

# RACE TO REFRAME

RestorativeTeachingTools.com

## OBJECTIVE

Students will learn and practice the important facilitation skill of reframing.

## MATERIALS

A picture frame (a real one is best, but a frame cut out of paper will work) that is large enough to frame someone's head and a list of statements to reframe.

*Optional:* Notepads and pens.

*Note:* This game is easier to lead with a co-facilitator. One facilitator leads the game, and the other acts as the "judge."

## INSTRUCTIONS

You may need to begin by offering a review of the skill of reframing. A "reframe" is a modified reflective statement in which the facilitator restates what has just been said by one party in a way that can be received by the other party without them becoming defensive or reactive. This may involve replacing destructive words and phrasing with constructive words and phrasing or identifying underlying needs. Commonly identified needs are those involving basic survival (food, water, shelter, clothing, etc.) and psychological needs (safety/security, love/belonging, friendship/family, being respected/self-respect, etc.). Reframing is done with a spirit of curiosity and respect, leaving room for the speaker to affirm or clarify.

### **Example:**

Speaker: "I can't stand my teacher. She never pays attention to what other people think."

Facilitator: "It sounds like you don't feel heard."

Divide students into 2-4 teams depending on group size), and instruct the teams to line up by the wall on one side of the room. Give the teams a few minutes to pick team names (just for fun) and record them on a whiteboard or large paper where you will keep score. The facilitator stands by a frame (real or made of paper) large enough to frame someone's head, which is located about 6 meters away from the teams. The other trainer is the "judge" and stands by the white board. The facilitator reads aloud one statement in need of reframing. It may be helpful to have a team scribe jot down the sentence that needs to be reframed, or you can provide the sentence on a poster or screen for a visual aid. Students discuss the statement with their teams and create an appropriate reframe sentence. As soon as a team has agreed on a reframe sentence, a representative from that team will "race" to put their head in the frame, then share their reframe response out loud. The first team to have a representative reach the frame will be the first team to share their response. Other team representatives can race to the frame and form a line to be the next to speak.

The judge will either approve or deny the reframe attempt. If it is approved, the team will be awarded 4 points for the round. If it is denied, the team representative will return to their team to rework the reframe sentence. The next team representative to reach the frame will be given an opportunity to share their reframe.

- The first team to share an approved reframe receives 4 points
- The second team to share an approved reframe receives 3 points
- The third team to share an approved reframe receives 2 points
- The fourth team to share an approved reframe receives 1 point

The game repeats for a total of four rounds, with four different statements in need of a reframe being read to the group.

### Example Statements in Need of Reframing:

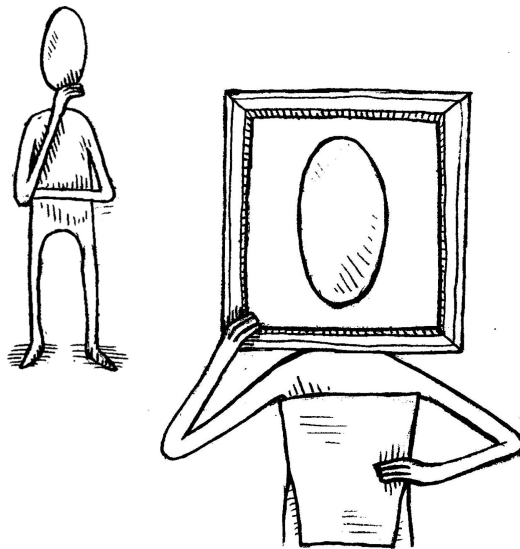
Statement 1: "I'm so tired of getting in trouble. I'm always getting blamed for things."

Statement 2: "Now she is a thief. I can't trust her in the house anymore."

Statement 3: "I see these punks in the street at night, and I can't even leave the house."

Statement 4: "She has been treating me like sh\*\* all year. She had it coming."

After the final round, points are tallied, and the winning team is announced. This game should be modified depending on the group's skill level and context for working together. If your group of learners is ready for it, create a list of statements that start off pretty low-impact and increase in offensiveness. In this case, it is important to inform participants ahead of time that you have intentionally chosen statements that may be triggering. Remind participants that in a restorative process, such comments might require a facilitator not only to reframe, but also to revisit ground rules about respect and safety. Accomplishing this also asks individuals to become aware of their own triggers and use self-regulation techniques. Another possible modification is to add nuance to the judge's criteria. Was the reframe clearly delivered with a non-judgmental tone? In addition to replacing destructive words or sentiment, does the reframe identify an underlying need?



## DEBRIEF

What was challenging about reframing? What made it easier? What strategies did you use to think objectively about the reframe without getting too emotionally escalated or evaluative? Discuss reframe responses as a group. What was the impact of coming up with a reframe under time pressure? How did this activity relate to your role as a restorative practitioner?

## LESSON

Reframing is one of the most difficult and important skills for facilitators to master. Being able to reframe respectfully allows you to diffuse tense moments in a pre-conference or conference and move the parties towards mutual understanding and respect. Practice this skill in your own life by taking time to mentally identify the needs behind hurtful statements you hear.