Chapter 17
The Repair and Restoration of Relationships

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17.1 Introduction

Conflict is an inevitable part of life and can occur in any setting. At times conflict can present positive opportunities for growth and learning, whilst at other times it can have destructive outcomes. Recognising the signs of conflict and developing the skills to repair harm in the aftermath of conflict and wrongdoing are essential for families, schools, organisations and communities. Conflict can take an emotional toll on those involved and needs to be managed in a way that the dignity and well-being of those involved can be restored. It also requires that the responsible parties take accountability for their part in the incident and ensure that they take action to make amends. Restorative justice offers much hope in this regard.

Restorative justice and the range of restorative practices have been found to effectively manage this process in a way that meets the needs of those involved. Working *restoratively* to resolve conflict means looking at the resultant harm and how to assist those who have been impacted to deal with this. Whilst some models of conflict resolution might seek to put aside emotions in the conflict resolution process, restorative justice seeks to work with the emotional impact. It does this by starting from the premise that people are often significantly affected by what has happened. The venting of emotion in a safe forum can assist those involved to shift from the negative range of affect and operate more in the positive range of emotions. Emotional wellbeing is enhanced through the appropriate expression of emotion, building understanding of what has happened and creating closure in order to move on. As such, restorative practices can operationalise aspects of positive psychology by turning a traumatic event into one for growth and healing. This chapter will

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outline how restorative practices have been adopted in various settings to make a difference when conflict, crime and wrongdoing have affected others.

17.2 The History of Restorative Justice Developments

Working restoratively is a way of approaching harm, conflict and wrongdoing in schools, families, workplaces and communities. Restorative justice emerged in the 1970s as a response to the failings of the retributive system of justice and rehabilitation models of the day (Lemonne 2003). Primary to this push were the need to prevent the re-victimisation of victims through the judicial process and to involve community in the repair of harm. This contributed to the development of alternate conflict resolution strategies designed to be responsive to the needs of those involved (Lemonne 2003).

Various authors have charted the development of restorative justice and commented on the diverse roots of this work. Hopkins (2009) refers to four strands of practice development that contributed to the gradual emergence of restorative justice around the world. The first of these involved victim-offender mediation initiated by the Mennonites in the mid-1970s, a practice pivotal in the development of the restorative justice movement. Victim-offender mediation offered victims a say in how offenders could take responsibility for their actions and to make amends for what they had done. This gave victims a voice and held offenders to account rather than locking them away from the very people they had harmed. Another strand involved the First Nations people of Canada and the development of sentencing circles. These built on traditional communitarian processes to bring members of the community together with the judiciary to determine the most appropriate sentence for a crime involving one of their own. Sentencing circles enabled those who had a stake in the matter to be involved in determining what needed to happen to repair the harm done by a member of their community.

Circles have since developed to repair harm, reintegrate wrongdoers into community and as part of the judicial process for sentencing and pre-release. In the 1980s, the Maori people of New Zealand were working through a similar process, resulting in the development of Family Group Conferencing (FGC) as the first legislated model to deal with young offending in a restorative manner. Like the First Nations people of Canada, this built on a long tradition of indigenous collaborative problem-solving practices (Hopkins 2009). Since this time, there has been a proliferation of practice emanating from New Zealand, Australia and North America.

The term restorative justice is now used interchangeably with terms such as restorative approaches, restorative measures and restorative practices, dependent on the setting in which it is applied. The term 'restorative practices' was first adopted by Australian practitioners working in schools. This distinguished practice from the justice setting and acknowledged the existence of a range of informal and formal practices. These ranged from a formal conference to deal with suspension and expulsion through to informal restorative conversations to deal with low-level

conflict and disruption. Rather than see a restorative approach as just an alternate method of discipline or conflict resolution, practice was diversified to look at ways to strengthen relationships across the school community. Likewise, Canadian practitioners refer to restorative measures in schools, whilst Scottish and British practitioners refer to a range of restorative approaches.

