

## **Developing a Restorative IMP**

**This restorative process has been adapted from a “narrative” conferencing model, developed by the Counselling Department of Waikato University, NZ (see Restorative Practices for Schools: A Resource. School of Education, Waikato University, Hamilton NZ, 2003).**

**It might be a preferred approach to be used for chronic, low - medium level wrongdoing where the young person is not responding to usual efforts to manage his/her behaviour, and an Individual Management Plan is appropriate.**

**A key issue in deciding to use this process is the willingness of the young person to participate in a process of making amends and problem-solving, and is willing to take responsibility for the impact of his /her behaviour on others.**

### **Deciding who comes to the meeting**

**The most important task is to identify the community of care around the young person and those who might have a connection because of the problems, and those who might have a role in the future. Include those who have knowledge of the problem. If victims are included in this group, then they do so voluntarily.**

**Those who are invited to attend the meeting must be prepared for the process and its philosophy (repair not retribution). The meeting will take about 2 hours.**

### **Meeting room**

**The room will need to be private. Chairs are set up in a horseshoe facing a white board – make sure whiteboard pens are available.**

### **The meeting process**

**1.Facilitator explains the purpose of the meeting and outlines the guidelines of the process:**

- **Process is respectful and is about restoring respect – privacy of what is said in here is emphasised**
- **Not about deciding who is right or wrong or who is to blame**
- **We are here to talk about what has been happening, how people have been affected and how to solve the problem**
- **Everyone will have a chance to speak, and it is important that we don't interrupt them**
- **Introductions include the person's connection to the young person and the problem, and what their hopes for the meeting**

**Facilitator makes this following statement and perhaps writes it on the whiteboard**

*The person is not the problem; the problem is the problem*

The most senior person (principal, deputy, HOD, dean) is asked then to outline the problem(s)/incidents(s) that triggered the meeting and what is at stake (possible disciplinary action).

Eg

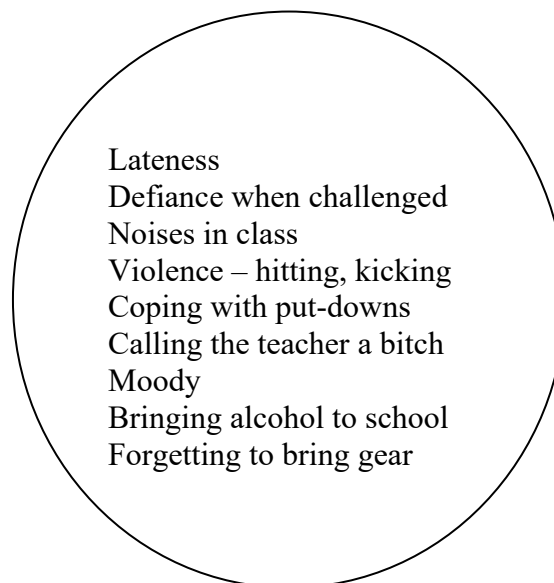
*What has brought here today?*

*Why is the school considering disciplinary action?*

*To the young person.....Is this a fair account of what has been happening?*

## **2. Naming the problem**

This phase of the meeting is designed to have participants NAME the problem to separate the problem from the young person. It helps if this process can be done on the whiteboard. Every person's idea about what the problem is, is written in the centre of a circle on the whiteboard. eg

