings, and Core Group Meetings.

Before starting the meeting, make sure the room and location is suitable and comfortable, and where possible set up the chairs in a circle. If possible, provide water or refreshments. Additionally, prepare what may need to be considered within the meeting. Consider the dynamics of the meeting and what people may need to know from you.



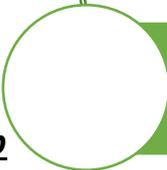
**INTRODUCTIONS** - Ensure everyone introduces themselves. You may wish to start with a **check-in question**.



**EXPECTATIONS AND GROUND RULES** - Set out what is going to happen in the meeting i.e. confidentiality, everyone will get a chance to talk, a plan will be developed together as a result of the meeting. Discuss and agree ground rules i.e. respect, not talking over each other. Set the **focus** of the meeting (purpose) and the **bottom lines** i.e. the non negotiables.



**STORY TELLING:** Start with story telling and direct questions for the family to talk first. **What has brought us here? What has been happening since we last met?** Then ask similar questions to others at the meeting.



**IMPACT:** Start with the family first. Explore the impact of what has happened using questions like, **how are you feeling? Who has been affected? What has been the hardest thing for you?** Then ask similar questions to others at the meeting.

Restorative Meeting Crib Sheet



**REFLECTION:** Check in with everyone. **Is there anything they want to add? Can everyone see the impact on the child? Are we all ready to change/move on/repair the harm?**



**AGREEMENT:** Ask the family, **what needs to happen now? What do you need to move on from this? What do you think about what has been suggested?** Focus on the **needs** and not the **wants**. If people are not happy with suggestions, negotiate what might be reasonable. Remember all actions need to be **SMART**.



**CLOSE THE MEETING:** Check in, **is everyone ok with the plan? Does everyone understand the plan, can they follow it? Do we need to meet again?** Book the TAF Meeting / CIN Review / Core Group)? If possible take a photograph of the plan and send it to everyone, or provide copies of the plan for people to walk away with.

# RESTORATIVE CONFERENCING

Names  
Expectations  
Focus

## Introduction

Questions  
Listening  
Perspectives

## Story Telling

Responsibility  
Ownership

## Reflection

*Do people realise the impact upon others?*

Clarity  
Tasks  
Outcomes

## Agreement

*Are people ready to move on?*

Review  
Evaluate  
Informal

## Summary and Close

*Do we need to meet again?*

What happened?

What were you thinking then?

What are you thinking now?

What were you feeling then?

What are you feeling now?

Who has been affected? How?

# Family Group Conference Service

## Family Group Conference



For more information call **01384 816155**  
or email: **[fgc.service@dudley.gov.uk](mailto:fgc.service@dudley.gov.uk)**



# Family Group Conferences

Family Group Conferences are an opportunity for family members and close friends, together with the child/ren, to get together and try and find a solution to a problem, or to find ways to support the family to keep the child/ren safe.

The following structure is used to facilitate the meeting...

- Rules and focus
- The strengths
- The worries
- What needs to happen next
- Private family time
- Family plan
- Review

# CHECK-IN QUESTIONS

Tell us the name of your favourite movie.

Tell us the name of the last movie you watched.

Tell us about one thing that made you smile during the weekend.

Tell us the last song you sung in the car.

If you could eat anything at all today for dinner, what would it be?

If you could go on holiday tomorrow, where would you go and who would you go with?

If you were stuck on a desert island, what are the three items you would need to have with you?

Tell us about one thing you enjoying doing in your spare time.

If you were a superhero, what would your super power be?

You were having a dinner party with any three people in the world, past or present, who would they be and why?

If you were an animal, what would you be and why?

If your best friend was here, what one word would they use to describe you?

What did you think you would grow up to be when you were a child?



Centre for Professional Practice

## What is Restorative Practice?

Restorative practice is about doing things *with* families, rather than to them or for them. The principles underpinning a restorative approach are:

- It focuses on building and repairing relationships
- In the process stories are told, motivations explained, and who has been affected is explored
- A plan is developed to support you and your family
- An opportunity to take responsibility for what has happened and what the family need to move on

A restorative approach provides a way to address harm that brings together the people affected and affords them the opportunity to make it better and in particular to make the child/ren safe.

