



# Applying Restorative Practices in Student Staff Supervising and Team Development

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# Learning Objectives

1. Participants will learn how Lehigh University applies Restorative Practices throughout the experience of a Gryphon (Resident Assistant) and in the Office of Residence Life.
2. Participants will gain strategies for replication within other team or student staff settings.

# Lehigh's Story

- Year 3 of RP integration into Residence Life and Student Affairs
- Most professionals are trained in RP from IIRP and most Directors and above are Trained Trainers
- RP is infused into other areas of Student Affairs in subtle, proactive ways and more formalized practices
- Momentum has slowed over the past year and a half, but it still informs our practice



# Restorative Practices and Residence Life

- Newly hired Gryphons (RAs) are trained in basic RP theory, proactive circles, and responsive circles
- Residence Life professional staff are trained either by attending IIRP trainings, or through Trained Trainers on the Student Affairs staff
- Circle community building is emphasized as the preferred method for Gryphons to use when holding hall meetings
- Responsive methods are used to address community concerns, roommate conflicts, and follow-up with students involved in incidents
- RP knowledge is assessed after trainings, Responsive Circles are tracked, and RP is the basis for a strategy for our upper class residential curriculum

# Staff Performance & Supervision

# Context

- Staff performance was evaluated through the Progressive Discipline Process
- If Gryphons were having performance issues, the supervisor would address them and then assign them to one of the stages of Progressive Discipline
- There was not a guide to determine which behaviors would result in which stage
- Gryphons and supervisors saw it only as reactive measure rather than a developmental or educational experience



# PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE



## **VERBAL WARNING**

- \* Typical first step
- \* Used to address a problem that occurs after expectations have been set



## **WRITTEN WARNING**

- \* Used to formally document a problem that has persisted after the verbal warning, or a serious first occurrence



## **PROBATION**

- \* A time frame is set in which the Gryphon must improve performance and fulfill set expectations in order to prevent termination



