

Engaging in Difficult Conversations through a Restorative Justice Lens

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Today's AGENDA

1. Brief introduction to restorative justice
2. Identifying situations where restorative justice might be appropriate
3. Engaging in difficult conversations from a restorative justice mindset
4. Practice engaging in restorative dialogue for problem solving through a case study presentation

**Share something that made
you laugh recently.**

Today's presentation is not a restorative justice training

Our goal is to learn how restorative justice can help repair harms that have been done in our community

Engaging in Challenging Dialogue is Good for Us

- Diverse teams are more **productive, perform better** and are more **innovative and creative** in their approach (AlShebli et al., 2018; Freeman, & Huang, 2014; Nielson et al., 2018; Page et al., 2017).
- We **work harder, prepare more thoroughly**, and encounter **more opportunities to challenge our assumptions** when we work with people who have a different background and lived experiences than us (Powell, 2018).
- Facing differing opinions forces us to **make sound, well-articulated** points.
- Diverse groups published **higher numbers of articles**, and these receive **more citations** per article (Adams, 2013; Powell, 2018).

Reaping the Benefits of Diversity in a Learning Environment

To get the benefits of a diverse learning environment, groups need to be managed well

We must be prepared to deal with some challenges

The biggest challenges:

- We need to engage in **trust building**
- We must learn to engage in **perspective taking**
- We must be willing to **engage in difficult dialogue**



The image features a quote by Frank A. Clark centered within a white rectangular border. The background is a soft-focus photograph of green plants, possibly a garden or field, with sunlight filtering through the leaves, creating a bokeh effect. The text is in a white, all-caps, sans-serif font.

*“WE FIND COMFORT AMONGST
THOSE WHO AGREE WITH US, AND
GROWTH AMONGST THOSE WHO
DON’T.”*

– FRANK A. CLARK

At its core, restorative justice is about relationships, how you create them, maintain them, and mend them. It is based on the philosophy that we are all interconnected, that we live in relationship with one another, and that our actions impact each other...Wrongdoing is seen as a damaged relationship, a wound in the community, a tear in the web of relationships. Because we are all interconnected, a wrongdoing ripples out to disrupt the whole web—a harm to one is a harm to all.

