



BYC

BELVEDERE
YOUTH
CLUB

BYC^{RP}
Belvedere Youth Club
RESTORATIVE PRACTICE

Transforming
an Inner-City
Youth Club into a
Restorative Practice
Organisation



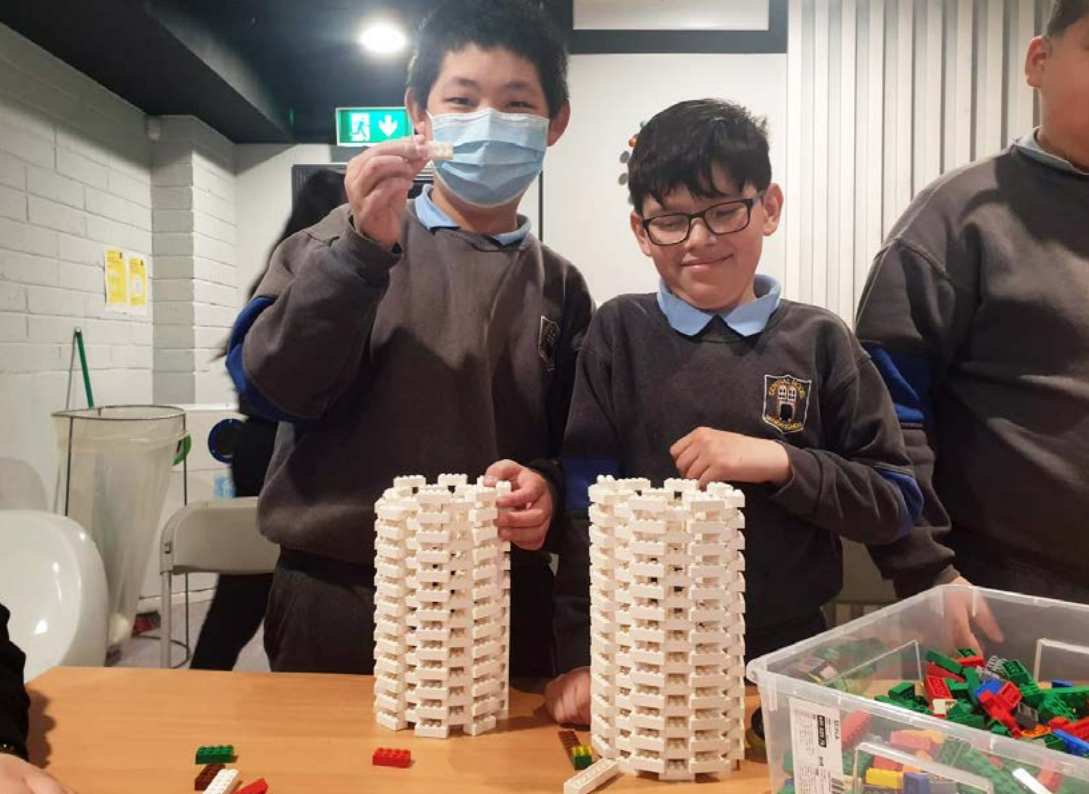
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1. Introduction

Belvedere Youth Club (BYC) serves the young people and community of Dublin's north-east inner city. Its mission is to support the empowerment of young people through the provision of a range of programmes that respect their rights and their voices, while encouraging and supporting them as they transition from childhood to adulthood. BYC's strategy focuses on supporting young people to develop key life skills and competencies so that they in turn can become leaders and role models in their community.

It is in the context of the community in which it operates and the young people with whom BYC has worked over the past hundred years that the board and leadership team have sought funding to transform BYC into a restorative practice (RP) organisation.

2. Community Profile of North-East Inner City (NEIC):

Dublin's NEIC is an area of dense population that since the early 1990's has changed from being a mainly indigenous disadvantaged area to one that has a patchwork of different communities, now combining disadvantage and affluence linked to the large migrant worker population that services the growing financial and corporate sectors.

