

# Restorative Practices

involving adults  
in school communities

- What are Restorative Practices?
- Restorative Practices with Adults



## What are Restorative Practices?



## What are Restorative Practices?

- a way of viewing conflict and wrongdoing that focuses first on
  - the *harm* these cause to relationships, and
  - the *obligation* to repair that harm
- a way for people to face up to the *real consequences* of their behaviour
- a way for people affected by conflict and wrongdoing *to be heard* and to *have their say* in the ‘solution’

## Fundamental Principles of Restorative Practices

1. Misbehaviour/conflict is a violation of *people* and *relationships*
2. Violations create *obligations* and *liabilities*
3. A restorative approach seeks *first to put things right*



A Reality

Our work in schools is

*moral* work

It is also

*emotional* work



CLASSROOM



TEACHER TEAMS



PARENTS



BEHAVIOUR MANAGEMENT

*Restorative Practices in Schools*

**‘Traditional’ approach**  
to conflict/wrongdoing

- What rule was broken?
- Who is responsible?
- What do they deserve?

**‘Restorative’ approach**  
to conflict/wrongdoing

- What happened?
- What harm has been done, to whom?
- What can be done to address the harm?



## Underlying Belief

Those people who are

*directly involved*

and

*most affected*

are

*best placed*

*to resolve a conflict*

or

*solve a problem*



Restorative Practices in Schools



## Another Reality

Much, if not most, wrongdoing and conflict is

*emotionally-driven*

Much, if not most, harm caused is

*emotional harm*

The free expression of emotion in a safe environment  
enables the participants

*to metabolise this negative affect*  
and work together towards solutions

## A 'Restorative' Process *is one which...*

- Brings together *all those who have a stake* in a specific incident
- Recognises *who* has been affected
- Explores and acknowledges *how* they have been affected
- Identifies what needs to happen in order to *repair the harm* caused, and
- Enables the group to work out how to put *things as right as possible*

## Restorative Practices with Students

- To better **educate** students towards self-directed right behaviour
- To better **promote, nurture** and **protect** healthy relationships among members of the community
- To enable students to **take responsibility** and to be accountable for the *real consequences* of wrongdoing



**control**  
*limit-setting, discipline*

*A 'field of practice'*

**support**  
*encouragement, nurture*

**control**  
*limit-setting, discipline*

**punitive**  
**TO**  
*authoritarian  
stigmatising*

**restorative**  
**WITH**  
*authoritative  
reintegrative*

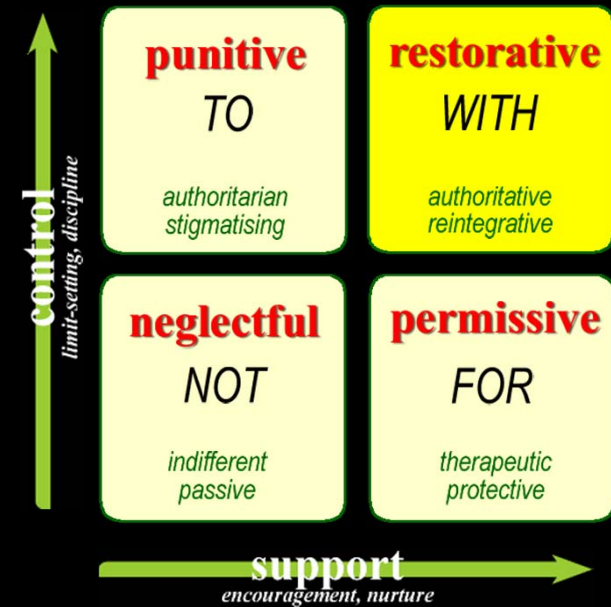
**neglectful**  
**NOT**  
*indifferent  
passive*