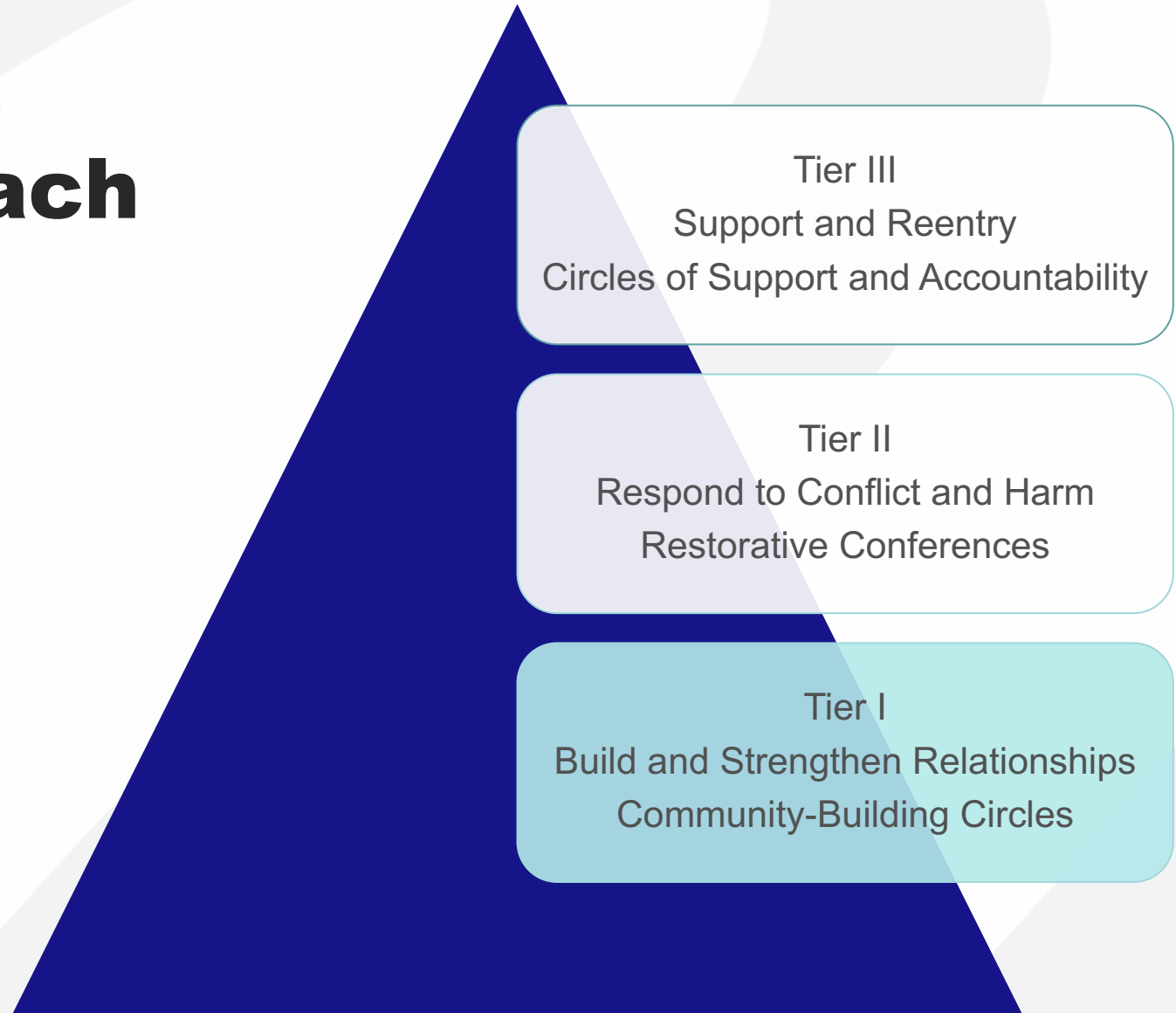
- Impact Justice



Restorative Justice Approach



Restorative Justice Approach



Opportunities for Tier 1 Dialogue: Community Building

Qualitative data from residents supports the importance of relationship building

Theme: Creating opportunities to be our authentic selves

“Sometimes I actually find it difficult with the attendings. Because I feel like my personality is so not safe for work, like my sense of humor and then talking to them. I just don't know what, how to be professional, but still be myself. But I feel like with the residents, it's way easier obviously.”

“Yeah, like Dr.____, he actually like remember every detail and like really gets to know you as a person. You feel like you can tell him anything.”

“Yeah, at least once a week, she'll ask me like, how's the wedding planning coming? You know, like on a personal level. And like, she knows, like my fiancée's name and stuff like that.”

Community Building Circles

- Restorative justice circles are born out of indigenous societies around the world.
- Circles tap into our communal nature, and our desire to be in positive relationships with one another.
- No one is seen as dispensable, and everyone is valued for their knowledge and unique gifts.
- Circles build empathy and accountability between individuals and the larger community.



RJ Questions by Tier

Tier I

Who are we?
What are our stories?
What are our core values?
What is important to us?
What kind of community do we want to be?
How do we want to treat each other?
How will we all contribute?

Tier II

What happened?
Who has been impacted? In what way?
What are the harms to be addressed?
What needs do we have?
What will make things right?
How do we rebuild relationships?
How do we address this in a restorative way?

