

RETRIBUTIVE VS. RESTORATIVE SKITS

RestorativeTeachingTools.com

OBJECTIVE

Participants will be able to understand what differentiates the restorative approach from a retributive approach. Participants will internalize the impact of the three central restorative questions.

MATERIALS

You will need two written scenarios that are relevant to your group of learners (two copies of each scenario) and four pieces of paper, two of which say “restorative” and two of which say “retributive” in order to assign a task to each group.

Optional, but fun: Props and costumes that the teams can incorporate into their skits.

INSTRUCTIONS

Start by introducing the three basic retributive and restorative questions to the group.

Retributive Questions

What rule or law has been broken?
Who did it?
How should he/she be punished?

Restorative Questions

What happened?
Who was affected?
What can be done to repair the harm and make things right?

Next, divide the group into four equal-sized teams. Give two teams a copy of Scenario #1. Randomly (and secretly) assign which of those two teams gets “restorative” and which gets “retributive” by giving each team a piece of paper with “restorative” or “retributive” written on it.

Give the remaining two teams a copy of Scenario #2. Randomly (and secretly) assign which of those two teams gets “restorative” and which gets “retributive” by giving each team a piece of paper with “restorative” or “retributive” written on it.

Give all teams 15 minutes to design a skit in which they act out applying either the “retributive” or the “restorative” questions to their scenario (depending on what they were assigned) in a creative way.

After 15 minutes, have each team perform their skit for the group one at a time. Pause after each skit to applaud the actors and debrief.

Debrief after each skit: Was that retributive or restorative? What worked or didn’t work about the approach the characters in the skit took? If a restorative skit was not actually very restorative, ask what could have made it more restorative, and help guide the group to a shared understanding of what an effective restorative approach would look like.

DEBRIEF

What different outcomes did you notice from the retributive and restorative approaches? What were some commonalities between the two restorative skits (what are the essential components of a restorative approach)? When have you experienced each of these approaches in your life and what was it like?

LESSON

The restorative approach involves asking a fundamentally different set of questions than what we are used to seeing (in the justice system, schools, workplaces, etc.). These questions lead to a markedly different outcome and allow us to approach issues with a spirit of curiosity, prioritize relationships, and work towards repair.