**permissive**  
**FOR**  
*therapeutic  
protective*

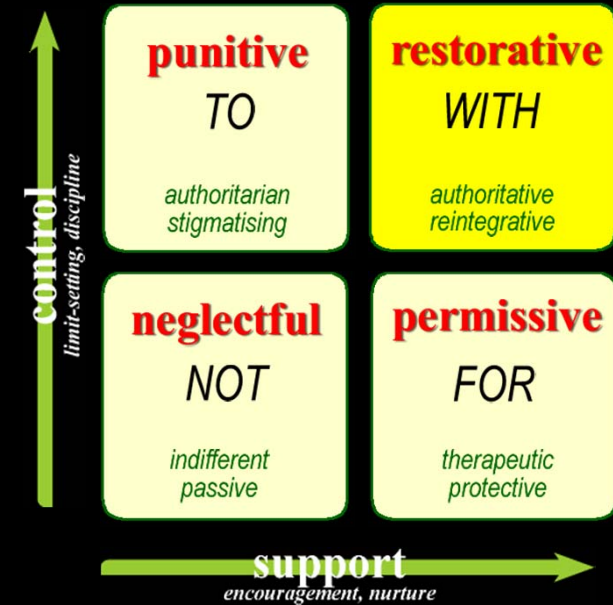
**support**  
*encouragement, nurture*

## We operate *restoratively* by...

- Having **high expectations** and insisting on **high standards** of behaviour
- While providing **high levels of support** and care for individuals to meet these expectations



Focussing on **restoring any harm done**,  
and seeing incidents primarily as **'teachable moments'**



*“Behaviour is confronted with disapproval...  
...within a continuum of respect and support”*

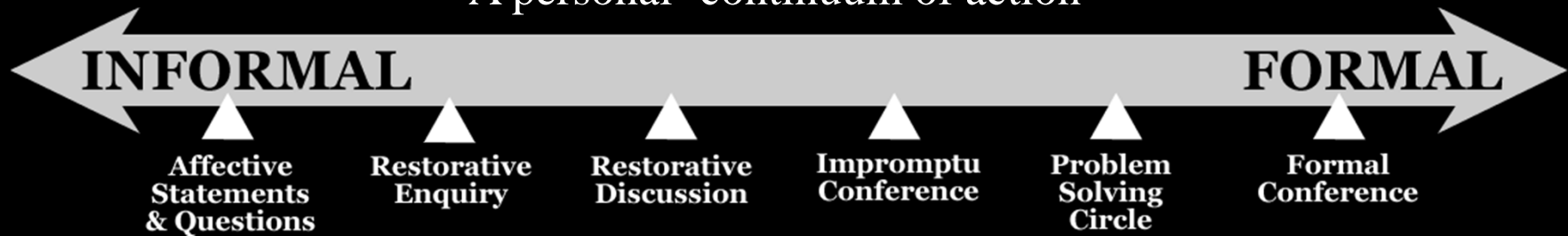
The  
**PROBLEM**  
is the problem.

The  
**PERSON**  
is not the problem.



# Restorative Practices with Students

A personal 'continuum of action'



*Restorative Practices in Schools*



Dr Lauren Abramson

Psychologist

Community Conferencing Centre - Baltimore

*Restorative Practices in Schools*

## Community Conference

The purpose of the conference is...

*to have the difficult discussions that need to occur  
with the aim of repairing the harm done*

within a highly-structured conversation  
with specific ground rules

and led by a trained facilitator

# Community Conference

Three main phases:

Describing and acknowledging what happened



Exploring and understanding the harm



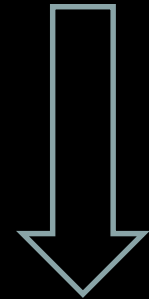
Repairing the harm

## *Restorative Questions*



- *What happened?*
- *What were you thinking at the time?*
- *What have you thought about since?*
- *Who has been affected by what you did?*
- *In what way?*
- *What do you think you need to do to make things right?*

FOCUS ON  
THE SELF



FOCUS ON  
'THE OTHER'

*... and for those affected*



- *What did you think when you realised what had happened?*
- *What impact has this incident had on you and others?*
- *What has been the hardest thing for you?*
- *What do you think needs to happen to make things right?*

## Community Conference

### *For those responsible...*

- *What happened?*
- *What were you thinking at the time?*
- *What have you thought about since?*
- *Who has been affected by what you did?*
- *In what way?*

- *What do you think you need to do to make things right?*

### *For those affected...*

- *What did you think when you realised what had happened?*
- *What impact has this incident had on you and others?*
- *What has been the hardest thing for you?*
- *What do you think needs to happen to make things right?*

Restorative Practices is a *philosophy, a way of being...*

*It's not just a tool...*

though it obviously has implications for practice

*It's about...*

building, nurturing and restoring healthy relationships

*It works best...*

when embedded in whole-school culture & practice





*Restorative Practices in Schools*

# Building & Nurturing School Community

## A Blueprint for Positive Relationships

1. share and *maximise positive affect*;
2. share and *minimise (metabolise) negative affect*;
3. create opportunities for the *expression of affect*.