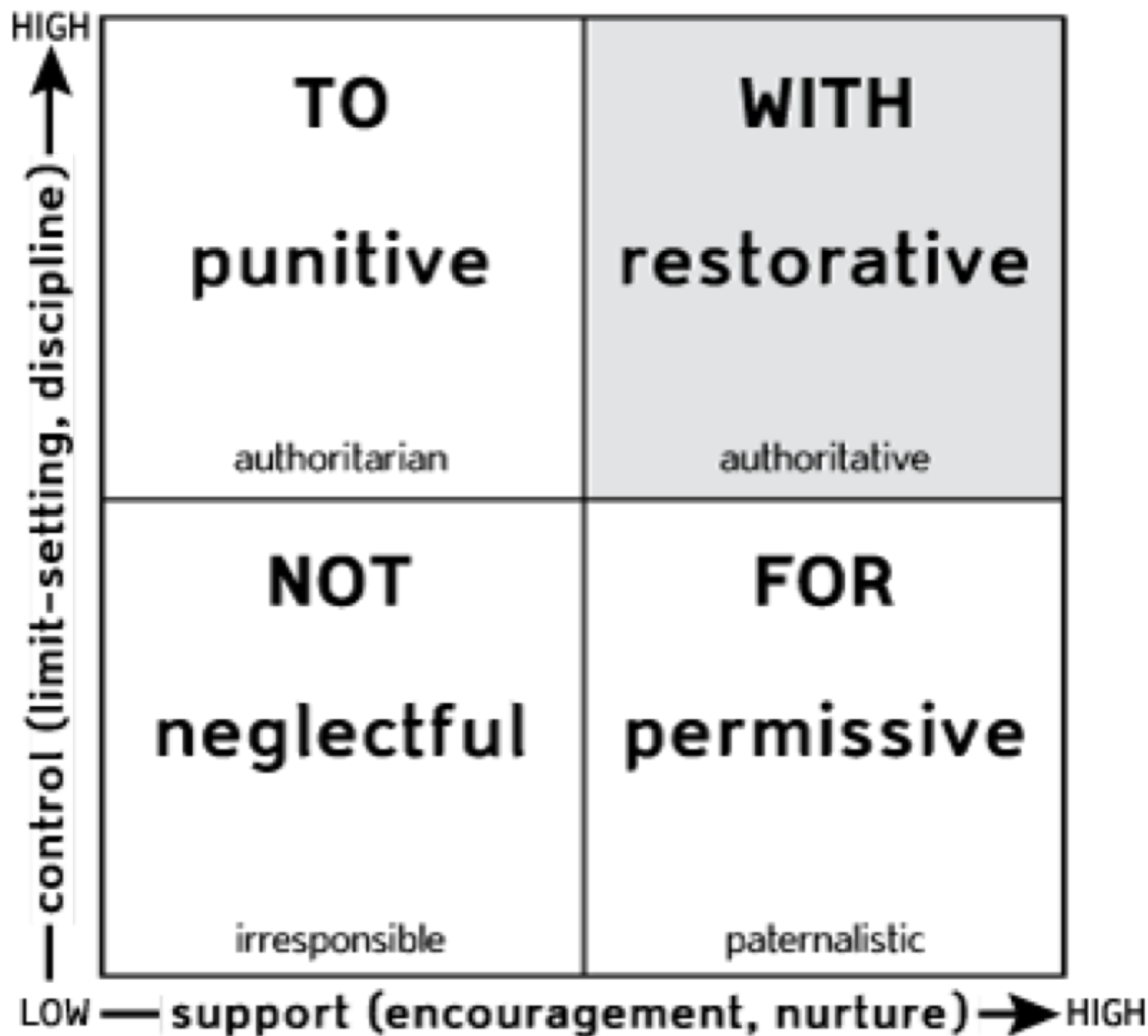
## **FINAL WARNING**

- \* Final Warnings are NOT a required step
- \* Can be used to provide a final opportunity for corrective action



## **FINAL TERMINATION**

- \* Termination can be immediate due to certain serious actions, or the final step in the Progressive Discipline Process





**Withdrawal:**

- isolating oneself
- running and hiding

**Attack Other:**

- "turning the tables"
- blaming the victim
- lashing out verbally or physically

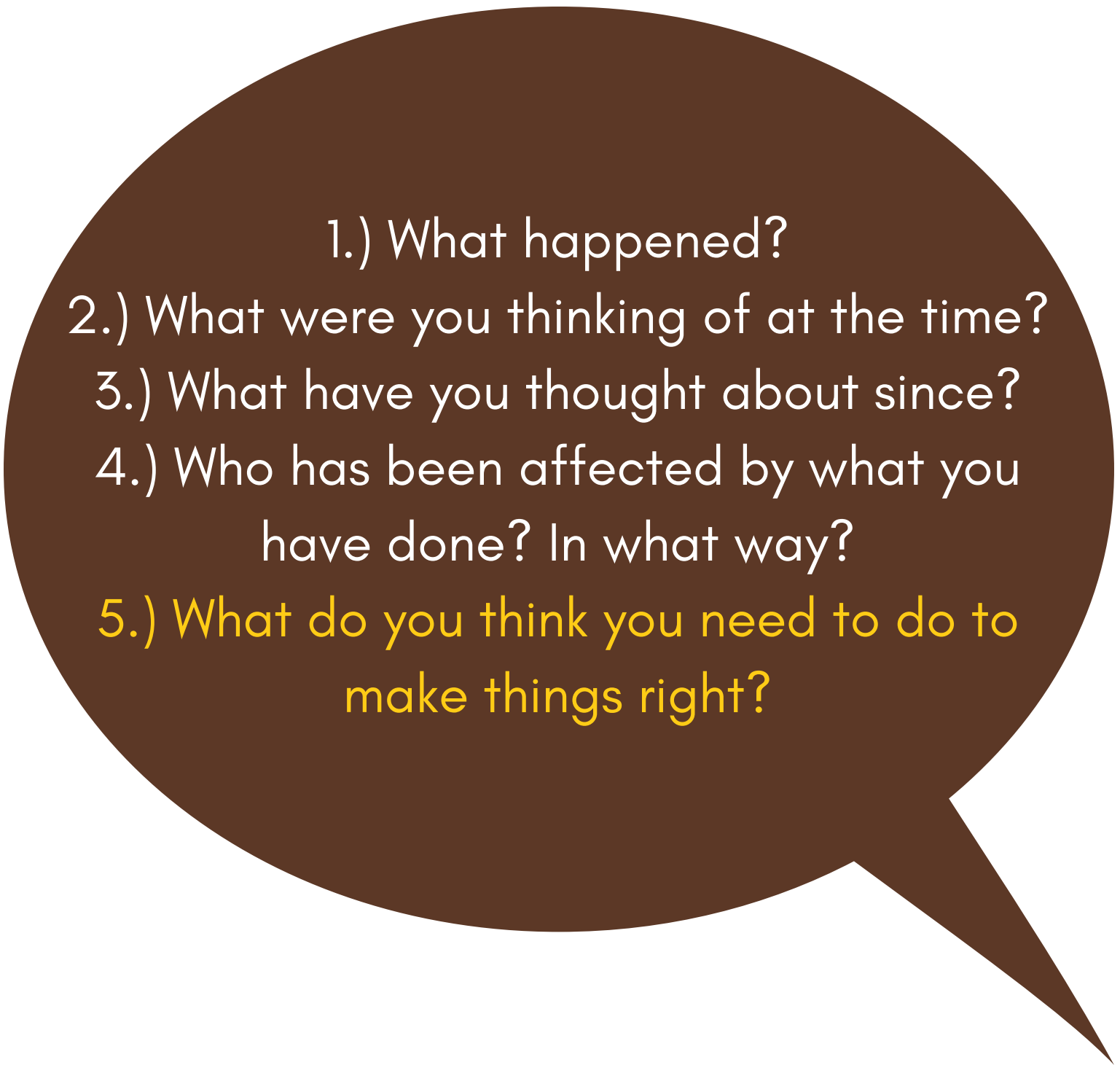
**Attack Self:**

- self put-down
- masochism

**Avoidance:**

- denial
- abusing drugs and alcohol
- distraction through thrill-seeking



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- 1.) What happened?
  - 2.) What were you thinking of at the time?
  - 3.) What have you thought about since?
  - 4.) Who has been affected by what you have done? In what way?
  - 5.) What do you think you need to do to make things right?