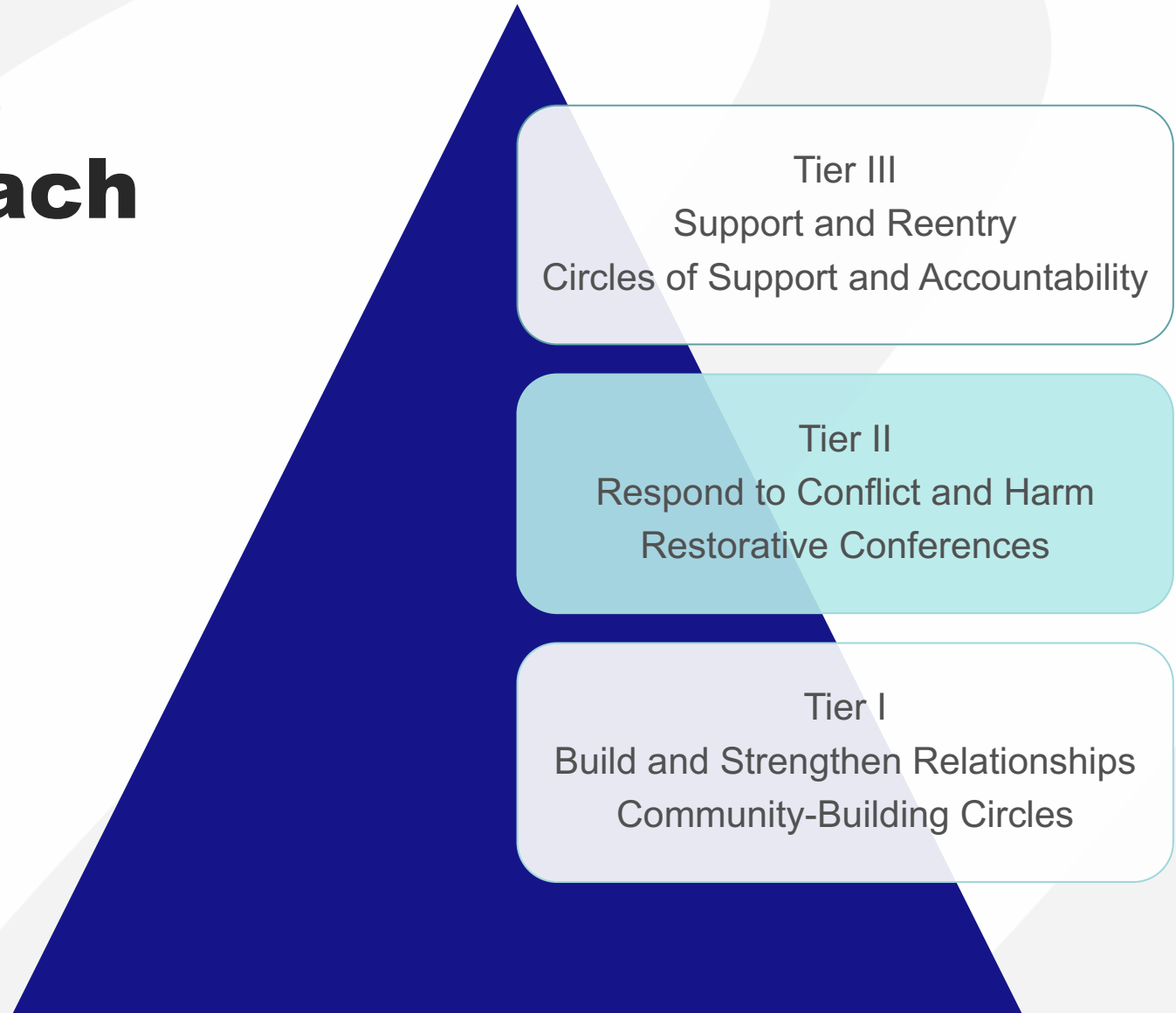
Tier III

How do we support this individual?
How do we support harmed parties?
Has the individual taken responsibility?
How do we prevent recurrence?
How will we welcome this person back? Who can support?
What resources do we need for successful reintegration?

Other Connecting Tier 1 Questions

- Share something that is giving you hope right now
- Share something that made you laugh recently
- Share something that brought you joy recently
- Give a weather report that reflects your mood today.
- What might you need to put aside to help you be present today?
- What's been on your mind lately?
- If your mood was a painting, how might you describe it?
- If you could have any superpower, what would it be and why?
- Who is someone you admire and why?
- What do you do to release stress?
- How would your best friend describe you?

Restorative Justice Approach



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Tier 2 Restorative Justice Process

1. Preconference

- Referral
- Outreach
- Assessment
- Preparation

2. Conference

- What happened?
- What was the harm?
- How can we repair and rebuild trust?

3. Post-Conference

- Mentoring
- Agreement monitoring
- Assessment

Restorative Dialogue Guiding Questions

The person who created the conflict:

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

Those who have been affected:

- What did you think when you realized 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?

Case Example

Throughout several class sessions, a group facilitator continuously mixed-up students' names, used the wrong gender pronouns, and called on students of color to share on the "minority experience." Students expressed concern and the opportunity to engage in a restorative justice conversation was offered.

Both students and the facilitator agreed to participate in the restorative conversation.

Tier 2 Restorative Justice Process

1. Preconference

- Referral: Students reached out
- Outreach: We reached out to instructor
- Assessment: Interviews with both parties
- Preparation: Facilitators prepared agenda

2. Conference

- What happened?
- What was the harm?
- How can we repair and rebuild trust?

3. Post-Conference

- Mentoring: Coaching for instructor
- Agreement monitoring
- Assessment

Opportunities for Tier 2 Dialogue: Engaging in Difficult Conversations

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**Think about a time when you
may have said or done
something that may have caused
harm.**

**Think about a time when you
were harmed.**

You have just completed rounds this morning. Dr. Johnson is debriefing with the team and asks if there are any questions. No one speaks. After a long silence, Riley decides to ask a question. Dr. Johnson is stunned by Riley's question and says, "How do you not know the answer to that question?!" "Do you really think you have what it takes to be a Doctor?" Riley gets nervous and begins to tear up. Dr. Johnson responds to Riley's reaction by saying, "If you are serious about becoming a Doctor, you are going to have to toughen up!"

Apology Guidelines

What happened

- Description detailing the harm

My role

- Acknowledgement of responsibility

How I feel

- Expression of remorse

What I won't do

- Commitment to preventing reoffending

What I will do

- Commitment to make amends for the harm caused

“ Sometimes we’re fractured by choices we make; sometimes we’re shattered by things we would never have chosen. But our brokenness is also the source of our common humanity, the basis for our shared search for comfort, meaning, and healing. Our shared vulnerability and imperfections nurtures and sustains our capacity for compassion.

- Bryan Stevenson