Anything that helps 1-3 builds community;

anything that prevents 1-3 threatens community

## Restorative Practices with Adults



WRONGDOING

CONFLICT

STRESS

FRUSTRATION

ISOLATION

FAILURE

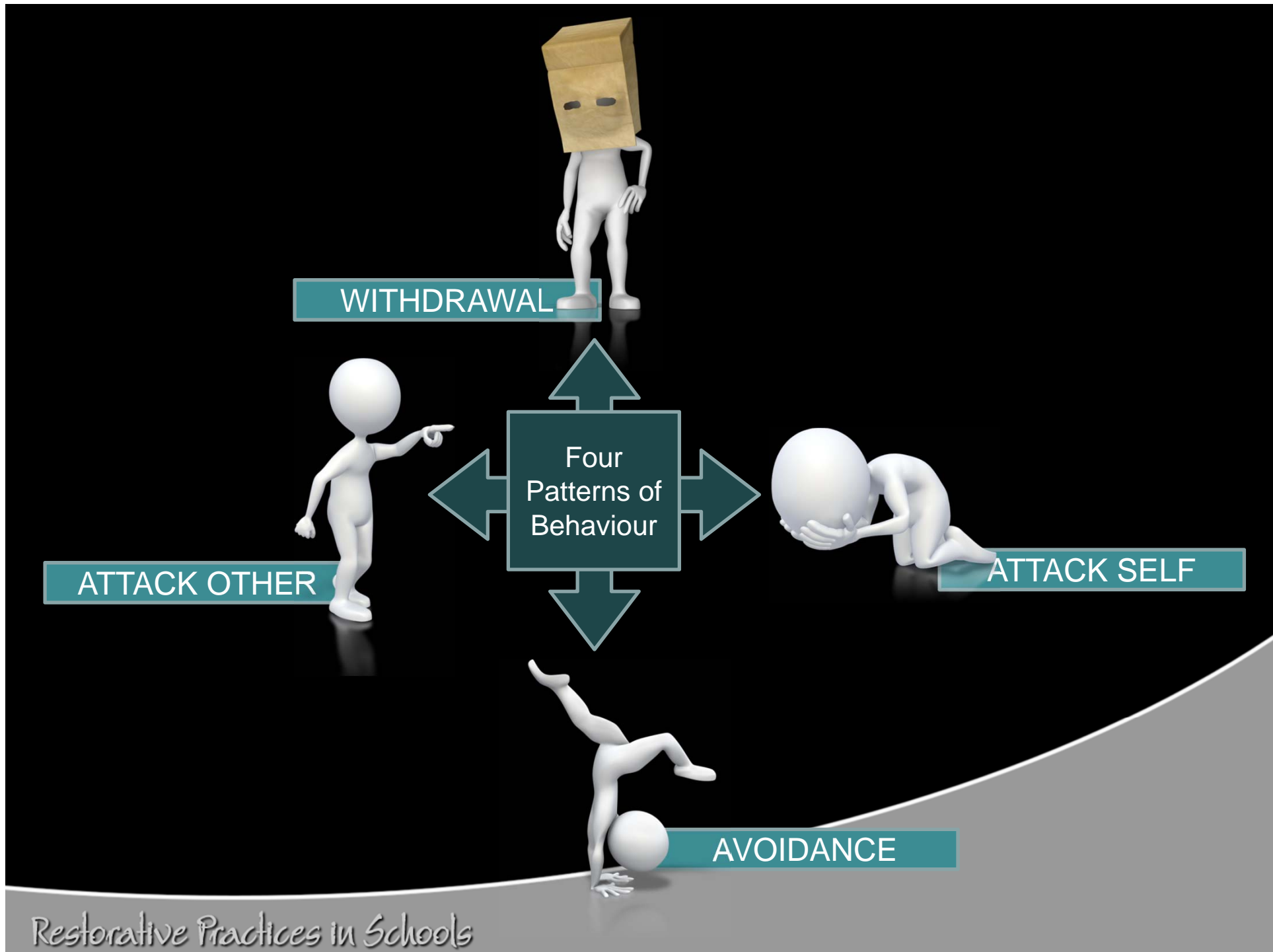
SHAME

DISTRESS

FEAR

Restorative Practices in Schools







Some situations will necessarily require a  
*policy, administrative, industrial* or *legal*  
response

In many cases, though, a timely restorative process can help  
prevent escalation to legal or industrial proceedings

That right remains, however

## Underlying Belief

Those people who are

*directly involved*

