

5 R STORIES

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OBJECTIVE

Participants will learn about the restorative approach to crime and conflict through engaging with the 5 Rs of restorative justice, a framework developed by Dr. Beverly Title.

MATERIALS

A set of five cards with the 5 Rs of Restorative Justice with one R per card (Relationship, Respect, Responsibility, Repair, and Reintegration).

A set of five cards with 5 punitive R words on them (Rage, Revenge, Retaliation, Ranting, Recklessness)

A story prompt.

INSTRUCTIONS

This activity involves collaborative storytelling. Start by establishing groups of 2-5 people. Each group will be a storytelling team.

Provide the storytelling teams with a prompt to start the story. The prompt should be a crime or conflict, but to maintain the silly and lighthearted nature of this game, select a crime or conflict scenario that isn't too egregious. See example scenarios below.

Note: This game invites creative silliness in exploring punitive directions in storytelling for the sake of contrast. Before playing, please consider whether or not your learners will be able to engage in a way that is playfully appropriate without getting outrageous or being offensive to others.

Example scenarios:

- Evan and Holly live in a townhouse in a large city in a row of identical townhouses. Holly purchased a large potted plant in a fundraiser for her niece's school, which they placed outside their front door. She is very fond of the plant. One day, they woke up and saw that the plant was missing. They were upset and confused. Two days later, on a walk in their neighborhood, they notice the same plant is sitting outside the front door of a neighbor's house a few blocks down the street from them. They know it is the same plant because it has Holly's niece's initials carved into the pot.
- Marcus, age 16, is about to leave for a 4-week trip to do volunteer service in Guatemala. He is excited, nervous, and very worried about what is going to happen with his new relationship with his girlfriend Ria while he's away. The night before his international flight, Marcus decides to sneak out to spend a little more time with Ria before he leaves. Marcus climbs out a small window in the basement of his house. He leaves a candle burning on the windowsill so he'll be able to find his way back inside more easily in the dark. When Marcus returns home at 4:30am, the candle is out and there is a note waiting for him in his Dad's handwriting: "We need to talk on our way to the airport. See you at 6am."

One person in the storytelling team will read the story prompt and then draw a card, face down. The card will have either one of the 5 restorative Rs or one of the 5 punitive Rs. They then continue the story, determining what happens next according to the R they drew from the pile. After they add a few sentences to the story, it becomes the next person's turn. Person 2 in the storytelling team draws another card and continues the story influenced by the R they drew.

The game continues with each storytelling team member drawing a card and adding to the story until either 1) all team members have had a turn or 2) continue until all R cards have been drawn (this option works well if you would like each team member to have multiple turns or if it is a small team).

Example:

Person 1 reads the story prompt.

- “Evan and Holly live in a townhouse in a large city in a row of identical townhouses. Holly purchased a large potted plant in a fundraiser for her niece’s school, which they placed outside their front door. She is very fond of the plant. One day, they woke up and saw that the plant was missing. They were upset and confused. Two days later, on a walk in their neighborhood, they notice the same plant is sitting outside the front door of a neighbor’s house a few blocks down the street from them. They know it is the same plant because it has Holly’s niece’s initials carved into the pot.”

Person 1 draws the “Respect” card and adds to the story.

- “Evan and Holly decide the best thing to do is to knock on the door and politely ask the person who answers why they have the potted plant and explain that it is theirs. They knock on the door.”

Person 2 draws the “Rage” card and adds to the story.

- “When a man answers the door, they are suddenly overcome by rage. ‘What the hell, man?’ Holly screams. ‘We are taking this back!’ she asserts as she delivers a swift kick to a gnome statue the neighbor had placed by the potted plant.”

Person 3 draws the “Revenge” card and adds to the story.

- “That night, Evan and Holly sneak back to the neighbor’s house and TP their tree.”

Person 4 draws the “Repair” card and adds to the story.

- “When they wake up in the morning, they feel bad about what they did and go back to the neighbor’s house to apologize. They explain how meaningful the potted plant was to them and the impact of having it suddenly disappear. They listen to the impacts the neighbor experienced when they screamed, kicked his favorite garden gnome, and TP’ed his tree.”

Person 5 draws the “Reintegration” card and adds to the story.

- “Evan and Holly decide to host a neighborhood BBQ in their front yard and invite the neighbor who had taken the potted plant to bring his famous potato salad.”

After the silly and comparative (restorative vs. punitive) collaborative storytelling process is complete (like the example outlined above), instruct the storytelling team to take just the 5 restorative R cards (Relationship, Respect, Responsibility, Repair, and Reintegration) and put them in a pile in that order with “Relationship” on the top.

Go through the collaborative storytelling process again, but this time with just the 5 restorative Rs and in this specific order: Relationship, Respect, Responsibility, Repair, and Reintegration. You will see how the 5 Rs build beautifully on each other to create a restorative process and outcome in the wake of crime and conflict!

DEBRIEF

How did introducing the restorative values through the 5 Rs influence the progression of the story? How is this activity of intentionally applying the 5 Rs relevant to your life?

LESSON

When we live by the 5 Rs, the way we approach conflict and harm and the outcomes of those approaches change dramatically!

Resources:

For more information on the 5 Rs framework, please see *Teaching Peace: A Restorative Justice Framework for Strengthening Relationships* by Beverly Title, 2011, and visit www.resolutionariesinc.com.