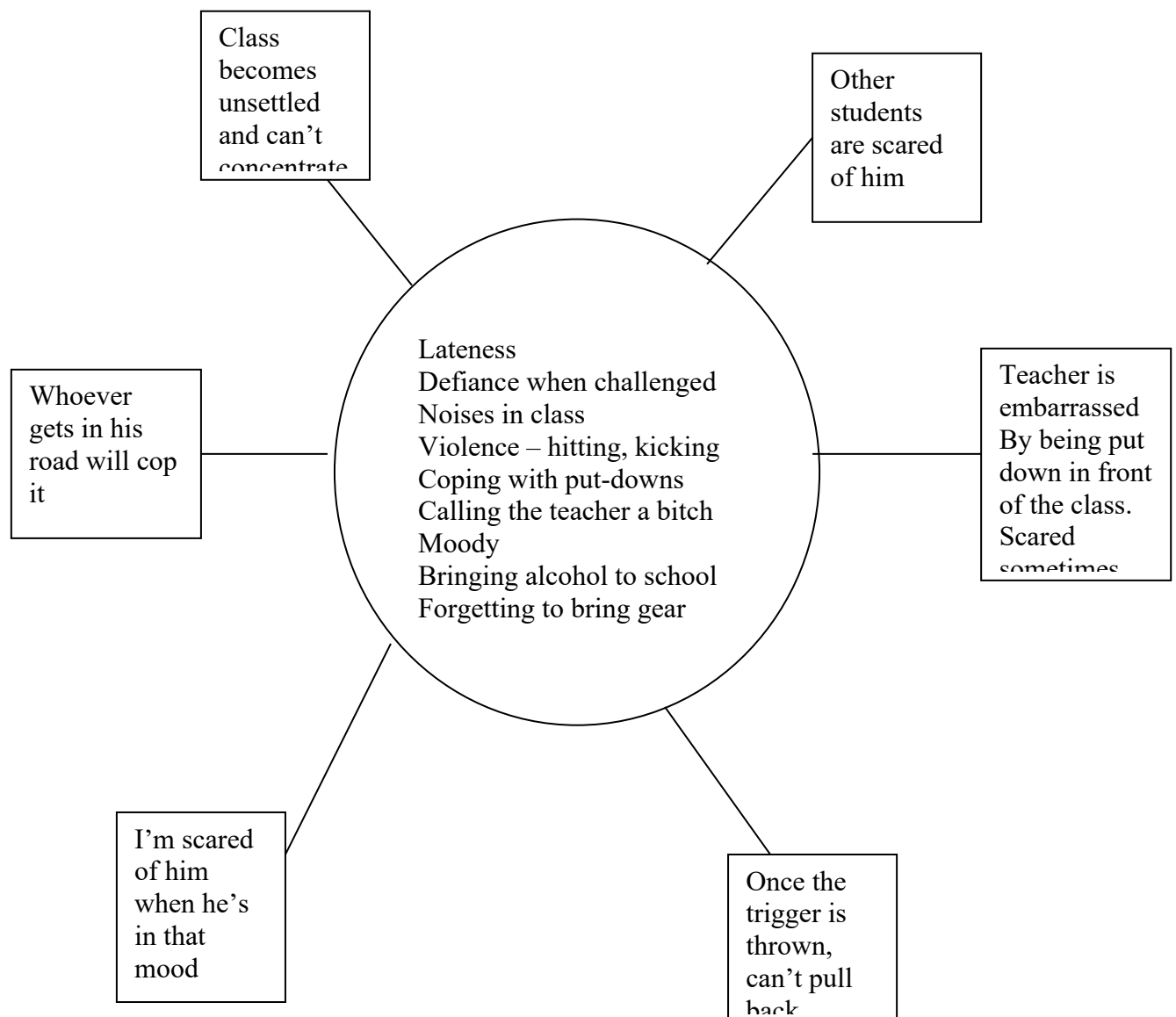


Stress that each person's perspective is different. Clarification might be needed to get the wording right. Take care that the behaviour is described, not something about character or personality. Avoid labels. Do not try to put these perspectives into a summary statement.

## **3. Mapping the effects of the problem**

This phase describes the impact of the problem on the people present( and perhaps those who aren't present) at the meeting. Each person is asked, in turn, about the impact of the problem, when it's around, on them. Spokes drawn out from the circle represent the effects of the problem on the person. Only when everyone has had a turn, might we then try to think about the impact on other people who are not present.

The impacts could be statements about feelings (fear, anger, disappointment, shame, guilt); about reactions; thoughts; intentions; physical symptoms such as headaches, feeling sick, injuries; about how relationships have been affected; possible negative outcomes..... if the victim is present, they are asked these questions first. Remember it is not the person who is causing these things, rather their behaviour (the problem).



**You could then ask the group *“is there anything here on the board that surprises anyone?”***

***What are the things which contribute to the problem alive?***

***Are you all happy about the impacts this problem has?***

***Do you want things to change?***

#### **4. Mapping the alternate story**

**This phase is about developing an alternative story for the young person; finding out the exceptions to the problem, so that a more hopeful picture of him/her can be understood and built upon. Another circle with spokes is drawn on the board.**

**The facilitator asks:**

***What do we know about ..... that does not fit the problem story (first diagram)?***

***When is the problem not around?***

***What settings does the problem not appear in?***

***What has the young person done which does not fit with the first story?***

**(it might be useful to tie the questions to the first diagram – when is it that he/she is on time to class, or brings the right gear, or is polite?).**

**The alternative behaviours are written into the spokes of the second circle. The young person is asked about these alternative behaviours:**

***“How are they able to do these things?”***

**Everyone is asked:**

***“What qualities/talents/abilities these behaviours might suggest about the young person?”***

**These descriptions are written in the centre of the circle.**

**Everyone can be asked to suggest *what is it about the person that the problem has masked and have been hard for others to see?* These too are written into the centre of the circle. (see page 6)**

**All are asked:**

***“What has everyone learned by seeing these two stories side by side?”***

***Which story is preferred by the young person?***

***What does he or she want to emphasise more in the future?”***

## **5. Developing a plan**

**The facilitator asks people to think about how this knowledge about the young person and his/her circumstances (as outlined in both circles) might be helpful in suggesting some solutions.**

**If the victim(s) is/are present, they need to be asked first:**

**“What needs to happen for things to be made right for you?”**

**Others can be asked for their ideas about how to put things right, make amends. They can also be asked about their ideas about how obstacles might be removed so that the young person can develop an alternative identity (based on the second circle).**

**The plan will need to be negotiated with all parties, including the young person.**

**It needs to be about people taking up their responsibilities, not about punishment or coercion. The ideas are best generated by the whole group including the young person.**

**It should identify a range of responsibilities across the school/home to address the issues which have been revealed by the process.**

**Eg     What will be the school’s (teacher/dean/senior manager/counsellor) responsibility?  
         What will be the family’s responsibility?  
         What will be the young person’s responsibility?**

**Make sure that the plan is:**

**Clear  
Specific  
Understandable  
Has clear timelines  
Reality tested  
Measureable  
Ensures safety  
Relates to the problems identified  
Monitored/supervised (who, when)  
Reviewed (date set)**

## **6. Closing the meeting**

**The facilitator brings the meeting to a close by emphasising the positive nature of participants contributions, and hope for the future. They can be asked for final comments ( an opportunity for making meaning of the process and what they learned – include the young person). Invite them to stay for refreshments so that there is further opportunity for reconnection.**