and

*most affected*

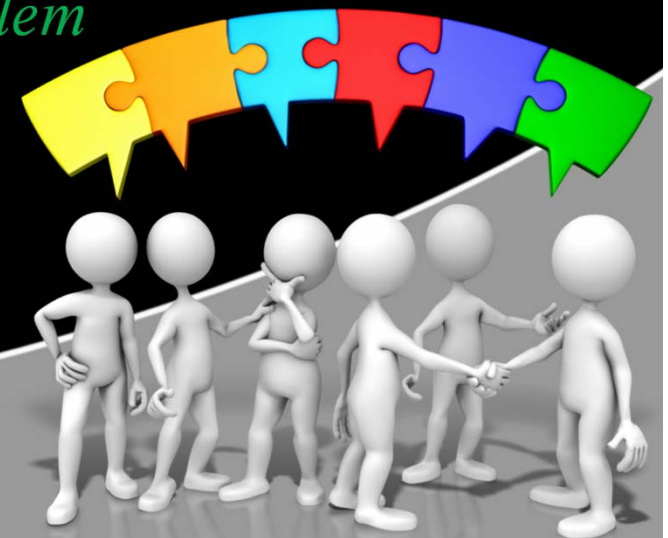
are

*best placed*

*to resolve a conflict*

or

*solve a problem*



Restorative Practices in Schools

## That Reality again...

Much, if not most, wrongdoing and conflict is

*emotionally-driven*

Much, if not most, harm caused is

*emotional harm*

The free expression of emotion in a safe environment  
enables the participants

*to metabolise this negative affect*

and work together towards solutions



## And Another Reality

Even where a formal response is required,  
according to fair process and **policy, codes of conduct**, etc...