Whilst still an emerging field, there is a diverse range of practice that includes circles, victim-offender mediation and conferencing. Practice varies in terms of who attends, who facilitates the process and the reason that people have been brought together. Restorative justice provides flexibility for adaptation to different contexts and cultural settings. Common names attributed to conferencing include: Family Group Conferencing (FGC), Family Group Decision Making (FGDM) and Community Accountability Conferencing (CAC). Conferences vary in terms of whether they are scripted as in the case of the Australian CAC model and whether participants have private time for deliberation as in the case of FGC and FGDM. Today, FGC is commonly practised in the juvenile justice sector. FGDM is more evident in care and protection and family matters, whilst the scripted model of conferencing is synonymous with the educational sector. Practice has been further developed to include a range of informal to formal practices that are used in schools, workplaces and residential settings. These will be explained in more detail later.

17.3   Definition

Restorative justice offers an alternate response to crime and wrongdoing, starting from the premise that when crime or wrongdoing has occurred, people have been affected and that someone will have obligations to repair that harm (Zehr 2002). Whilst a clear definition of restorative justice is yet to be agreed on, Zehr's (2002) pillars of restorative justice form the elements of most working definitions. These are:

1. Establishing who has been harmed and what their needs are
2. Determining who has an obligation to repair that harm
3. Engaging key stakeholders in the matter

Restorative processes built around these pillars take into account the ripple effect of harm by seeking to involve all who have a stake in the matter. This could be in terms of the impact on them or their loved ones, or that they were somehow involved. In a restorative frame, these people are critical to the process. An example in a school situation occurs when a student is sent from the classroom for disciplinary reasons. Often they are dealt with in isolation and then returned to the classroom. The teacher and other students may still be annoyed with them, whilst others may still expect the errant student to behave in a certain way. In this instance, the teacher and the other students are key stakeholders in the process. Unless they are included or involved in some way, they may maintain their view of the wrongdoer or carry unresolved emotional issues triggered by the incident. For the student at the centre

of the issue, they walk back in carrying their feelings about what happened without the opportunity to make amends. The pattern of behaviour is likely to continue.

In a restorative frame, the student would be called to account for their behaviour and be provided with the opportunity to acknowledge the harm, hear how it has affected others and together look at what needs to happen to repair the harm and move forwards. This requires a paradigm shift in the way institutions and communities respond to crime and wrongdoing, or a shift in hearts and minds.

Restorative justice moves from the traditional punitive systems of discipline and justice to one that is responsive to the needs of those involved and less dependent on the state (Lemonne 2003; Zehr 1990). Pranis et al. (2003), in describing the practice of circles, articulate this as shifting from:

1. Coercion to healing
2. Individual to collective
3. State dependence to self-reliance within community
4. Punishment to healing and a renewed sense of justice

Braithwaite (2003) describes this as a victim-centred process focused on the repair of harm, as opposed to the retributive or formal justice system, which is offender oriented and focused on punishment, blame and stigmatisation. In the traditional system, crime and wrongdoing is seen more as an offence against the state as the judicial process seeks to determine what law has been broken, who is to blame and how they will be punished. At sentencing time, the offender is given an opportunity to put forward a case for mitigating the circumstances of their crime and reducing the penalty imposed on them, i.e. 'I was intoxicated at the time and not in control of what I did'.

Despite numerous criminal justice reforms, the victim's voice still struggles to get heard. Helen Garner's (2004) portrayal of the death of Joe Cinque is a case in point. At the centre of the court process are two offenders who were responsible for Joe's premeditated death. Throughout Garner's description of the respective court cases, the question lingers 'But what about the victim, Joe?' Whilst the offenders and the offenders' families have a voice in the process, the victim and the victim's families are absent except on the occasion when their anger, rage and distress spills over into the court. What they desire throughout the case is a chance to say who the victim was to them and for the offenders and the court to hear who they took away. Alternatively, in the documentary *Facing the Demons* (Ziegler 1999), which tracks the family of 18-year-old Michael Marslew (killed in a botched armed robbery on a takeaway food outlet) confronting two of the four offenders responsible for Michael's death, the family thank the offenders for the opportunity to humanise the victim and to say what he meant to them as a coworker, as a friend and as a son. Follow-up interviews with the family and friends show how this had let them get on with their lives. This included the father of Michael going on to work with Karl, one of the offenders, to help young people not get into trouble.