# Restorative Action

- We noticed how ineffective the previous system was and how many frequent fliers we had
- Identified common, low-risk mistakes that Gryphons would often make
- Thought about about RP theory and how to change our approach
- Utilized the RP Questions as a guide for the conversations
- Recognized that context, the story, and the person matters



## **GRYPHON PROGRESSIVE DISCIPLINE ACCOUNTABILITY SCALE**

| <b>Offense</b>  | <b>1st</b>         | <b>2nd</b>     | <b>3rd</b>      | <b>4th</b> | <b>5th or more</b> |
|---|--------------------|----------------|-----------------|------------|--------------------|
| Late to meeting, required training, or duty   | Restorative Action | Verbal Warning | Written Warning | Probation  | Termination        |
| Missed 1:1 or $\geq 10$ minutes late  | Restorative Action | Verbal Warning | Written Warning | Probation  | Termination        |
| Late with administrative duties (including but not limited to bi-weekly reports, receipts, evaluations, etc.) | Restorative Action | Verbal Warning | Written Warning | Probation  | Termination        |
| Bulletin board late or poor quality   | Restorative Action | Verbal Warning | Written Warning | Probation  | Termination        |
| Failure to confront/report policy violation   | Restorative Action | Verbal Warning | Written Warning | Probation  | Termination        |
| Failure to wear “Gryphon on Duty” tag or Gryphon provided apparel (must be visible in check-in photo)         | Restorative Action | Verbal Warning | Written Warning | Probation  | Termination        |
| Failure to check mailbox regularly (3x/week) or respond to emails (within 24 hours)                           | Restorative Action | Verbal Warning | Written Warning | Probation  | Termination        |

# Scenario #1

A student staff member is 20 minutes late to the regularly scheduled staff meeting which happens every Tuesday at 8:15pm. The staff member did not inform you or any other members of the team that they were going to be late.

# Scenario #2

A student staff member forgets that they were scheduled for duty and ends up going to the Spring Concert and drinking. Another staff member has to cover that shift and miss the concert.

# Examples

- Bringing treats to a staff meeting for everyone to enjoy
- Cleaning the staff office
- Taking an extra duty shift
- Sponsoring a staff bonding experience
- Giving a gift
- Writing an apology letter
- Taking them out to lunch/coffee/ice cream
- Completing an extra project



# Limitations

- There are serious performance issues that will still result in immediate Progressive Discipline or termination
- This still occurs within an employment context, which is a bit different than community-based RP
- Sometimes will not meet all components of RP such as including Communities of Care
- Potential conflicts of interest in that the supervisor could be the only one impacted by the negative behavior
- Lack of effort from the student staff member to take meaningful, restorative action



# For Implementation

- Take a step back and review how you supervise your staff members (student staff or not) through performance problems or other concerns
- Take note of your policies and procedures and cross reference that with RP frameworks, such as the Social Discipline Window
- Analyze any data you have about your staff evaluation processes and where RP could fit in
- Have a discussion with your staff about how their needs are or are not being met by the current process
- Consult with your supervisor and/or HR department about how this would look in your organization
- Utilize the Restorative Questions in your meetings
- Create an example guide for your staff

Team Development  
(The other 80%)

# Context

- Assessment data showed that Gryphons wanted a greater sense of belonging to the Society and to create relationships across staffs
- Gryphons felt that the Progressive Discipline Process was punitive in nature
- Recognized that we needed to build stronger staff communities to truly infuse RP
- Wanted to role model RP so that Gryphons could see how to use it in building their own communities





# Team Development

- Circles for staff meetings including check-ins and check-outs
- Staff retreat
- Peer Mentor program
- Gryphon Conference
- G-6's - peer to peer learning
- Training in RP
- Activities that build authenticity and vulnerability
- Discussing harm and conflict openly

# For Implementation

- Review your staff culture and climate
- Determine where you could infuse components of RP theory that you previously were not
- Allow time for intentional dialogue and discussion
- Incorporate opportunities for your team members to learn from one another
- Plan staff bonding opportunities that build authenticity and vulnerability (ex. Who Am I Poems, Identity Signs, 4 Corners)
- Role model RP for your staff both in a team context and in individual meetings
- Address harm or conflict using RP



# Questions???