There can still be a need to deal afterwards with the  
*emotional fallout*

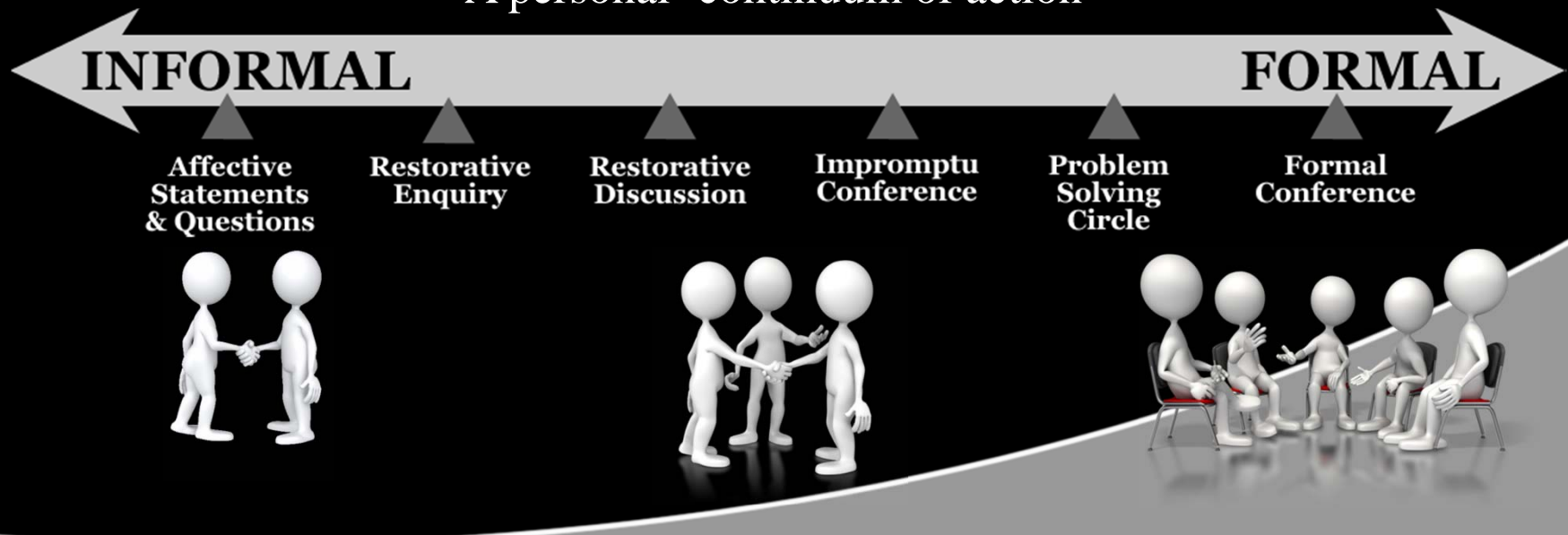
The free expression of emotion in a safe environment  
enables the participants  
*to metabolise this negative affect*  
and work together towards solutions

## Restorative Practices with Adults

Invites people to *share their stories & experiences*  
in a way that allows *expression of emotion...*  
and seeks solutions

Feeling *heard* and *understood* can itself be very powerful

A personal 'continuum of action'



Restorative Practices in Schools

# Workplace Conference



Three main phases:

Describing and acknowledging what happened



Exploring and understanding the harm



Repairing the harm



## Workplace Conference

### *For those responsible...*

- *What happened?*
- *What were you thinking at the time?*
- *What have you thought about since?*
- *Who has been affected by what you did?*
- *In what way?*

- *What do you think you need to do to make things right?*

### *For those affected...*

- *What did you think when you realised what had happened?*
- *What impact has this incident had on you and others?*
- *What has been the hardest thing for you?*
- *What do you think needs to happen to make things right?*



## Workplace Conference

*For generalised conflict, dysfunction...*

- *What has happened?*
- *What have you done to contribute to this?*
- *What do you think about this?*
- *Who has been affected by what has happened?*
- *In what way?*
- *What has been the hardest thing for you, personally?*
- *What do you think you need to do to make things right?*
- *What can we all do to prevent this happening again?*