Despite changes and moves to offer more restorative processes, the traditional court system is still impersonal, state oriented and overly offender focused. In many ways, the early kings of England have much to answer for, by taking away the right

of communities to deal with wrongdoing within their own community and making it their business to be the punisher, often in barbaric and publicly humiliating ways. Prior to this, if you stole a pig from your neighbour, your community would call on you to repay the neighbour in a way that replaced the food or breeding stock that you stole. In order to do this, you may labour for your neighbour, you may give him an animal of yours or find a way to address that wrong. From a sociological perspective, the responsibility for crime and wrongdoing was taken out of the hands of the very communities affected by that crime and put in the hands of some authoritarian figure or institution. Since this time, we have continued to see the professionalisation of crime and wellbeing as we rely on others to take care of our needs and to deal with society's deviance – a by-product of the industrialised world.

As the Cinque and Marslew cases highlight and Zehr (2002) affirms, crime is a personal violation of people and their rights. When someone's home is broken into, it is a violation of their property and their personal space. Secondary to this, it might be seen as an offence against the good order of the state, there to protect its people. Restorative justice is about taking care of the needs of those involved in crime, conflict and disruption and the roles of those responsible to repair that harm. As Moroney (2010) states, the prison system locks offenders away from society, where they are not forced to face the damage that they have done. Victims and their loved ones and the families of the offenders are left to face the community, often with devastating effects. Restorative justice is inclusive in an effort to address the ripple effect of harm by taking into account that crime often affects many people. More often than not, those who are important in the lives of those directly involved are also affected, even if only out of concern for their loved ones or because they too have been impacted by what has happened. Communities need to pay attention to the needs and concerns of victims and the roles that offenders/wrongdoers have in meeting the needs of those involved (Zehr 2002). To not do this leaves people in precarious places having to deal with the impact on their lives in their own way or to seek professional help.

17.4 How Does Restorative Justice Work?

Whilst debate exists as to what types of interventions constitute effective healing, it is generally accepted that helping those involved to tell their story is a significant part of the process. It allows for the integration of what happened (the version of events) with the impact this has had at an emotive level. As Yoder (2005) indicates 'acknowledging and telling the story counteracts the isolation, silence, fear, shame, or "unspeakable" horror' of the event (p. 53). Restorative practices allow those involved to share their version of what happened and the impact this had on them.

In the aftermath of conflict and trauma, people initially go through a process of trying to make sense of what has happened. Yoder (2005) indicates that this happens automatically as those involved try to come to terms with the preceding event in the immediate aftermath. With time, the process unfolds for those involved

making sense of their life or their view of the world and how that has been affected. Conflict itself can result in major upheaval that can have destructive consequences for those involved or constructive consequences when people are able to make sense of what happened, to learn from it and to move on. How the traumatic event is interpreted and integrated is crucial to a person's accurate sense of self and their view of the world. This is no more evident than in the 2010 BP Oil disaster in the Gulf of Mexico where the damage to the environment and to the livelihoods of those working on the coastline is likely to continue for many years to come. The human victims need acknowledgement of the harm done to their livelihoods and to their communities, and they need to see that those responsible are called to account and make amends.

The restorative justice philosophy is about valuing relationships and understanding the needs of those involved. This addresses the emotional or *affective* needs as well as a primal need to belong, which works across cultural boundaries. As Zehr and Mika (2003) state 'restorative justice is a continuum of responses to the range of needs and harms experienced by victims, offenders and the community' (p. 41). The author's own experience of working with those harmed and those affected is that their needs mirror the process that Yoder outlines and that their needs are ultimately similar. In the face of having done harm or been harmed, people need to:

- Have their say
- Be heard
- To understand and be understood
- Make sense of what happened
- Know that what happened was not fair or was not intended
- Have time out/space to reflect (perhaps talk to a trusted other)
- Make amends
- Feel OK with self and OK with others
- Repair relationships

When these needs are met, this helps bring a sense of closure and restore a sense of wellbeing for all involved. In the case of those responsible, this amounts to having a chance to make amends and restore their place in community.

