

YOUTH TRANSFORMATION CENTER ZIG AND ZAG ACTIVITIES

There are times when the three restorative justice questions don't meet the needs of the situation, the offense, or the personalities of the offenders and victims. Here are some creative ideas for facilitators to enhance or deepen the impact for your school students when wrongdoing occurs.

THE ARGUMENT

Two co-facilitators will appear to disagree about something (such as who will begin the session or which question you'll start with). The disagreement will escalate to an foolish argument and seem to move toward borderline volatility. Facilitators then will agree to walk out of the room and "finish" the argument "outside" so it's not done in front of the students/participants. You can do this in less than 3 minutes. Then come back smiling to show that the co-facilitators were play acting.

Ask participants: How many of you were uncomfortable with what was happening?

- This was a way to demonstrate how our behaviors affect others. We might think that others aren't affected, or that something we say or do only affects the person we're talking to or doing something to, or who is right next to us.
- But more often than not we take our upset and emotions home and our behaviors now affect our family, or our friends, or our teachers, and on and on.
- So, as we proceed, let's consider how our behaviors of the past have impacted other people in our lives, our school, and our families.
- How does that make us feel?
- And then let's look at what we might want to do about that.
- Now take a deep breath and let yourselves relax.

TEDDY BEARS IN THE TRASH CAN

- A trash can is placed beside a facilitator.
- 6 or 7 small teddy bears or stuffed animals sit together in a small circle in front of the facilitator.
- Each time someone expresses hurt or speaks of someone else being hurt, a stuffed animal is thrown in the trash can (with no words spoken about what is happening). If students/participants ask if the facilitator will explain, he/she can say "Yes, I will tell you, but not now." (keep them in suspense and curious)
- At the end of the session the explanation is given: when we send a student out on suspension, expulsion, or to law enforcement, we in essence 'throw them away'; or when we disrespect them, hurt them, make them feel unwanted or not valued, we throw them away. When we exclude a student from our group, we say "we don't want you here; you aren't good enough" and we "throw them away."
- What Restorative Justice does is it sends the message that they ARE valued, and they ARE important to the community. In the case of offending students, it is their behavior that may be unacceptable, and they can change that. It will be up to the student facilitators to make everyone in the circle feel valued.

POST-IT NOTES

- A co-facilitator holds a packet of post-it notes.
- Without explanation, every time someone says they've been hurt, or talks about someone else being hurt, a post-it note is stuck to his/her body or hair or face.
- At the end of the session the explanation is given: when we are hurt by others by something they said or did to us, we hold onto those things like they were solid objects. They're like post-it notes stuck to us. By the time we become adults, we have so many of those hurtful remarks or putdowns on us, we forget who we really are.
- Too many people are carrying around these comments that were made to them by a teacher, a parent, someone on the playground in our early childhood.
- We can choose our behaviors. We can choose not to hurt other people.