Demography:

According to the 2016 census, the latest figures to hand, the total population of the Mountjoy 1 electoral district, the main area of operation for BYC, was 45,816, with 12,438 people under the age of twenty-four (see age breakdown below). The 2016 census analysis in relation to deprivation and affluence also showed that 35 per cent of the population in the district was disadvantaged.

Age	Male	Female
7 - 11	935	923
11-14	698	658
14-24	4,543	4,681

Table 1: Age Profile of BYC Catchment Area (CSO, 2016)



Educational Attainment and Employment:

There are eight primary schools, three secondary schools, one pre-school and one PLC college in the area, as well as thirty-eight community youth organisations. Early school leaving and low educational attainment have been persistent problems in the NEIC. In certain regions of Ireland and of Dublin, approximately 99 per cent of all children attain a third-level qualification; among residents of the NEIC, that figure stands at less than 15 per cent.

The unemployment rate for Dublin City was 12.9 per cent according to the 2016 census but this figure masks significant disparities in outcomes. According to the Mulvey Report (2017), unemployment is running at close to 25 per cent in the NEIC, with a significant proportion of long-term unemployed among that number. The available evidence also reveals high levels of employment amongst fifteen- to sixty-four-year-old immigrants.

Crime and Drug-Related Intimidation:

In recent years, the NEIC has been affected by unprecedented levels of street violence due to ongoing drug-related feuds. An analysis of official crime figures for 2019-20 highlights that Dublin North Central Garda division is the country's top crime hotspot on a per capita basis.

A recent study funded by the NEIC and published by the Ana Liffey Drugs Project showed that drug-related Intimidation is widespread in the community and is normally carried out by those involved in the trade or distribution of drugs. While people who use drugs are most often the victims, in many cases these victims are also the perpetrators.

The government's current National Drug Strategy (2017) lays out a health-led rather than punitive approach to drug use with a focus on harm reduction. This is closely allied to the RP levers of Belvedere Youth Club.

3. Profile of Belvedere Club:

The club was established in 1918 by past pupils of Belvedere College, itself located in the NEIC. The needs of young people and the community in the area are constantly evolving and BYC is now considering the role it will play into the future and the values that will underpin this role.

BYC's Vision, Mission, Values:



Vision

BYC's vision sees all young people being supported and encouraged to grow and develop key skills & competencies so as they can become leaders and role models in their community.



Mission

BYC's mission is to support the empowerment of young people to realise their full potential through the provision of a range of programmes, by respecting their rights and hearing and amplifying their voices, while encouraging and supporting them as they transition from childhood to adulthood.



Values and Principles

BYC is committed to underpinning these values and principles in all of its work

- 1. Inclusive**
Everyone is respected and included
- 2. Fun and Joyful**
Having a positive team and family spirit
- 3. Needs based**
A strong focus on the specific needs of our children and young adult members
- 4. Respectful**
Being present and treating everyone openly and honestly
- 5. Restorative**
Putting restorative practice at the heart of our relationships

BYC- in the NEIC Community:

BYC has one of the highest member registers of youth organisations in the NEIC. When it is operating at full capacity, up to 350 young people are registered as active participants. Our strategic plan 2021-2025 seeks to reach out to many more young people in the catchment area, including the non-indigenous population, which we believe is key to building healthy community relationships.

Our plan identifies four key areas of focus for the period 2021-2025: Confidence gained from learning performing arts skills is transferable to school, career, and life.

Work with 7-10 year olds:

BYC has identified a lack of services in the NEIC for children aged between seven and ten years (also noted in the Mulvey Report, 2017). BYC wishes to continue to work with young people from the age of seven, providing semi-structured activities with an emphasis on play and creativity. To date this work has been very successful and provides an opportunity for early intervention to counteract adverse childhood experiences.

Creative Arts Programs:

Research highlights the positive influence – physical, emotional and social – of drama, theatre and the performing arts on young people. The performing arts, especially improvisation, help young people to appraise situations, think outside the box and be more confident going into unfamiliar scenarios. This confidence transfers to school, career and life. BYC's creative arts programmes aim to foster young people's creativity and improve their confidence and communication skills.