## Workplace Conference

In the Restorative Conference,

*empathy*

is the path through the

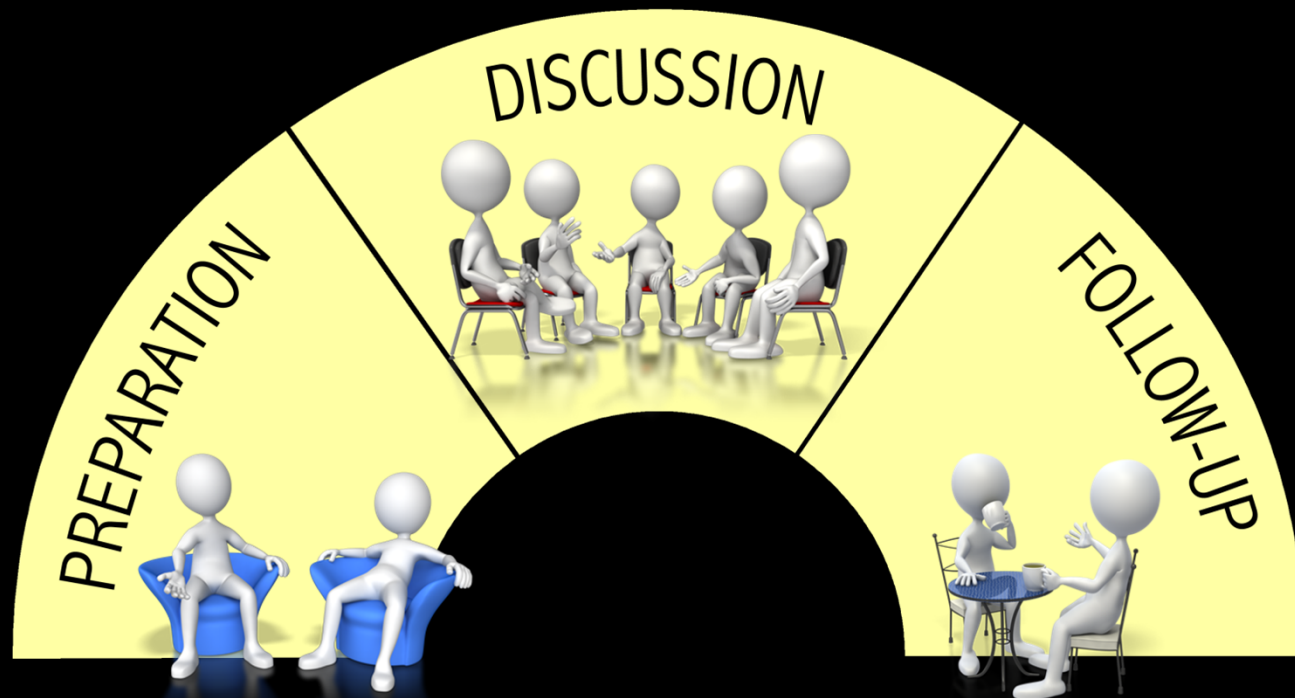
*negative emotion*

The free expression of emotion in a safe environment  
enables the participants

*to metabolise this negative affect*

and work together towards solutions

# Workplace Conference



# Restorative Practices with Adults



Affective Statements & Questions



Restorative Enquiry

Restorative Discussion

Impromptu Conference



Problem Solving Circle

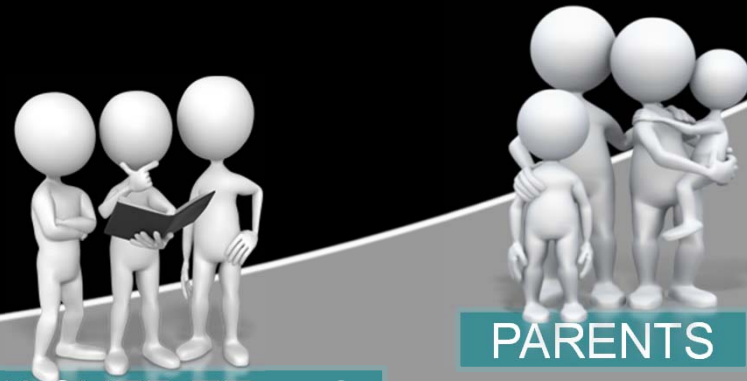
Formal Conference



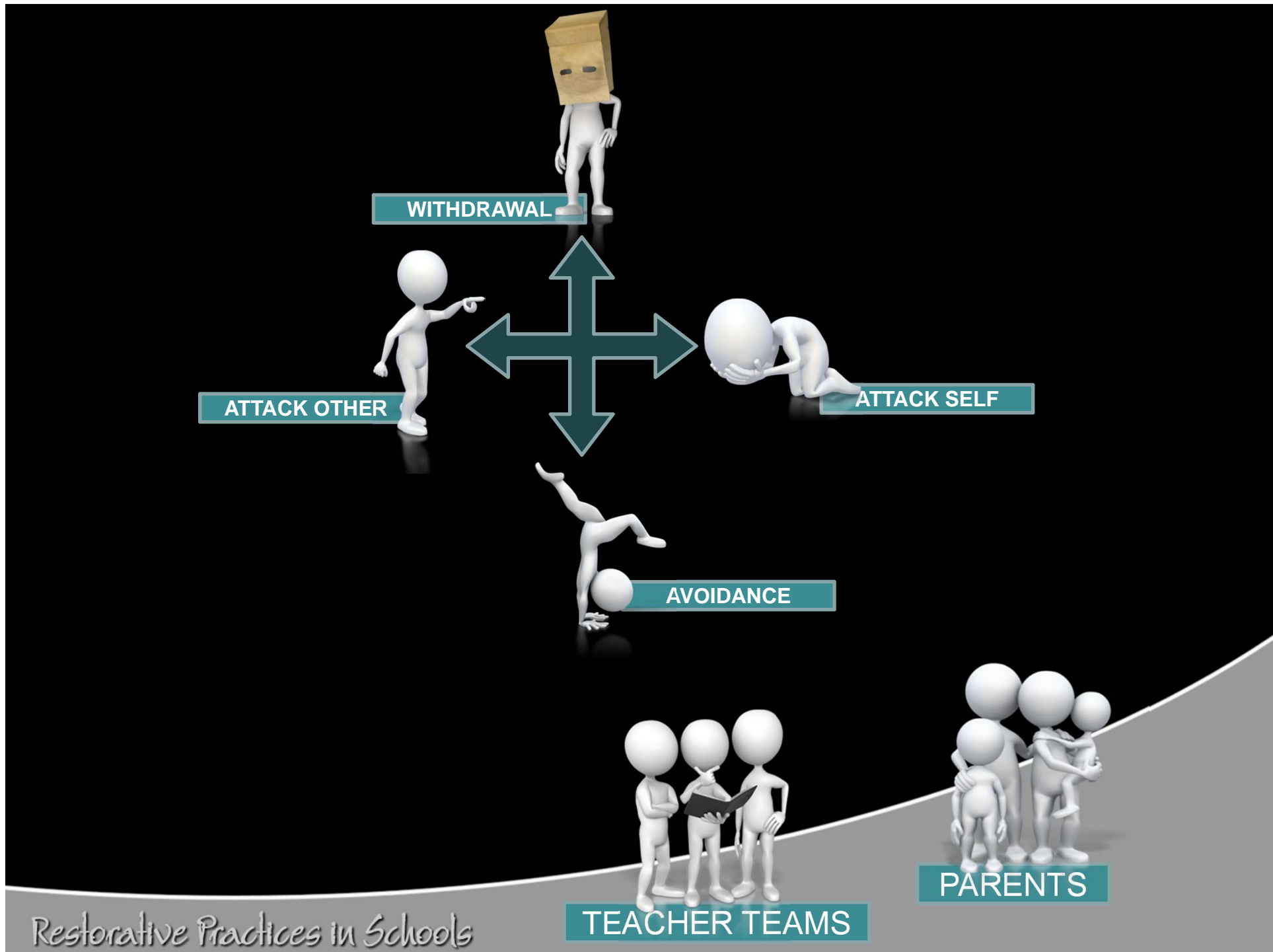
*Restorative Practices in Schools*

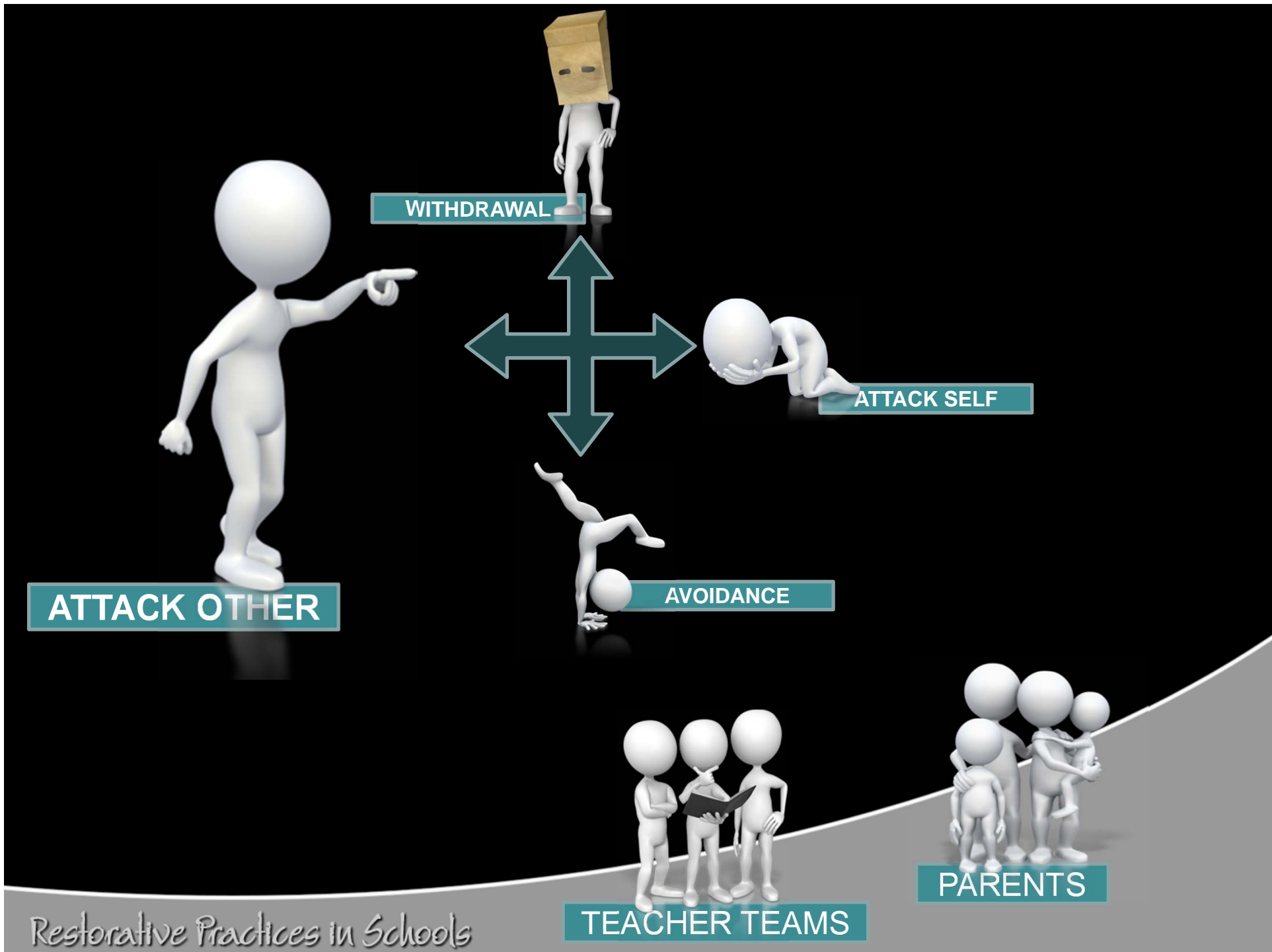
**TEACHER TEAMS**

**PARENTS**











ATTACK OTHER