Take for instance a family conflict involving Kathy, who is the victim of childhood abuse. After being steadily groomed by her perpetrator, Kathy went on to marry the offender, not knowing that anything was wrong with the initial covert relationship. After the marriage dissolved a few years later, Kathy realised what had happened to her was abuse and took steps to ensure the offender was appropriately dealt with and punished for his wrongdoing. Whilst sexual abuse is a serious issue, related conflict emerged in Kathy's family as her parents and siblings struggled to manage how they felt about what had happened. There were those that felt that justice had been served and Kathy ought to get over it and not speak about this horrendous shame. Kathy's mother refused to talk about it, whilst her father would get angry if the topic was raised. Her siblings aligned themselves accordingly. Kathy, whilst she felt that justice had been served through the court, needed her family to understand the impact this had had on her and that she was still being punished by

her family for having spoken the truth. What is clear is that conflict and trauma can have far reaching impact on others, and they need to be involved in processes to bring about extended healing.

17.5 Affect and Script Psychology (ASP)

The success of restorative justice processes is that they work at a deep level to repair emotional harm. Silvan Tomkins' (1962, 1963) Affect and Script Psychology (ASP) has much to offer in understanding the biological roots of emotions and how restorative justice helps in trauma recovery. This is something that has been understated in the commentary about the effectiveness of restorative justice, despite victim satisfaction being one of the most commonly used measures to determine a successful restorative process. Much of the debate instead focuses on whether restorative justice reduces re-offending, which was not the original intent of the process.

Tomkins described nine core affects or patterns of response that are innate to human beings. These fall on a continuum from positive to negative and include the neutral affect of *surprise-startle*. On the positive end of the continuum is the affect of *enjoyment-joy* and *interest-excitement* which generally feel good. On the negative end of the continuum, we experience six uncomfortable forms of affect on a range from *anger-rage, fear-terror, distress-anguish, disgust, dismell* and *shame-humiliation*. Negative affect feels unbearable, and we are moved to find ways to feel better or to neutralise the pain. The neutral affect of *surprise-startle* is the affect that merely resets the system. When affect is said to be triggered, it is taken to mean that a 'known pattern of biological events' has been set in train (Nathanson 1992: 49). For this to occur, there must be a stimulus that triggers the affect. For example, the little known affect of *dismell* is a sensory smell response triggered by an offensive odour, or, more commonly in the modern world, is seen as the rejection of something without sampling, as in the case of racism. As an affect is triggered, we take notice and start to ascribe feelings or emotions to that sense. When people are affected by conflict and trauma, they may experience any or all negative affects. It can be difficult to work through this. Help may be needed to return to a state of wellbeing and positive affect.

Understanding the biological aspects of emotionality is crucial to understanding the range of affect triggered in situations of conflict and upheaval and how to work with it. Tomkins (1962, 1963) said that learning how to read affect in the faces of others can assist with understanding what is happening for them. This assists us to see a situation from a different perspective and adapt our approach to dealing with it, thereby becoming smarter about conflict management. Roth and Newman (1992) indicate that one of the challenges in working with those who have been traumatised is to help them shift from preoccupation with the trauma to finding an adaptive resolution to the negative affect of 'helplessness, rage, fear, loss, shame, and guilt' (p. 221). Of these affects, shame will be explored in depth to understand what happens for people caught in the conflict cycle and how we can

assist those involved to deal effectively with what has happened. As Tomkins (1962, 1963) controversially stated, shame is the negative affect that precedes all other negative affect. In learning more about ASP, it is clear that Tomkins saw shame as a warning sign that something is wrong and that corrective action needs to be taken. At the same time, it is relatively easy to see how offenders carry shame for their actions, how some victims feel shame in terms of what happened and how their loved ones also carry shame about what happened. This is especially so for the families and friends of wrongdoers. Regardless of how people view the significance of Tomkin's work, it is important in understanding how restorative practices work at a deep emotive level.