Outreach:

BYC has developed an outreach strategy to engage with young people in the NEIC who are 'harder to reach'. The team endeavours to take the organisation beyond the limits of the building and into the heart of the city streets to meet these young people. We also make contact with young people through referrals by parents, teachers, colleagues and neighbours in the community and by external organisations.

Restorative Practice:

The transformation of BYC into a restorative practice organisation, the first of its kind in Ireland, is the cornerstone of our strategy. We believe that the time and energy taken to embed RP levers into everything we do will enrich our programmes and help our children and young people to build better and more positive relationships. We look forward to promoting and documenting this work, ensuring that young people in BYC and the wider community benefit and sharing the learning with others, in Ireland and abroad.

4. Restorative Practice: Approaches and Learning

This section explores the background to restorative practice, the different models of RP that have emerged in different contexts and environments and the key principles and practices of each approach.

Background to Restorative Practice:

Restorative practice (RP) has been defined as a social science that studies how to improve and repair relationships between people and among communities. The purpose is to build healthy communities, increase social capital, decrease crime and antisocial behaviour, repair harm and restore relationships (Wachtel, 2013). In an Irish context, the Childhood Development Institute (CDI) in Tallaght has defined Restorative Practices as “an evidence-based set of skills that help develop and sustain strong and happy organisations and communities by actively developing good relationships, preventing the escalation of conflict and handling conflict and wrongdoing in a creative and healthy manner”.

Restorative practice is aligned to restorative justice in that its aim is to create and maintain healthy relationships but, unlike restorative justice, which seeks to repair damaged relationships, the aim of restorative practice in a community setting is to build healthy relationships before any harm occurs.

CDI reports positive results from using RP: “People who have done CDI’s RP training and are using restorative practices as a way of working report that their work is easier, more enjoyable and more effective. Parents report better relationships with their children, residents report better relationships with their neighbours and young people report increased confidence and better relationships with their teachers, their families, their friends and their peers.”

In the NEIC, the Early Learning Initiative (ELI) of the National College of Ireland advocates restorative practices as a “collaborative and fair approach to working in partnership with children, parents, educators and the wider community in the Dublin Docklands and East Inner City.” ELI “has done significant work within the

community in creating awareness of the potential of RP and in training community and youth workers. Its aim is to embed RP across the community.”

The impact of RP in the NEIC and the benefits that Belvedere Youth Club has derived from it have motivated us to become a RP organisation. In developing an RP model for BYC, we reviewed the following approaches:

- Six RP Questions
- International Institute for Restorative Practices
- 5:5:5 Model
- Restorative Me: Connect, Reflect and Model Programme
- Childhood Development Initiative Approach to RP(CDI)

Six RP Questions:

Terry O’Connell, often known as the father of restorative practice, is an international restorative practitioner from Australia who worked for more than thirty years as a police officer. He developed the six restorative questions that form the backbone of most RP practice.

1. **What happened? (background knowledge)**
2. **What were you thinking of at the time? (cultural knowledge),**
3. **What have you thought about since? (knowledge integration)**
4. **Who has been affected by what you have done? In what way? (connectedness)**
5. **How could things have been done differently? (knowledge Integration)**
6. **What do you think you need to do to make things right? (connectedness)**

O’Connell maintains that restorative practice is a powerful methodology using Socratic principles to encourage facilitative questioning and reflective communication. It gives all users a democratic and mutually supportive framework to encourage dialogue without judgement or blame.

International Institute for Restorative Practice:

According to the International Institute for Restorative Practices (IIRP) in Pennsylvania, “RP is an emerging social science that studies how to strengthen relationships between individuals as well as social connections within communities. Though new to the social sciences, restorative practices have deep roots within indigenous communities throughout the world. The aim of RP is to develop community and to manage conflict and tensions by repairing harm and building relationships.”

The IIRP has built a body of evidence supporting the effectiveness of restorative practices in improving outcomes. The Institute models a relational approach that honours human dignity, outlining six steps to Implementing restorative practices that resonate with the approach adopted by BYC in implementing RP.