Extreme

*anger*

often masks the more vulnerable emotions of

*fear, shame* or *distress*

*Understanding* and *empathy*

are antidotes to *anger*



TEACHER TEAMS



PARENTS

Restorative Practices in Schools

## Restorative Practices with Adults



Three main phases:

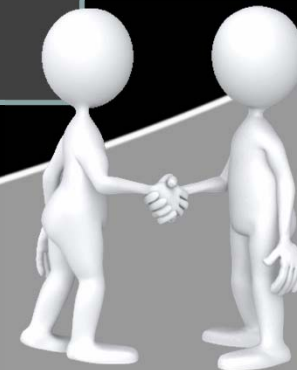
Describing and acknowledging what happened



Exploring and understanding the harm



Repairing the harm



## Restorative Practices with Adults

In Restorative Practices,

*empathy*

is the path through the

*negative emotion*

The free expression of emotion in a safe environment  
enables the participants

*to metabolise this negative affect*

and work together towards solutions

## Restorative Practices with Adults

- Bring together *all those who have a stake* in a specific incident
- Recognise *who* has been affected
- Explore and acknowledge *how* they have been affected
- Identify what needs to happen in order to *repair the harm* caused, and
- Enables the group to work out how to put *things as right as possible*

*Embedding restorative practices in the school-wide culture*

*vaccinates* against *conflict*,  
*builds trust*,  
*and makes having these difficult conversations*  
*easier.*



*For further information...*



[rpiassn.org](http://rpiassn.org)



[rpiqueensland.org](http://rpiqueensland.org)



[rpforschools.net](http://rpforschools.net)

Restorative Practices in Schools