17.6   Kelly's Blueprint for Healthy Relationships

Human beings have a primary need for healthy attachments with others they can rely on in times of need (Kelly 2009). A sense of secure attachment allows us to function at an optimum level, feel safe and have a positive view of self and others. Shaver and Mikulincer (2009: 447) state: 'This pervasive sense of security based on implicit beliefs that the world is generally safe, that attachment figures are helpful when called upon, and that it is possible to explore the environment curiously and engage effectively and enjoyably with other people. This sense of security is rooted in positive mental representations of self and others'.

In order to maintain healthy relationships, we need to manage our emotional wellbeing. Kelly (2009) describes a central blueprint for relationships in which the following four rules must work in tandem: We need to maximise positive affect, minimise negative affect, minimise the inhibition of our affect and maximise our ability to do all three. The mental and emotional wellbeing of human beings in relationship with each other is maintained when the blueprint is maintained. Kelly (2009) states that: 'When circumstances in our lives hinder our ability to follow these rules and we either have to ignore one of them completely or overemphasize one at the expense of the others, there is significant reduction in the quality of our lives and our relationships' (p. 24).

This can be difficult to achieve when cultural norms dictate how emotion can be expressed, with the minimisation of negative emotion encouraged in some cultures, particularly around death and dying. To express how we feel about the loss of someone or how an event has been triggered can be a shame-evoking experience in itself. I recall a situation in my police forensic career of being ridiculed by another forensic operative, when several colleagues had experienced a stress response in reaction to a series of traumatic incidents and high workload without sufficient support or rest. The same operative managed his own stress through drinking and being difficult to work with. By ridiculing another, he could effectively distance how he felt about his own workload and in some way feel better about himself by denying his own stress levels. By not getting in touch with his own issues, he can feel temporarily better about himself.

17.7   Why Is Shame Important to Understand?

Kaufman (1993) states that 'to feel shame is to feel *seen* in a painfully diminished sense. Shame reveals the inner self, exposing it to view. The self feels exposed both to itself and to anyone else present. … it is an entirely inner experience' (p. 17). Shame stops someone feeling good about themselves or others. If people do not have the capacity or processes for dealing with their shame and the punishing feelings associated with this, they potentially alienate themselves from others, withdraw, attack themselves or attack others. At its worst, people who experience shame (which we all do) may do all four (Nathanson 1992). When we become aware that we have done something to harm another, we are likely to experience shame and not feel good about ourselves or our actions. Likewise, when we have been harmed by another's actions, we too experience shame, as our relationships with others change and our sense of self-worth is shaken.

Shame is a normal part of the human experience and is innate to human beings (Nathanson 1992). It is difficult to talk about and often a part of an experience that most seek to disown. Shame feels uncomfortable and we will do anything to avoid it. We may run away from these uncomfortable feelings and in turn withdraw from the relationships around us, often at great cost to the self and others, or we may adopt a confrontational style to avoid how bad we feel. Take for example finding out that a partner is unfaithful. Not only can this event derail the relationship but also both parties are likely to feel a sense of shame in the aftermath of this issue being exposed. The partner who had the affair is likely to feel ashamed of what they have done, whilst the other partner is likely to feel confused, angry and that they are somehow to blame – which is one of the shame responses.

If we are unable to deal with the situation effectively, we are likely to try and displace the way we feel. According to Nathanson (1992), we have several possibilities; see the *Compass of Shame* (Fig. 17.1). The four responses include a withdrawal from the situation and the other person, attacking ourselves through negative self-talk or self-harming (such as self-mutilation), attacking others (physically or verbally) or avoiding the situation and its toxic feelings by drinking or refusing to talk about it (a form of denial). Consider potential responses to the issue of infidelity

Fig. 17.1 Compass of shame (Adapted from Nathanson 1992)
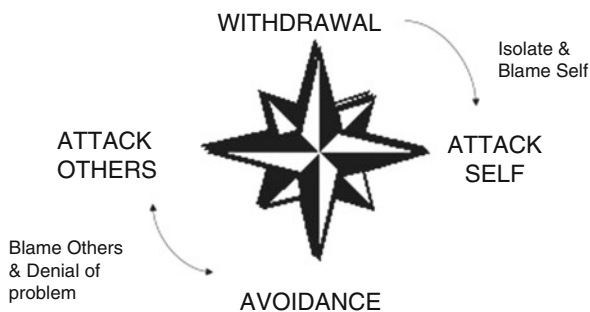
above. One partner may be outraged that they have been exposed and resort to violent outbursts (attack other), whilst the other may internalise the matter feeling that they are in some way to blame (attack self). At the same time, family members and significant others can be outraged, insist on the relationship dissolving or be in varying stages of disbelief. All are defensive ways of coping with the *shame* that has been triggered.