- Address staff scepticism
- Build trust
- Get district and state buy-in
- Invest in professional learning opportunities
- Engage students as leaders
- Build capacity by sharing best practices

5:5:5 Model:

Belinda Hopkins pioneered the application of restorative principles in school settings in the UK in the 1990s and created the first training course in restorative skills developed specifically for teachers. The framework she developed centres on five core beliefs, based on which a range of different restorative conversations, meetings and techniques can be deployed, depending on the situation. These themes have been incorporated into a framework for listening called restorative enquiry.



Figure 2: 5 Core Beliefs and 5 Steps of the 5:5:5 Model¹

Hopkins believes that the 5,5,5 framework helps teachers to:

- support others to resolve their conflicts, using informal and more formal mediation skills
- think differently about how to prevent bullying and how to address it when it happens
- have a consistent and applicable set of strategies for reducing the use of sanctions

She also emphasises the importance of an organisation’s leadership in bringing about a restorative workplace culture by actively participating in restorative practice: “if leaders want to truly embrace a restorative culture in their workplaces, then the change needs to start with themselves.”

Restorative Me: Connect, Reflect and Model Program:

Irish educationist Michelle Stowe developed the “Restorative Me” model to help create relationship learning communities. The three pillars of this model are designed to be proactive, with an emphasis on building relationships and engaging with young people before conflict arises. If we create a space to reflect both good and bad outcomes, we can model this to our young people.

1. **Connect by creating a circle and asking on a scale of one to ten how participants are feeling. The circle can be used to set any intention that the facilitator may wish to discuss. Then the group connects out at the end of the session by forming a closing circle and again using the one to ten model we check out how they are feeling and what they learned.**
2. **The facilitator/teacher to reflect on their practice, be mindful of what was said by the young people when they connect into or out of the circles and engage with them if they detect a problem.**
3. **The facilitator/teacher to develop the capacity to be vulnerable, open and honest around the young people and always to model the values and philosophies of restorative practices with other facilitators and students.**

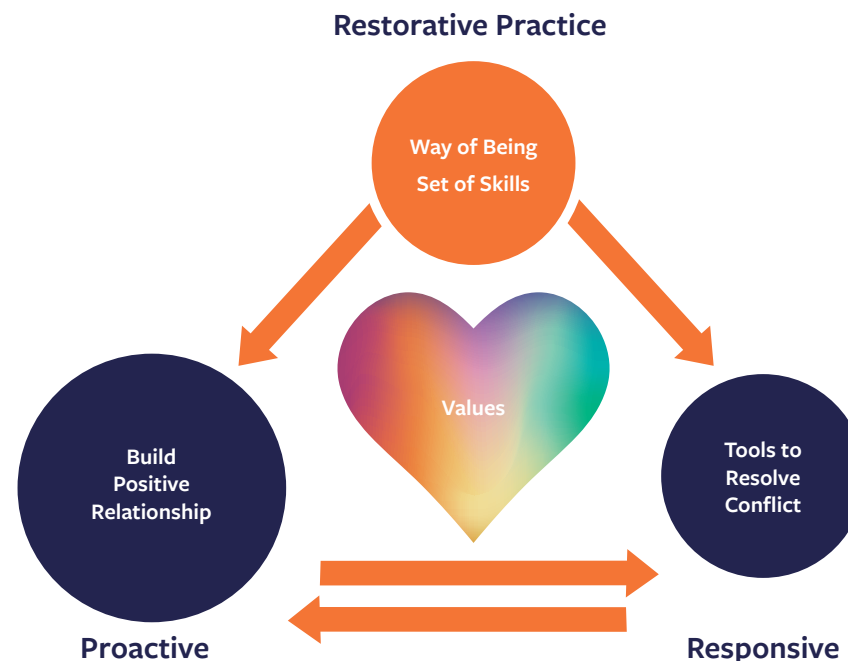


Figure 3: “Restorative Me” model ²

² Stowe, M (2015) Cultivating Community - What is your Superpower? <https://mstowerp.wordpress.com/2015/10/27/what-is-your-superpower/>

