BUILD THE HOUSE

OBJECTIVE

Students will understand how unmet needs often lead to harmful behavior and also how harmful behavior creates needs. Students will be introduced to the Te Whare Tapa Whā framework for understanding human needs.

MATERIALS

Four copies of a statement from a responsible party and the four walls of the Te Whare Tapa Whā model that fit together to make a house that can be constructed at the end of the activity. These should be printed on cardstock.

INSTRUCTIONS

Introduce the activity by reminding students that restorative justice looks at incidents of harm through a different lens than the conventional criminal justice system. One important element the restorative justice process seeks to uncover is: what are the needs that participants have? These could be unmet needs that led to the negative behavior or needs that are a result of the harm caused.

Often, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs is employed as a tool for understanding these basic human needs, but the Te Whare Tapa Whā model provides an even more relevant framework for restorative practices.

Te Whare Tapa Whā is a Māori framework for understanding health and well-being. Te Whare Tapa Whā portrays four dimensions of well-being as four walls, or sides, of a house. If one of the dimensions is missing or damaged, the entire structure (representing the person) will become unbalanced or unwell.

The four dimensions are:

Taha wairua   Spiritual well-being
Taha tinana.   Physical well-being
Taha whanau.   Social well-being
Taha hinengaro   Mental and emotional well-being

These aspects of an individual's health are deeply interconnected. For example, when someone's mental health is irregular or unbalanced, their physical, spiritual and social health also all suffer. This is important for us to understand because, ultimately, restorative processes are concerned with achieving well-being.

Once students have been introduced to the Te Whare Tapa Whā concept, divide them into four teams. Assign each team one wall of the Te Whare Tapa Whā model and give them the printout (preferably on cardstock or heavyweight paper) of that wall. Next, read an example statement from a responsible party (something you might hear during a pre-conference meeting) to the whole group.

> Example statement: "It's just not fair. I only stole the clothing because I had an interview coming up and nothing to wear. I'm sick of working at that fast food joint. I can't support my family on that money, and I just can't stand it there. Every day is the same. The interview was for a marketing role. I've always thought I would be great at that! Then I could feel like I'm actually doing something. Now I have this court date, and this is hanging over me and my family. Forget about the new job. There is no way they will trust a thief."

Give a written copy of the statement to each of the four groups so they can revisit it during the exercise. Then, give the teams ten minutes to talk through the issue and identify all the needs related to their side of the house that may be involved in the scenario. These could be needs that led to the behavior or needs that now exist as a result of the behavior. Instruct the groups to write the needs they identify directly on their wall.

After ten minutes, have each group share their list of needs with the larger group. After each group has spoken, ask one person from each group to come to the middle of the circle with their wall so that they can build the house together. The activity will end with a collaboratively constructed four-walled house in the middle of the circle with the wide range of needs relevant to the scenario written on all sides.
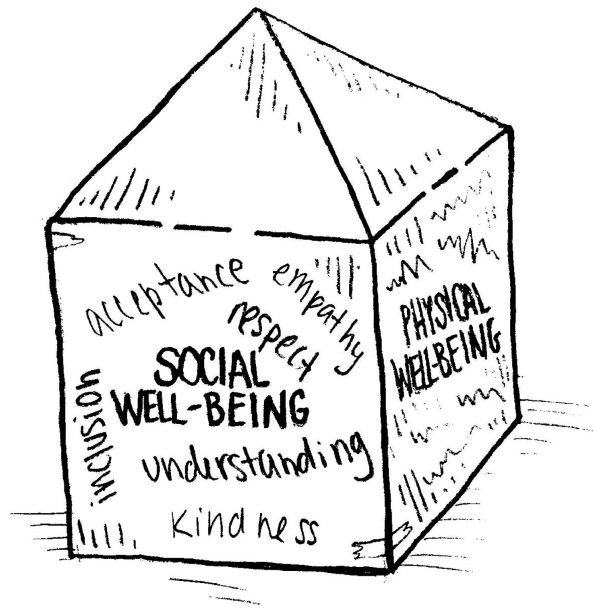
DEBRIEF

Are there any needs that surprised you? What additional understanding did you gain from looking at the needs in these different categories? How is the Te Whare Tapa Whā model relevant in restorative justice? Now, seeing all these needs, what ideas do you have about what could happen next?

LESSON

When we understand the needs that led to a behavior and the needs that have arisen from the harm caused, we are more able to facilitate a process that fully repairs harm and ensures that the behavior is not repeated. Having a model like Te Whare Tapa Whā can help us to understand the range of human needs involved and to explore those components with learners.

Taha Tinana

Physical Health

What are the physical needs?

Taha Wairua

Spiritual Health

What are the spiritual needs?

Taha Whānau

Social Health

What are the social needs?

Taha Hinengaro

Mental Health

What are the mental health needs?