## How are we doing it?

Restorative approaches are used for a range of meetings, both formal and informal. These are held in circles, rather than around tables, to remove physical and psychological barriers between people. Meetings may be facilitated by skilled staff to create an environment where those attending can share their thoughts and feelings in a way which is constructive. The focus of these meetings may be to build relationships, solve specific problems or repair harm where there has been conflict.

In Dudley we are using the restorative model for facilitating all Initial and Review Child Protection Conferences. We are also supporting Social Workers and Early Help Professionals to chair a range of meetings using restorative approaches.

The Child Protection Chair will be responsible for chairing Restorative Conferences and the Social Worker will be responsible for chairing subsequent Core Group or Child In Need Meetings. The Lead Professional chairs Early Help Meetings.

## What is a Restorative Meeting?

A Restorative Meeting will give everyone, starting with you and your family, the opportunity to participate by asking open-ended restorative questions. The meeting will be help in two phases:

- Story Telling phase: including what has happened and who has been affected?
- Agreement phase: What needs to happen next? Outline plan.

The aim is to understand what has happened from a range of perspectives, explore feelings, and to develop a plan in conjunction *with* you and your family. The Chair aims to provide a safe environment for you and others in your family to be able to have this conversation openly and honestly in the knowledge you will not be blamed or shamed for what has happened.

In addition the Chair will ensure that your emotional and physical needs are catered for, and you have the time and space to reach agreements. The meeting is written up and agreed actions are shared by the Chair, who checks that you have the capacity and ability to carry them out.

**Preparation** —the Social Worker is responsible for ensuring you understand what to expect in a Restorative Meeting. The Social Worker will also share the assessment and Conference Report with you before the Restorative Conference. By explaining the process and preparing those involved to come together and participate in the conference it is envisaged you will be able to fully participate in your meeting.

## What is a Restorative Plan?

A Restorative Plan will list the outcomes you want to achieve and the list of actions - who will do what, when - to achieve them. It is really important that your Restorative Plan is written in the language you use and understand so that you are clear about what needs to happen to move on.

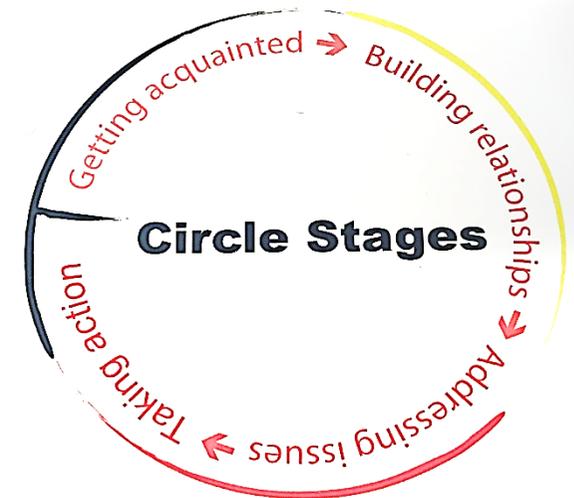
A Restorative Child Protection Plan will only include actions that address the harm identified. If the actions listed are more about promoting a child's wellbeing, the plan agreed should be a Restorative Child in Need Plan. A Child Protection Plan can be 'stepped down' to a Child in Need Plan at a Restorative Review Child Protection Conference (RCPC) once the actions to address the harm have been completed and things are better for you and your family.

## What is a Core Group?

The Core Group is a group of people (family members and professionals) you identify as able to help you to make things better and keep your child/ren safe. This Core Group will meet at a minimum of every 6 weeks to talk about the plan - how it is working for you, how well you and your family are progressing, and whether the child/ren are safe. It is important that you attend Core Group Meetings.

The progress you and your family make will be reported back to the Restorative RCPC. The professionals in the Core Group will be expected to work with you and other professionals to provide high support and high challenge for the benefit of your child/ren.

***“Circles bring us together to share who we are beyond our appearances. They’re places of listening – of hearing what it’s like to be someone else. They’re also places for being heard – for expressing what’s on our minds and hearts and having others receive it deeply.”***