Childhood Development Initiative (CDI):

CDI has been delivering RP in Tallaght West since 2010 using best international practice. Its aim is to develop strong relationships in the local schools, community centres and the family home, using an approach that honours human dignity in all that they do. CDI suggests that restorative practices are not limited to formal processes, such as restorative conferences or family group conferences. On a restorative practice continuum (see below), the informal practices include affective statements that communicate people's feelings as well as affective questions that cause people to reflect on how their behaviour has affected others. Impromptu restorative conferences, groups and circles are somewhat more structured but do not require the elaborate preparation needed for formal conferences.



Figure 4: Restorative Practices Continuum³

5. The RP Model in Practice in BYC

Applying RP Learning within BYC:

Learning points from each RP approach helped to inform the BYC RP model described in this section.

Six RP Questions

- Already form part of the framework used to work with children and young people in BYC
- Can we use the six questions in all our interactions?
- How can we integrate the questions so that we no longer need to refer explicitly to them?

International Institute for Restorative Practices

- Invest in learning for leadership and staff.
- Build trust and acceptance with staff and leadership team.
- Learn from others.

The 5:5:5 Model

- Can we build a culture of restorative enquiry?
- Can we become role models for our community?
Restorative Me; Connect; Reflect and Model Program
- Start with ourselves by building meaningful relationships and the capacity for restorative enquiry.

Childhood Development Initiative

- Realise the benefit of informal and formal processes.
- Build relationships across the community.
- Take encouragement that RP makes a difference.

³ Wachtel, T. (2013). Defining Restorative. Bethlehem, Pennsylvania: International Institute of Restorative Practices.

How BYC will Operate as an RP Organisation:

The team believes that the key to an authentic outcome is to operate as a RP organisation, where RP practices are modelled throughout and not just in our interactions with children and young people. We will create a space where relationships are fostered and those involved can articulate what they are feeling and explore the impact these feelings have on themselves and on those with whom they come into contact. This awareness helps individuals to develop coping strategies, deal with conflict and, crucially, to be open to new ideas and new perspectives. Our model aligns to BYC mission and values and seeks to articulate what RP means in BYC.

We see our model developing in two stages:

1. Within BYC, where RP becomes part of our DNA.
2. In the wider community, where BYC members, staff and board model RP engagement models.

