



Youth Restoration Project

Cultivating Relationships; Restoring Community

Sample Questions

Being heard is central to Restorative Practices. Asking questions ensures the opportunity for the other guy to be heard. When someone else's behavior triggers our impulse to make a statement, they may not have meant it the way it seems to us. So asking a question first can prevent misunderstandings, wrong assumptions and accidental slights.

When holding others accountable, questions put the onus on the other person to come up with the answers. With kids, kind accountability questions help them understand and process the effects of what they did. Lecturing is ineffective as an interaction strategy.

While the landscape of good questions is vast, here are a few good examples:

Quick check-in questions

- You seem off; what's up?
- Is there something important on your mind that someone should know about?
- How's your day going so far?
- What do you need in order to... (get to work, quit fooling around, manage a feelings outburst, get to class on time, be more positive with colleagues)...

Community building questions -- when relationships have been established

- What was one time you remember being really happy?
- How would your best friend describe you?
- What would you NOT want to change about your life? Why?
- If you could talk to someone from your family who is no longer alive, who would it be? What would you want to talk about?
- If you had an unexpected free day, what would you do with it?
- Whom do you respect, and why? What change would you like to see in your community? What can you do to promote that change?
- What was a time when you were outside your comfort zone? What did you do, and what were the results?
- What is it like for you when someone is angry at you?
- What do you wonder about yourself? Your family? Your closest friends? Your teachers? Nature? Your future? Your community?



Heading off problems

- If you do that, what do you think the consequences might be?
- What is it you want right now?
- What are you doing to achieve what you want?
- Is it working?
- I hear what you need...so here's what I need. What solution might work for both of us?
- Is there a reason you need so much attention right now?

Accountability Questions

- What happened?
- What were you thinking at the time?
- Who has been affected by what you did? In what way?
- What do you think needs to happen to make things right?
- What would prevent this from happening again?

Adult interactions

- What do you hope to get out of this meeting?
- What's working/not working about ... ?
- Can I circle up with you about...?

After school restoration

- Say in some detail what happened that you ended up here.
- What was happening just before the problem?
- What were you thinking?
- What did you want?
- Did you get it?
- What do you hope to do after ...high school?
- How would this behavior be received at a job?
- If someone did that to you, how would you feel?
- What are other ways you could have handled your feelings or needs without causing trouble?
- Can you commit to any of those?