When we are not managing the shame we feel, there is a tendency for certain poles of the compass to combine. Our response is likely to relate to whether we are more likely to internalise or externalise our reaction to what is happening.

Those that are likely to attack others and adopt a confrontational approach are also likely to avoid the situation and deny that there is a problem or that they were responsible. In another explanation of the power of shame to motivate behaviour, Ahmed and Braithwaite (2004), in discussing bullying behaviour, use the notion of shame *displacement* to explain how, as destructive as it is, it is a protective mechanism for the wrongdoer or person responsible, as they are blaming others and pushing the problem away from themselves. Bullies frequently offer excuses to minimise their role in a shameful situation, denying their responsibility. This might in part explain why studies have found that bullies do not necessarily have the diminished sense of self-esteem that we might imagine.

On the other side is the victim who is typically *internalising* the shame by withdrawing from the situation and berating themselves for being too weak. They internalise the problem and feel they are to blame, which fits with Seligman's (1990) view of pessimism. No one can maintain this state of 'attack self' for lengthy periods of time without the risk of further self-harm or switching poles to attack other. In the school massacres committed by school students, this switch is all too evident. Those responsible for these devastating acts at some stage withdrew or were forced to withdraw from their school community, only to turn and attack others, blaming them for what had happened. What was lacking for these students was a secure attachment or sense of belonging with their peer group, their school community and, in some cases, their families.

17.8 What Can Be Learned from Positive Psychology

Seligman (1990) draws on extensive evidence that suggests there are two ways of viewing life and coping with what happens: we are either optimistic or pessimistic about our life and what happens around us. At the core of pessimism is a sense of helplessness that can develop in the face of tragedy and loss, when nothing an individual does makes a difference. As Roth and Newman (1992) suggest, this is frequently experienced by survivors of sexual and other trauma and is something that needs to be dealt with therapeutically. In Kathy's case, she had sought much needed psychological assistance to deal with her ongoing issues. In the end, the opportunity to confront the person that had taken her innocence from her, to share the impact on her and her family, enabled her to take her power back in the

situation. It also enabled her family to deal with the extended impact on them and to reunite the family.

A positive view would say that what hurts us can make us stronger when it is handled effectively. These events can put us in touch with our deeper self and facilitate self-growth (Boniwell 2008), or they can cause us to reconsider the very nature of our purpose on this planet (Roth and Newman 1992). Whilst it is possible that someone may have the resilience to manage this process themselves, others will need to engage in a therapeutic or healing approach. Sullivan and Tifft (2005) indicate that restorative justice and its range of practices foster healing in others. As people 'we develop our potentialities as human beings and enhance our collective wellbeing when our needs are respected, expressed, listened to, defined with care, and ultimately met' (p. 167).

Positive psychology explores mental health, what it is to feel good, what qualifies someone as a good person and what constitutes a group or community's social responsibility (Boniwell 2008). The range of strong negative emotions generated in trauma and conflict get in the way of people feeling good about themselves; they may question their very being and the virtues of the community to which they belong. As Drozdek et al. (2006) indicate, this may result in questioning their very existence. Questioning the self can lead to feelings of inadequacy and self-blame for what has happened and trigger a host of negative emotions, including the affect of shame. These negative emotions can also have a destabilising effect on communities.

