

Document 1 - Restoration Activity Description

Restoration can take many forms and can involve more than one type of intervention. Written below is an explanation of the most common restorations provided by the Workplace Conflict Resolution Unit (WCRU).

Leadership Support – This is when the WCRU provides support to the chain of command regarding an issue that is either affecting the whole team, some individuals or it is related to a Performance Management concern. These discussions may be a single opportunity, or they may occur multiple times until the issue is resolved.

Conflict Coaching - The WCRU provides one-on-one support and coaching to help a person develop their conflict competence so that they can handle conflict conversations or difficult conversations on their own. Practical skills are offered to assist with challenging workplace issues. These sessions can be done with management or with a member directly. The WCRU may meet affected members to have one-on-one discussions on how to resolve a dispute or guide them on how to prepare for a conflict conversation. We discuss strategies on how to effectively communicate their messaging for optimal outcome (i.e. how to deal with interpersonal conflict and how to address discipline issues when tensions are high). Suggestions and practical examples are used, whereby participants are encouraged to focus on the behaviour being addressed and not on the personality. These conflict coaching sessions can be one individual session or may be a series of sessions that are conducted weekly over many months.

Mediation - This is a voluntary, confidential, structured process in which an impartial and neutral third-party assists the parties to find a mutually acceptable solution to a situation. It is often part of the procedural process to resolve complaints and grievances and can result in a mediation agreement. It is sometimes referred to as Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), for its ability to complement formal processes. This may involve a face-to-face meeting with the disputing parties and the mediator from within the WCRU or an external mediator, to assist in reaching a mutually beneficial agreement. The preparation for one mediation often involves the mediator meeting with each party separately, before putting the parties in a room together. The preparation for mediation can take months, as there may be documents that need to be obtained and reviewed, and a lot of preparatory work is done to ensure the parties will attend the actual mediation in good faith. The preparatory work can take many hours and the mediation is usually scheduled in four hour blocks. There may be many days of

mediation required, prior to coming to a resolution.

Workplace Assessments – A type of diagnostic process to identify group dynamics, which contribute to workplace conflict. The assessment should be conducted using a format where the issues identified are not attributed to any individual and there is no complaint. It involves participants rendering an overview of the workplace, identifying possible causes of the conflict, and in developing ways to address/resolve conflict. This includes restorative strategies to re-establish respectful relationships specific to the group's needs. Conducting a Workplace Assessment may have a variety of purposes that range from reactive, to restorative to entirely proactive. There are many different types of assessments, and they are used for different purposes. Workplace Assessments are used to assess group dynamics. Information collected is not attributed to individuals but rather themes are created, findings are offered, and recommendations prepared. This involves individual interviews with each member of the team. Depending on how many employees are involved, and the depth of the concerns, each interview can take 2-3 hours. The writing of the report, meeting with the chain of command to offer a debrief and review the report, and then a separate meeting with the participants – not to mention putting the recommendations into action – can take many months.

Behavioral Interviews - One-on-one discussions with the individual to assess their awareness and understanding of the impact of their behaviour on others, and to elicit positive behavioural change by helping the member to identify and acknowledge their role in a conflict and to address inappropriate behaviour in the workplace. Similar but different than conflict coaching, this intervention may be a single session or multiple sessions over many months.

Skills Building/Training Support – Trainings encourage both knowledge and skill development with a focus on strengthening collaboration. Typical topics can include - but are not limited to - Anger Management, Fairness & Respect in the Workplace, Healthy Communication with Colleagues, Having Difficult Conversations, Dealing with Conflict, Harassment and Bullying, Communication Concepts, Bystandership, and Ethics in the Workplace. The WCRU also offers Tailored Training, which is developed and provided based on requests by specific units within OPS. These trainings are created based on need and then become part of the roster of courses WCRU can offer. Creating the training is very time consuming and delivering the training may take 2-8 hours, depending on the topic.

Group Interventions – Aimed to address a systemic issue in a specific work environment by helping a team work through issues in a positive, collaborative and productive manner. The purpose of such interventions is to highlight group similarities versus their differences. It can take many forms such as: creation of a group charter and facilitated discussions. Hours of preparatory work is required – often with individual meetings that take hours to do - to get to the point where a group intervention will be trusted. These group interventions often take a half a day and may require more than one group session to get the team back to baseline, and then to a place where they can then thrive. This is key to repairing a unit breakdown and restoring workplace harmony within the team.

Numbers are important but they do not tell the whole story. There is a tremendous amount of time and effort required for each file from start to finish, in order to restore individuals and the workplace.