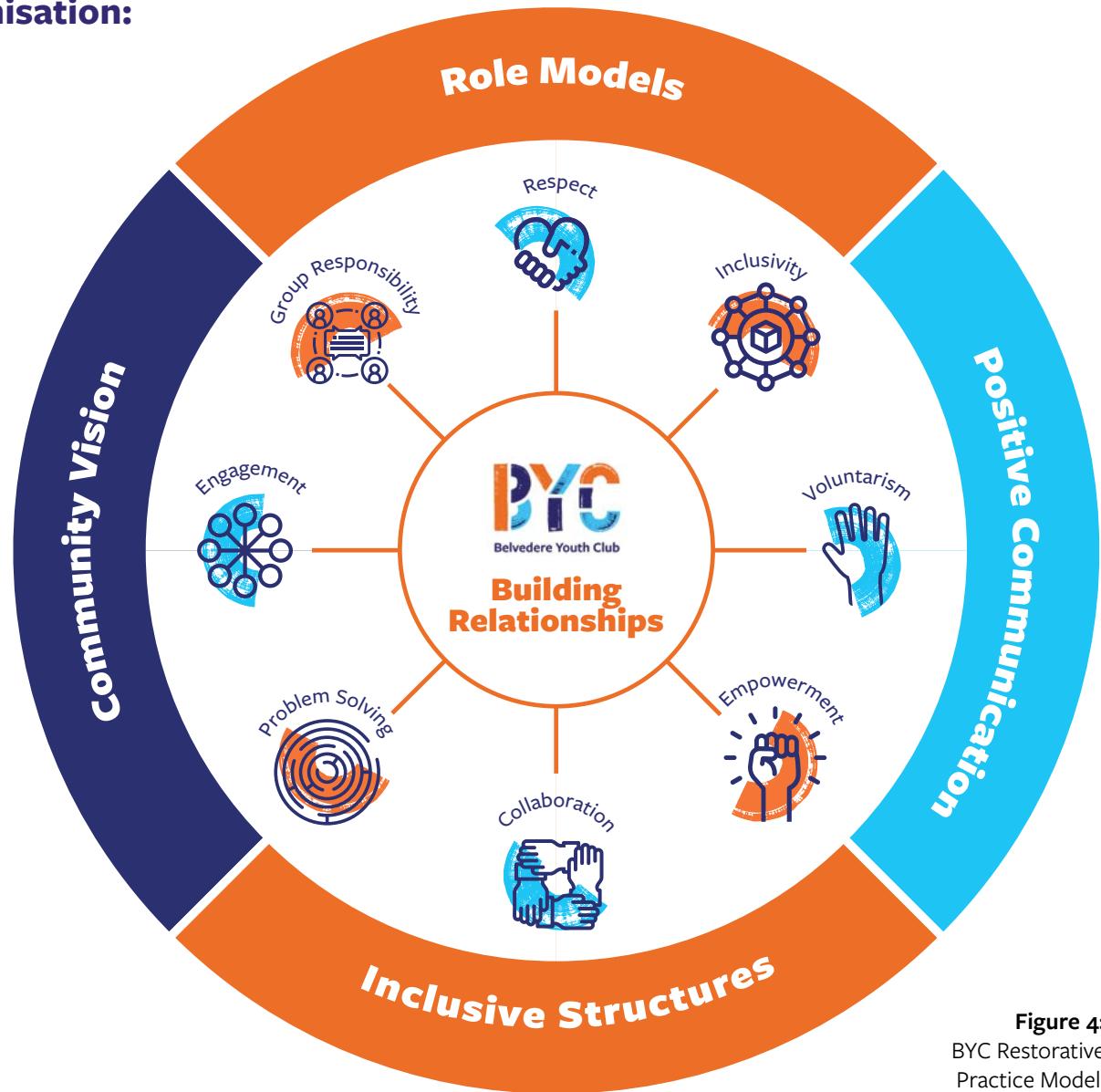


Figure 4:
BYC Restorative Practice Model.

Building relationships is at the heart of our RP model, which is based on eight core RP levers. These are closely aligned to those outlined in BYC’s strategy for 2021-25.

Applying RP Learning within BYC:

RP Levers	What do they mean for us at BYC?
Empowerment	Personal responsibility, creating confidence in one another as individuals and as a team so that we all feel able to strive and succeed.
Respect	The feeling that everyone’s views and perspectives are respected and taken into consideration.
Voluntary participation	Participation is entirely voluntary: if anyone chooses not to participate BYC will respect this decision.
Engagement	Personal accountability, participation, discussion, constructive conflict resolution and a focus on identifying and resolving unmet needs in an environment that is supportive emotionally and intellectually.
Inclusiveness	People are encouraged to express their opinions and all opinions are taken into consideration.
Collaboration	Willingness to work together and compromise to achieve results. Trusting one another to deliver on decisions.
Group responsibility	Being accountable for the actions of the group, not assuming that someone else will deal with the issue.
Problem-solving	Focus on solving the problem, not allocating blame or looking back in anger or shame.

Phase 1: Achieving RP Outcomes in BYC:

From an organisational perspective, we can identify four key outcomes:

1. Role models are emerging.
2. Inclusive structures are in place.
3. Positive communication informs our work.
4. An outward-looking community vision defines our ambition.

In order to achieve these outcomes, we will focus on the actions outlined in in Appendix 1.

Phase 2: Supporting Restorative Outcomes within NEIC:

As we embed RP, our focus will shift from building capacity in BYC to our goal of supporting a restorative community within the NEIC and ensuring that BYC is a welcoming space that allows other organisations to experience RP and learn from our journey.