17.9   Restorative Practices

A fully restorative process seeks to bring together those responsible, those harmed and those who are significant in the lives of those harmed and responsible, to repair the harm. Each practice in its own right might be completely or partially restorative, dependent on the impact on others and who is involved. For example, mediation around the separation of a couple with children may be partially restorative if it assists the couple to work through their differences, but it does not take into account the impact the separation has on the children and the extended family who are often left reeling in the aftermath of a family break-up. Involving children and others in a family decision-making circle (FGDM) or conference may assist in absolving children of blame for the relationship breakdown and assisting them to stay clear of the conflict (Grych and Fincham 1993). This hopefully prevents an ugly situation developing that can perpetuate throughout the years between fractured families. By involving those who have a stake in the matter, there is an opportunity for all involved to have their say and together work towards the best possible solution. Kathy's case was an example of this. This also aligns with a growing body of research that indicates that families who are more restorative in nature by having firm boundaries and strong support are less likely to have delinquent children (Braithwaite 2003; Coloroso 2009).

Bringing restorative practices into our families, schools, workplaces and communities is a way to transform conflict. In doing so, it is important that we understand what people's needs are and be comfortable in dealing with the range of strong emotions that are triggered. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) in South Africa is an example at a community level of an attempt to deal with the human rights violations of the apartheid era. The nation chose not to perpetuate the process of retribution by seeking an alternate way of dealing with the harm and taking responsibility for gross breaches of human rights, largely perpetuated by those carrying out government policy. Whilst the process has its detractors, it is held as an example of a nation taking responsibility for attempting to speak the truth and to start the reconciliation process (Vora and Vora 2004).

By taking a restorative approach to our lives and our interactions with others, we can start transforming our families, schools, workplaces, communities and nations. By working with children to equip them with these same values and the skills to manage repair of relationships, this will flow into families, their relationships with others and their workplaces. Take for example a young man with anger management issues who had been suspended from school many times throughout his schooling. Each time he was suspended, the angrier he would get, and the angrier others would get towards him. Everything changed when a teacher took the time to have a conversation with him and inquire what needed to happen to make a difference. By asking questions such as:

> What happened?
> What were you thinking at the time?
> What have you thought since?
> Who has been harmed? How?
> What needs to happen to repair the harm?

The young man was able to get in touch with the impact of his action, find a way to discharge his shame and move on, not getting suspended again for his entire schooling. On asking him what had happened, he clearly articulated how someone had shown him how to come back from when he had done the wrong thing. Until this point he didn't know how, which translated into heightened frustration, anger and further incidents of harm. As Kelly (2009) indicates, he overemphasised the negative affect of anger at the expense of feeling good about himself, reducing the quality of his own life and those around him. Without this intervention, he was a likely candidate for violence in community, particularly in relationship with others, as he struggled to control this emotion.

17.10   Role of the Facilitator

The role of a skilled facilitator is central to the success of restorative justice (Latimer et al. 2005). As in the case above, it took not only the willingness of the wrongdoer to look at doing things differently but also the skill of the facilitator (in this case a teacher) who guided the adolescent through the process by asking the right questions.

This included patience and an openness to helping him find a way that worked. It also required ongoing persistence and an intervention plan to change his behaviour over time. In effective processes, preparation is everything, as is the facilitator's ability to trust and manage the group process. Facilitator skills outlined by Hopkins (2004) include the need to:

- Be impartial and non-judgemental
- Respect the perspectives of all involved
- Listen actively and empathically
- Develop rapport amongst participants
- Empower participants to come up with solutions rather than suggesting or imposing ideas
- Use creative questioning
- Above all else, to be warm, compassionate and patient

Applying these skills enables the facilitator to prepare participants so that they can have a challenging conversation, feel free to share their story and express their emotions in a safe way. To facilitate a process where people are not prepared risks further harm. When restorative processes are facilitated well, those involved return to a state of wellbeing, as in Kathy's case. To do this, facilitators need to take a positive psychology approach in being optimistic about outcomes and believing that those involved can take responsibility for their behaviour and be healed in the process. Together they work with the capacity of those involved to find a solution for all and hopefully prevent the reoccurrence of further harm. From a traumatic experience, growth, learning and change can occur. Restorative approaches have been integrated with a range of different approaches, including solution-focused thinking, non-violent communication (NVC) and narrative therapy. The blending of approaches bodes well for a more responsive way of working with conflict and trauma and preventing this from happening. The latter signifies a development in restorative practice, where an emphasis on prevention through the development of healthy connections is as prominent as a behaviour response, particularly in schools and care settings. Working restoratively is an approach to working with others both when things are going well and when they are not going well. As Sullivan and Tifft (2005) suggest, 'how healthy we are, how spiritually grounded we are, how moral we are, can be measured by how much we are committed to meeting the needs of all and to living out relationships in which seeking the equal wellbeing of all is our intention' (p. 169). These are perhaps hard principles to maintain but worthy ones to aspire to.