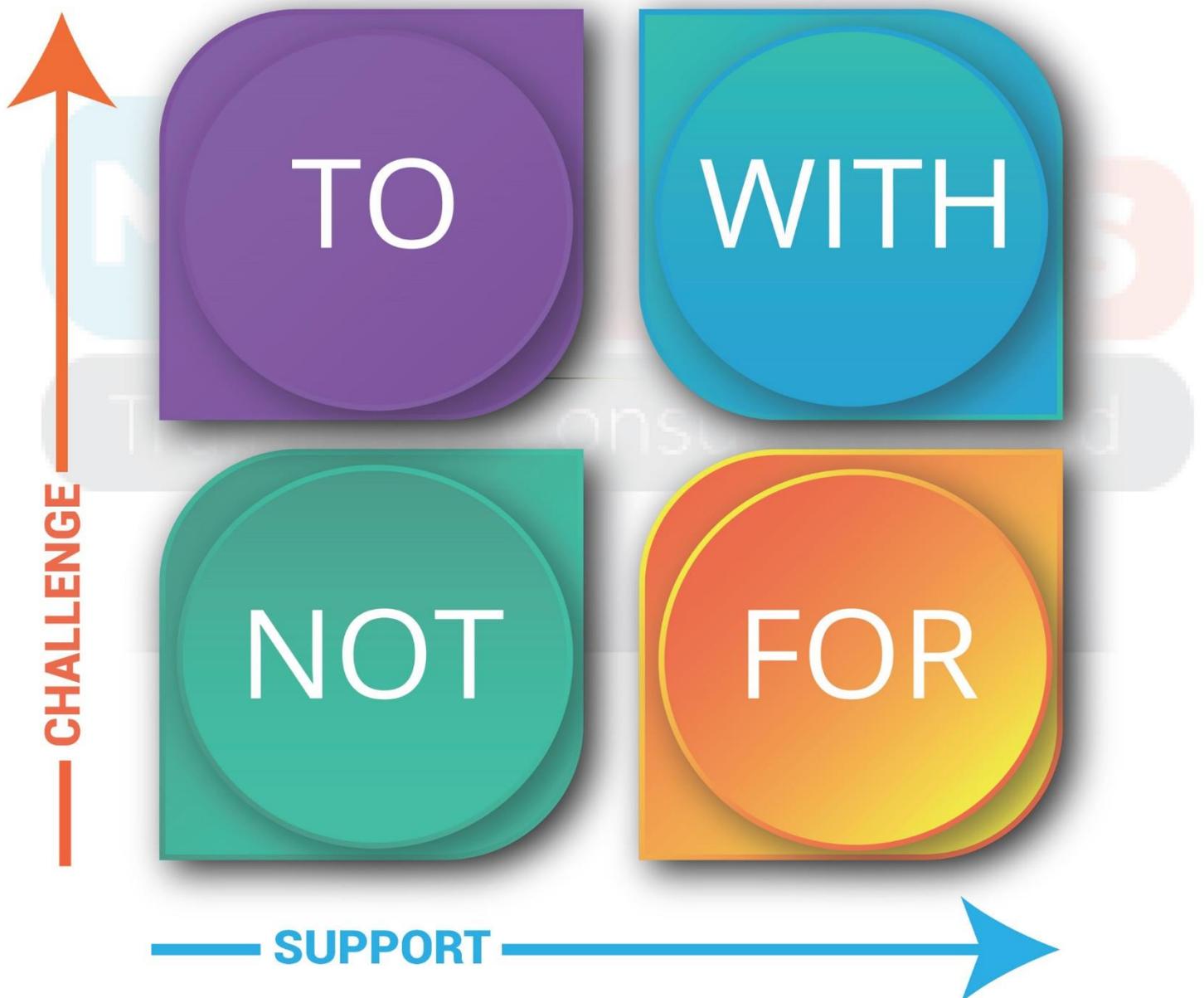
**(Pranis, Stuart and Wedge, Peacemaking Circles: From Crime to Community, 2003)**

# Restorative Practice

## FOUR WAYS...

The underlying premise of Restorative Practices rests with the belief that people will make positive changes when those in positions of authority do things **WITH** them rather than **TO** them or **FOR** them.

According to the Social Discipline Window, a restorative approach requires a balance of high levels of **CHALLENGE** (We mean things like setting limits, boundaries, expectations, clear bottom line and consequences) with high levels of **SUPPORT** (We mean things like encouragement, nurture, compassion, empathy and listening)



High Challenge and Low Support = Punitive/authoritarian = Doing things **TO** people  
Low Challenge and Low Support = Neglectful/not interpreted = **NOT** doing much of anything  
High Support and Low Challenge = Permissive/rescue/makes excuses = Doing things **FOR** people  
High Support and High Challenge = Restorative/Authoritative/Relational = Doing things **WITH** people



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