Wide Community Outcomes:

- Our role models become community leaders.
- We participate fully in the overall RP plan for NEIC.
- Our experience encourages the use of RP in local homes, schools, and clubs.
- We encourage more people to integrate RP into their organisational DNA by making our own organisation a more inclusive space for all the community,
- We foster new opportunities for RP techniques of managing relationships and conflict within the community.
- We trial a more coherent and consistent approach to community collaboration using RP techniques,
- We empower young people to express their views within community structures and feel that they have an influence.

Experience RP and Learn from Our Journey:

- We welcome other youth and community organisations looking for guidance on how to use RP.
- Our resources are seen as useful and supportive in broadening participation in RP.
- We make policymakers and decisionmakers aware of the power of RP in shaping new responses to old challenges in the community.

6. Conclusion:

We are passionate in the belief that RP techniques will help to shape a better future for the children and young people of BYC and through them the community in which they live and work. The transformation of BYC into an RP organisation will create the framework for this to happen.

BYC is the first youth project in Ireland to seek to create a restorative organisation. Our hope is that, through shared learning, this model can be replicated locally, nationally and abroad.

A key focus for the project's work is to develop benchmarks and indicators that can allow us to better understand how we can progress our vision. The project team will use these measures to track results and outcomes. Innovative approaches will be used to ensure that the voice of the young person can shape this learning. We will document experiences, both positive and negative, that will help in the further development of RP techniques and its application by other organisations.

At BYC the board, staff and members are fully committed to the RP approach and we believe we have structures in place to make this process a success.

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Appendix 1: Outcomes to Actions



Desired outcome	Strategic Objectives	Actions
<p>To build role models</p>	<p>We carry out continuous RP training for young people, staff, board, volunteers and stakeholders.</p> <p>We include RP techniques in all programmes such as check-ins, circles and conferences.</p> <p>We organise awareness sessions with parents, community organisations and schools.</p>	<p>Delivery of bespoke RP training course to staff, young people and stakeholders.</p> <p>All meetings and programmes begin and end with an opening and closing circle.</p> <p>Delivery of an RP induction programme for parents and guardians of young people.</p> <p>Use of our social media platforms to raise awareness.</p>
<p>To ensure our structures are inclusive</p>	<p>We use restorative circles, conferences, check-ins, and positive language within all our programmes.</p> <p>Our youth councils are active and engaged across the organisation.</p> <p>We proof our policies and procedures to ensure that they are in line with RP levers.</p> <p>We organise all our board and staff meetings in line with RP standards.</p> <p>We deal with all issues, including grievances, using an RP model.</p>	<p>Logic models incorporate RP principles within each programme.</p> <p>RP levers are displayed throughout the building so that the organisation shares a common language.</p> <p>Youth councils are established with the support of youth workers through consensus and consultation.</p> <p>Annual review of our staff handbook, policies and procedures and governing documents to ensure RP language is used throughout.</p> <p>Board and staff meetings are opened and closed with circles using restorative language.</p> <p>An RP grievance policy is in place and listening circles are used to discuss any other issues or grievances that arise.</p>

Desired outcome	Strategic Objectives	Actions
<p>To integrate positive communication techniques into our work</p>	<p>We take time to focus on the language we use in our interactions, web site and social media.</p> <p>We use affective statements and utilise restorative circles and conferences as appropriate.</p> <p>We are inclusive in our communication, taking time to ensure that everyone understands and feels included.</p> <p>Our training focuses on the language we use and how we develop shared understandings.</p> <p>Our youth programmes involve our young people in planning and evaluation.</p> <p>We work with parents with a view to improving communication skills.</p>	<p>RP language is used by the board, staff and young people and consistently across our social media platforms.</p> <p>The organisational values are displayed throughout the interior of the building.</p> <p>Restorative circles are used constantly to build relationships and manage conflict if needed.</p> <p>We use open and honest dialogue which is essential for clear communication.</p> <p>We build relationships and manage conflict to create an inclusive space.</p> <p>The use of RP language and one-to-one dialogue support the development of emotional intelligence among peers.</p> <p>The voices of the young people underpin the entirety of BYC's service delivery.</p> <p>Holding of café mornings and evening meetings to build capacity among parents and guardians and provide them with a basic understanding of RP.</p>



