

Restorative Practices:

Strategies for responding to harm that make our emergency services safer for staff and clients.



Coalition On Homelessness

Basics of Restorative Practices

Moving away from punitive & punishment based responses to harm towards investing in healing, health, and transformation for all parties involved and impacted.

Not “one size fits all” but allows for processes that are creative, flexible, and respond to the specific needs of the culture of the space, specific incident, and individuals involved.

Centers the experiences of all parties involved, including bystanders and staff, and requires the person causing harm to respond to those impacted by their behaviors directly.



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Case Studies

Hull HARP – UK-based homeless services includes housing, outreach, and emergency services for “rough sleepers”

“While we offered support & services to a high standard, we weren’t addressing the behaviours and dynamics of a group of people who often created conflict, were extremely socially disengaged, & excluded, in a positive way. We were punitive, enforced punishment, excluded individuals from services, a culture that used power as a way of managing individuals.”

Approach Framework:

- **Proactive Work**
- **Reactive Work**
- **Reintegration**

“Clients were met and they were confident about the support they received from Hull HARP and in particular the use of Restorative Practice which has significantly enabled and empowered them and allowed them the opportunity to take responsibility for their actions and how it affects others. They confirmed that they see a support worker and have key working sessions where they feel supported to make informed choices and listened to. Clients appeared to be very well informed about the remit of the service. They advised they were happy with the levels of support they received both during and out of office hours. They fully understood both their support plans and tenancy agreements and could describe the salient information in both documents. They felt safe in their accommodation and described staff as reliable, honest, polite and respectful. They felt Hull HARP was interested in their opinions and views and offered them meaningful support and involvement and gave them accountability as well as responsibility which would enable them in independent living.”



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Case Studies

St. Stephen's Drop-In – Toronto-based drop-in center catering to needs of drug users and street based folks in downtown area – includes counseling/case management, medical care, food, and community building.

Peer-based model that includes: 12 weeks of training, on-going support of team, stipends, and organizing. Peer team is supervised by 1 staff person and an advisory committee. Peer team signs up for shifts and offers:

- Conflict Mediation as alternative to being kicked out;
- De-escalation in milieu;
- Facilitation of community meetings and trainings on related & relevant topics.



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Ideas For San Francisco

- Peer based model to include training, stipends, and 1 staff person;
- Begin in 1 medium/large shelter;
- Program Development and Training would include staff training at pilot shelter;
- Training to include: arts-based training, conflict mediation, de-escalation, harm reduction, trauma informed approaches, listening skills, confidentiality, harm reduction, facilitation skills
- Mentorship and on-going support + evaluation from advisory committee made up of community stakeholders and experts.



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