17.11   From Restorative Justice Practices to Restorative Communities, Cities and States

At the core of this process is the need to build strong, healthy communities that see incidents of crime and wrongdoing as a violation of people and a signal that the community has work to do to repair the harm. Restorative justice is a communitarian

process that implies that you are restoring good order. In many cases, the functionality of the community involved is questionable, whether this be whole sections of communities, workplaces, schools or families. Hoyle and Noguera (2008), for example, question the ability of some parents to effectively support their children in restorative approaches either because they are somehow complicit or struggle to deal with their own shame about their parenting ability.

Increasingly, we are seeing examples of whole towns, cities, states, territories, counties or areas moving towards a restorative approach in everything they do, in an effort to transform their communities. This has led to a wave of practice, perhaps better referred to as transformative justice (Hopkins 2009). The city of Hull in the United Kingdom is an example of an economically and socially challenged city working to ensure that all people and services that interact with children and young people work in a restorative way (Mirsky 2009). Initiated in 2007, preliminary findings are encouraging at several levels. Collingwood Primary School reported shifting from a school requiring special measures to an outstanding school within 2 years of implementing a restorative approach (Mirsky 2009). Similarly, in Australia, Charnwood Primary School in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) went from a school where no one wanted to send their children or to work there to a thriving school within 2 years of implementing a range of measures that included restorative practices. The school was anecdotally credited with contribution to the reduction of crime within the area, because in the view of local police, the young people (many from socially disadvantaged situations) were no longer involved in crime because of what the school were doing. The successful implementation of restorative practice in schools and at a justice level has led to the ACT to adopting a restorative approach to their whole territory (ACT Government 2008).

The city of London in the United Kingdom recently called a meeting of those interested in developing a restorative city, following initiatives supported by the Home Office in 1997 to promote restorative justice in working with young offenders (Hoyle and Noguera 2008). Key providers in the regional area of Wodonga in Victoria, Australia, have united together to improve the outcomes for young people and adolescents with engagement issues in schools. Here, police, community health and schools have come together to use Family Group Conferencing (FGC). This approach offers a 'family-centred, strengths-focused, culturally sensitive and community-based approach to family decision-making and case planning' (Parker 2009). Since its inception, the project has seen overall reductions in truancy, suspension, expulsions and criminal activity.

Combined with the growth of practice in schools across the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, North America and emerging areas in the Asia Rim, it is hoped that the proliferation of practice in educational arenas will see a corresponding reduction in youth offending. Braithwaite (2004) indicates that schools provide an ideal place to start to develop restorative communities, not only from the perspective shown here, but also from the notion of schools as the hub of their communities. Whilst these initiatives take time, it is encouraging that policy makers see this as a positive way forwards, and that 36 years on, restorative practices continue to evolve.

17.12   Conclusion

Conflict is an inevitable part of life. From a positive psychology perspective, the effective management of conflict and traumatic experiences allows us to develop emotional resilience, so that we are better able to manage the ups and downs of life. The blueprint for healthy relationships helps us to understand that any block to feeling good about ourselves will invoke a host of negative emotions and cause disconnect in our community. We need to know how to repair these breaches for our own wellbeing and that of those around us. Restorative practices encourage the appropriate expression of negative emotion by giving those involved and who are affected the chance to have a say and to be heard. When the impact of conflict is expressed, those responsible are more likely to have empathy for the other person, and all parties are more able to move forwards feeling better about themselves and others. At the same time, the communities of care around the central players are more able to accept the decision that has been made and also to move on. This allows for the best chance of the restoration of relationships and an effective outcome for all. The adoption of restorative practices by institutions, families, schools and communities is providing hope that together we can make a difference and transform our communities.

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