Desired outcome	Strategic Objectives	Actions
<p>To drive our community vision</p>	<p>We are active members of the broader community and encourage community engagement for our team.</p> <p>We are active and innovative in our local engagement work.</p> <p>To ensure that we are fully accessible and inclusive, a core element of our programme is to link with outreach and harder-to-reach groups.</p> <p>We engage with a wide range of local stakeholders, from SMBC to schools.</p> <p>Our programmes and projects encourage young people to be keenly aware of and engaged with the community.</p>	<p>Collaborative initiatives with local stakeholder are part of BYC's service provision.</p> <p>Our outreach team regularly engages with relevant stakeholders to identify the needs and emerging trends in the local community.</p> <p>BYC delivers a collective outreach programme with other local youth service projects and is represented on harder to reach subgroups within the NEIC.</p> <p>BYC engages with local stakeholders and the corporate sector to ensure opportunities are in place for our young people.</p> <p>BYC supports young people to reach their full potential as individuals and grow their capacity to take responsibility for social change in their community.</p>

BYC RP Outcomes Map

1. Role models are emerging

- Staff, board, volunteers and stakeholders are trained
- RP techniques are included in all programmes and sessions
- Awareness raising sessions are happening with parents, community organisation and schools
- Our profile as RP organisation is raising.

2. Our structures are inclusive

- Restorative circles, conferences, check-ins, and positive language are used within all our programmes
- Our youth councils are active and engaged across the organisation
- Policies and procedures are in line with RP levers
- Board and staff meetings are run in-line with RP standards
- We deal with all issues, including grievances, using our RP operating model

3. Positive communication techniques are integrated into our work

- We take time to focus on the language we use in our interactions, web site and social media
- We are inclusive in our communication, taking time to ensure that everyone understands and feels included
- Our training focuses on the language we use and how we develop shared understandings
- Our youth programmes involve our young people in planning and evaluation
- We work with parents with a view to improving communication skills

4. Our community is being influenced by our restorative vision

- We are active members of the broader community and encourage community engagement for our team
- We are innovative in our local engagement work
- Our programmes are including harder-to-reach groups
- We engage with a wide range of local stakeholders, from SMBC to schools
- Our programmes and projects encourage young people to be engaged within our community

Strand A: Training and Development

- A1:** Training for staff, including refresher and new staff induction
- A2:** Awareness raising with parents, one off training sessions, follow up, invited speakers and cafe style drop ins
- A3:** Direct work with young people, by age, promotion of peer mentoring and advocacy
- A4:** Board support and training, including subcommittees
- A5:** Awareness raising work with local stakeholders, including funders from statutory and corporate sectors
- A6:** Development work with volunteers, taster sessions and in-depth training

Strand B: Embedding and Supporting

- B1:** Supporting delivery of outreach strategy with RP focus
- B2:** Supporting delivery of arts and drama strategy with RP focus
- B3:** Supporting delivery of harder to reach strategy with RP focus
- B4:** youth programme design - ensuring an explicit RP dimension
- B5:** Developing youth council - establishing model and structures

Strand C: Communication and Engagement


- C1:** Review feedback loop and information flows internally within the organisation
- C2:** On basis of review, agree common principles
- C3:** Apply principles and implement restorative approach to internal communication
- C4:** Apply same approach in relation to how we work with parents / schools / community / volunteers

Strand D: Organisational Structures and Ways of Working

- D1:** Review and update policies and procedures - staff handbook
- D2:** Implement RP approach to all meetings - management - board - staff
- D3:** Review use of positive language in contact with parents and online communication
- D4:** Put in place monitoring and review system

Strand E: Branding and Visibility

- E1:** BYCRP logo and brand developed, signage in place
- E2:** Project work promotion using social media and other platforms
- E3:** Messaging across community, through podcasts and other channels
- E4:** Outcomes measured and documented, - with appropriate support



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